

Mayfield Lavender, 139 Reigate Road, Ewell, Surrey, KT17 3D6

Erection of a replacement shop, extension to car park, extension to outside plant sales area, use of part of an existing glasshouse for a tearoom/lecture room, and engineering and landscaping works in association with the proposed development (as amended).

Ward:	Nonsuch
Contact Officer:	John Mumford

1 Plans

- 1.1 The Council now holds this information electronically. Please click on the following link to access the plans and representations relating to the originally permitted application via the Council's website, which is provided by way of background information to the report.

Link: <http://eplanning.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=OSKN3LGYH7J00>

2 Summary

- 2.1 This application is for the erection of a replacement shop, extension to car park, extension to outside plant sales area, use of part of an existing glasshouse for a tearoom/lecture room, and engineering and landscaping works in association with the proposed development of the horticultural nursery which specialises in growing lavender.
- 2.2 The application site is located within the Green Belt and the application is referred to Committee for determination by Councillor David Wood.
- 2.3 **The application is recommended for APPROVAL** as it is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt and there are no residential amenity or other significant concerns relating to the development.

3 Site description

- 3.1 The application site is situated on the eastern side of Reigate Road close to the Borough boundary. The site area is approximately 4.6 ha and mainly comprises open fields which include lavender growing fields and an orchard.
- 3.2 Close to the Reigate Road frontage is a small corrugated metal clad retail shop of 128 sq m that currently sells lavender together with lavender based products, garden plants, sundries and ornaments. To the side of the shop is an open sales area and in front of the shop is a compacted gravel customer car park providing about 19 spaces. There is a semi-detached house close to the car park and adjacent to the site entrance which is used as a staffroom, office and staff accommodation.

- 3.3 There are 7 separate polytunnels of various sizes ranging from 126 sq m to 410 sq m, 2 substantial glasshouses of 511 sq m and 589 sq m and 2 barn structures of 129 sq m and 56 sq m. The greenhouses are used for growing plants whilst the polytunnels and barns are largely used for storage of equipment and supplies in association with the horticultural use.
- 3.4 The site has a tree belt along the south-eastern boundary to the site which screens the site from the adjacent Drift Bridge farm situated to the south. There are also trees and shrubs along part of the Reigate Road frontage and hedging along the boundary with 137 Reigate Road. The site slopes down from the rear (north-east) towards Reigate Road.

4 Proposal

- 4.1 The application seeks permission to develop the site to enable the existing lavender growing business to expand and diversify into other areas linked with the growing of lavender.
- 4.2 The proposed development includes:
- Removal of existing shop and adjacent container and provision of expanded compacted gravel car parking area to double capacity to 41 spaces.
 - Removal/relocation of 2 polytunnels to enable provision of 28 space staff parking area/customer overflow parking on compacted gravel.
 - Erection of 166 sq m timber clad and glazed shop with pitched clay tiled roof which would include a 30 sq m kitchen/servery with mezzanine floor for use as business, lecturing and storage.
 - Conversion of 224 sq m of glasshouse No 3 into a shop area of which 101 sq m would comprise a small tea room (70 covers) /lecture area. The small café is proposed as an integral part of the overall nursery and would not open separately from the nursery. It is intended both as a 'showcase' for products derived from the plants and trees grown on site (for example lavender based teas, biscuits etc, fruit juices, herb based products) and an education facility for the proprietors to give talks and demonstrations on lavender, herbs, etc.
 - Relocation and extension of plant display and sales area to provide a total area of 1218 sq m adjacent to the new shop and glasshouse No 3 by relocating polytunnel 5.
 - Removal of polytunnel 12 to enable provision of service/storage yard on compacted gravel area.

5 Comments from third parties

- 5.1 The application was advertised by means of letters of notification to 7 neighbouring properties and no representations have been received.

6 Consultations

- 6.1 Surrey County Council – Initially requested additional information on visitor numbers, staff numbers, details of tea room and access/circulation arrangements. Further information was provided by the application and on this basis Surrey County Council has confirmed that there are no objections subject to a condition requiring the modified highway access details to be submitted for subsequent approval and implementation prior to the use commencing.

7 Relevant planning history

Application number	Date	Application detail	Decision
15/01727/PREAPP	31.05.2016	Redevelopment of Mayfield Lavender Plant centre to include refurbished visitor centre comprising shop and cafe, ancillary buildings with associated landscaping and car parking.	Report completed

8 Planning Policy

National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) 2012

Para 79-92 Protecting Green Belt Land

Core Strategy 2007

Policy CS1 Creating Sustainable Communities
Policy CS2 Green Belt
Policy CS4 Open spaces and green infrastructure
Policy CS5 The Built Environment
Policy CS6 Sustainability in New Development
Policy CS11 Employment Provision
Policy CS15 Role of local centres
Policy CS16 Managing Transport and Travel

Development Management Policies 2015

Policy DM3 Replacement and extensions of buildings in the Green Belt
Policy DM6 Open space provision
Policy DM10 Design requirements for new developments
Policy DM19 Development and Flood Risk
Policy DM25 Development of employment premises
Policy DM35 Transport and New Development
Policy DM36 Sustainable Transport for new Development
Policy DM37 Parking Standards

9 Planning considerations

Green Belt

- 9.1 Paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the construction of new buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt. However, there are exceptions to this, including "limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development".
- 9.2 In addition "the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building" are also considered to be not necessarily inappropriate. Further guidance on this aspect of development within the Green Belt is given in the Council's Development Management Policies Document Policy DM3 which refers to extensions to buildings where the increase would be no greater than 30% above the volume of the existing building as not constituting inappropriate development.
- 9.3 The design of the replacement shop has been modified since submission to provide a lighter structure with more glazing resulting in a structure which has more of a horticultural appearance to reduce its visual impact. The removal of two existing polytunnels together with the existing shop and adjacent container would result in a net reduction of volume of buildings within the site of some 1,748 sq m. It is accordingly considered that the proposed replacement building and conversion of part of one of the existing glasshouses would not conflict with Green Belt policy.
- 9.4 The impact of the proposed scale of car parking area could be problematic in terms of maintaining the open character of the Green Belt but it is considered that this is sufficiently mitigated by the siting and compacted gravel surfacing treatment which would maintain the rural appearance of the site.
- 9.5 The open sales area would not directly impact on the openness of the Green Belt but together with the internal retail sales area needs to be controlled by planning condition 6 to ensure that the retail element remains ancillary to the primary function of the site as a horticultural nursery so that it does not have a negative impact on the vitality and viability of nearby Local Centres.
- 9.6 The applicant has stated that the business would be selling some 60% of plants and products which are grown or processed on site or at the applicant's other site near Banstead. It is proposed by further planning conditions to control the element of non-plant sales including any imported plants to 20% of the retail area and that this should be further restricted to sale of goods directly related to the horticultural use of the site and gardening. (Conditions 7 and 8)

Layout, Design and Scale.

- 9.7 The proposed shop would measure 18.7m x 6.8m x 6.6m which would be approximately 2.5m higher than the retained glasshouse to the rear and 1.6m higher than the existing shop building but given its siting further back from the Reigate road frontage together with the removal/relocation of nearby polytunnel structures it is considered that the visual impact would be acceptable.
- 9.8 The areas of hardstanding, apart from the expanded car parking area at the front which is partly occupied by the current shop building, are mainly occupied by polytunnels or existing hardstanding areas and do not result in further development of the site.
- 9.9 In conclusion the layout, scale and massing of the proposed development is appropriate for this Green Belt location.

Residential Amenity

- 9.10 Policy DM10 requires development to have regard to the amenities of occupants and neighbours, in terms of privacy, outlook, sunlight/daylight, noise and disturbance. It is considered that the scheme should not adversely impact on the amenity of the nearest residential occupiers at 135-137 Reigate Road and 141 Reigate Road given the existing boundary treatment to those properties that would largely screen the proposed development together with proposed new landscaping and removal of certain polytunnels. The existing low key access would need to be widened and provided with adequate sight-lines but subject to appropriate boundary treatment this should be visually acceptable. Whilst the proposal would be expected to generate additional traffic and visitors to the site and some additional associated noise it is not likely to result in an unacceptable impact on other aspects of residential amenity.

Local economic benefits

- 9.11 The applicant has confirmed that the number of projected staff would be 3 full-time and 5 part-time compared to the existing 3 full-time and 2 part-time. The proposed development would enable the business to diversify into other areas linked with the growing of lavender. More people are now wanting to learn more about the growing and use of lavender and it is proposed to hold lectures and courses for people to attend. It is also proposed to expand the planteria to offer a wider range of herbs and medicinal plants as well as cottage garden plants. The lavender field is an attraction which only opens during the flowering season (July to August). The nursery also has orchards which will include varieties of Old English apples and pears which will be pressed to make juice to be sold through the shop.

Parking and Access

- 9.12 The applicant has provided projected trip generation figures including the estimated car arrivals generated by the opening of the lavender fields during July and August. It should be noted that the lavender fields at the Reigate Road site are about 10% of the size of the lavender fields at Banstead. It is projected that the peak month would be around June when the Plant Centre sales and the proprietors give talks on the uses of lavender and conduct tours around the lavender growing areas prior to the harvesting of the flowers. This indicates a peak parking requirement of 33 on a Saturday in June which could be accommodated within the proposed car parking area. Surrey County Council have scrutinised the trip generation projections and are satisfied that the parking proposals are adequate.
- 9.13 The applicant has proposed to encourage visitors to the site to travel by means other than by car through advertising the bus service on their web site. The site is accessible by public footpath and it is proposed that cycle parking will be provided for both customers and staff.
- 9.14 Modified highway access details can be reserved by planning condition.

Landscaping

- 9.15 The layout plan indicates new planting within the car parking area and this can be reserved by planning condition.

Sustainability

- 9.16 Policy CS6 requires development to reduce or have a neutral impact on pollution and climate change. It also requires proposals to demonstrate how sustainable design and construction can be incorporated to improve energy efficiency. The applicant's Supporting Statement confirms that the building would be clad in sustainably sourced timber and heated through the use of energy derived from an air source heat pump installation. Roof water would be collected and recycled for the visitor toilets and for plant irrigation. Plant waste would be composted and used in the nursery production process.
- 9.17 There are existing water storage facilities on site and surface water drainage details can be reserved by planning condition.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 9.18 The scheme would not be CIL liable.

10 Conclusion

- 10.1 The application proposal is compatible with Green Belt policy and in terms of design, scale and appearance is considered to have no harmful impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers or upon the visual amenities of the area.
- 10.2 In view of the above, it is recommended that planning permission is granted.

11 Recommendation

11.1 Planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

- (1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- (2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents: MSC1654-04G, MSC1654-08E, MSC1654-09A, MSC1654-07B.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans to comply with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007).

- (3) The development hereby permitted shall be constructed entirely of the materials as detailed on the schedule of materials on the planning application form and as shown on MSC1654-08E.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory appearance in the interests of the visual amenities and character of the locality in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (4) The development hereby approved shall not be first opened for trading unless and until the proposed vehicular modified access to Reigate Road has been constructed and provided with visibility zones in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the visibility zones shall be kept permanently clear of any obstruction over 1.05m high.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not prejudice highway safety or cause inconvenience to other highway users in accordance with Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policy DM35 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (5) No development shall take place until a strategy of surface water drainage for the site using a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved strategy prior to the first use of the building and thereafter retained in that condition.

Reason: To ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage are incorporated into the development and to reduce the impact of flooding

in accordance with Policy CS6 of the Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy (2007) and Policy DM19 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (6) No area of the development hereby permitted shall be used for the for the retail sale of goods except for the proposed building (shop), existing building 3.2 and the open sales area identified on Drawing No MSC1654-04G and those areas shall only be permitted to sell such goods in accordance with conditions 7, 8 and 9.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and to protect the vitality and viability of local centres in accordance with Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (7) The proposed building (shop), existing building 3.2 and open sales area identified on Drawing No MSC1654-04G must only be used for the sale of plants and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class A1 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), (or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) except as permitted by conditions 8 and 9.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and to protect the vitality and viability of local centres in accordance with Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (8) No more than 301m² (20%) of the proposed building (shop), existing building 3.2 and open sales area identified on Drawing No MSC1654-04G shall be used for the sale of products directly related to the horticultural use of the site (excluding plants) together with the sale of goods directly related to indoor and outdoor gardens and gardening unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class A1 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), (or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and to protect the vitality and viability of local centres in accordance with Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (9) The existing building 3.2 (seating area) identified on Drawing No MSC1654-04G must only be used for ancillary A3 café use and for no other purpose and, notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting or amending those Orders with or without modification), planning permission shall be required in

respect of a change of use of the seating area falling within Schedule 2, Part 3, Class A of that Order other than the retail sale of plants.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and to protect the vitality and viability of local centres in accordance with Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (10) There shall be no mezzanine floors or other internal alterations which would increase the gross retail floor space above that permitted, without the prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and to protect the vitality and viability of local centres in accordance with Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (11) The use hereby permitted shall not operate other than between the hours of 09.00 to 18.00 hours.

Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers in accordance with Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (12) No development shall take place until full details, of both hard and soft landscape proposals, including a schedule of landscape maintenance for a minimum period of 5 years, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved landscape scheme (with the exception of planting, seeding and turfing) shall be implemented prior to the first use of the development hereby approved and thereafter retained.

Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of an appropriate landscape scheme in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM5 and DM9 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

Informative:

- (1) The Council confirms that in assessing this planning application it has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the requirements of paragraph 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.