

Planning Committee

16 August 2024

Agenda item number 9.1

BA/2024/0066/FUL- Wayford Nursery, Wayford Road, Wayford Bridge

Report by Planning Officer

Proposal

Replace 8 poly-tunnels with glasshouse & covered area

Applicant

Mr Nicholas Meale

Recommendation

Approval subject to conditions

Reason for referral to committee

Major application

Application target date

10 September 2024

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1. Description of site and proposals

- 1.1. The subject comprises part of a well-established farm shop, garden centre, and nursery site known as ‘Wayford Nurseries’ or ‘AG Meale and Sons’ with associated retail buildings, glasshouses, polytunnels, and plant hardening open areas, set amidst fields in horticultural and agricultural use, part of the wider Wayford Nurseries site.
- 1.2. The site is located to the northern side of Wayford Road (A149), with the vehicle entrance to the site approximately 300m north-east of Wayford Bridge.
- 1.3. The subject area covers three elements of the site. Eight polytunnels in a row which are used for the growing of plants. To the front (east) of the polytunnels is an uncovered area which is used to bring plants on and to harden them, with an element of retail. To the immediate west of the polytunnels is an area used for growing strawberries and raspberries which includes some elements of polytunnel coverage, a small part of this area also forms the subject area of the site.
- 1.4. To the north of the subject area site is an open area for plant sales, a café, and retail buildings selling plants, consumables, and garden equipment. To the east of the subject area is a hard surfaced car park, with fields to the south and west. There is an existing glasshouse at the site which is located to the east of the retail buildings.
- 1.5. The wider site comprises 105 hectares producing potatoes, asparagus, cabbage, cauliflower, calabrese (broccoli), kale, corn, pumpkins, beet, barley and wheat for sale at the site.
- 1.6. The surrounding area is predominantly in agricultural use. There are pockets of residential development, the closest to the subject area of the site form part of the wider ownership area, with further dwellings immediately east and south-east of the wider site. To the west are commercial uses around Wayford Bridge.
- 1.7. The site is not within a conservation area and lies outside of flood zones 2 and 3. The site is approximately 425m east of the Broad Fen SSSI, SAC, SPA, and Broadland Ramsar site.

1.8. The proposal is to remove the 8 existing polytunnels and replace them with a glasshouse and a covered area. The new glasshouse and covered area would include the polytunnel area, the adjacent plant hardening area, and a small part of the strawberries and raspberries growing area. The total size of the glasshouse and covered area is 72.0m by 57.6m. The glasshouse would occupy an area of 49.5m by 35.2m and would be fully enclosed and capable of being heated. The covered area would be an open-sided structure in the form of a wraparound to the north and eastern sides of the glasshouse, aside from an area of 13.5m x 9.6m in the south-eastern corner. The roof of the glasshouse and covered area is one continuous structure formed of a series of ridges to a maximum height of 4.8m, falling to 4.1m at eaves. Immediately north of the glasshouse and covered area is a plant room measuring 9.6m x 9.0m and formed of plastic coated metal sheets in a green colour to match the retail building, and to the south of the glasshouse and covered area are two rainwater harvesting tanks each with a diameter of 6.34m and a height of 3.04m.

2. Site history

- 2.1. BA/2022/0015/AGR - Steel Portal Framed Building for the purpose of storing grain produced by the applicant. Prior approval not required.
- 2.2. BA/2015/0168/FUL - Proposed coffee shop, patio and play area. Approved with conditions.
- 2.3. BA/2013/0206/FUL - Replacement toilet block and staff room. Approved with conditions.
- 2.4. BA/2006/1209/HISTAP - Erection of extension to provide replacement glasshouse / plant area and coffee shop. Approved with conditions.
- 2.5. BA/2004/1420/HISTAP Erection of canopy over walkway. Approved with conditions.
- 2.6. BA/2003/1469/HISTAP Erection of building to provide additional retail / storage area. Approved with conditions.
- 2.7. BA/1995/2344/HISTAP Construction of potato storage building
- 2.8. BA/1995/2329/HISTAP Covered open area for plant sales, glasshouse, coffee house and porch to glasshouse and existing farm shop. Approved with conditions.
- 2.9. BA/1994/2429/HISTAP Extension to include butchers, bakers, coffee shop and additional greenhouse. Refused.
- 2.10. BA/1991/2730/HISTAP Extension to existing building used for storage, preparation and sales of produce. Approved with conditions.
- 2.11. BA/1989/3003/HISTAP Erection of relocatable office and toilet accommodation Approved with conditions.

- 2.12. BA/1989/2901/HISTAP Extension of use of building to include sale of bought in produce. Approved with conditions and s106 agreement.
- 2.13. BA/1989/2900/HISTAP Greenhouse for the display and sale of plants grown within the nursery grounds. Approved with conditions.
- 2.14. BA/1988/3438/HISTAP Portal framed building for onion conditioning and potato storage. Approved with conditions.
- 2.15. BA/1987/3594/HISTAP Erection of additional glasshouse. Approved with conditions.

3. Consultations received

Stalham Town Council

- 3.1. The Council has no objections to this planning application.

Norfolk County Council (NCC) Highways

- 3.2. No objection.

BA Ecologist

- 3.3. No objection subject to conditions and enhancements.

4. Representations

- 4.1. None.

5. Policies

- 5.1. The adopted development plan policies for the area are set out in the [Local Plan for the Broads](#) (adopted 2019).
- 5.2. The following policies were used in the determination of the application:
 - DM6 - Surface water run-off
 - DM13 - Natural Environment
 - DM16 - Development and Landscape
 - DM21 - Amenity
 - DM23 - Transport, highways and access
 - DM43 - Design
 - DM51 - Retail development in the Broads
- 5.3. Material considerations
 - National Planning Policy Framework
 - Planning Practice Guidance

6. Assessment

- 6.1. The main issues in the determination of this application are the principle of development, the design and appearance of the proposed glasshouse, impact on landscape, neighbour amenity and highway and parking issues.

Principle of development

- 6.2. In terms of the principle of development, the proposed glasshouse would partly replace 8 existing polytunnels and partly cover over an existing open area, all within the existing site. There would be no change to the use of those areas which would still be used for the growing and hardening of plants including an element of sales, all for the benefit of the existing and well established business at the site. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in principle.

Design

- 6.3. The provision of glasshouses at garden centres and nurseries is fairly typical and there is an existing glasshouse at the Wayford Nurseries site of a comparable size and design to the proposed glasshouse. The proposed glasshouse has a simple yet pleasant design and is of a suitable scale for the site and its setting within the site. In addition, the height of the proposed glasshouse is reasonable taking into account the existing buildings at the site.
- 6.4. It is acknowledged that polytunnels are common at businesses of this type, however, their appearance can vary greatly depending on the age of the coverings which the applicant has advised need replacing up to every 10 years. The proposed glasshouse is of a more solid and enduring construction and so more easily maintains its appearance, along with providing a more useable area for plant growing and hardening.
- 6.5. The design of the proposed glasshouse, and the replacement of the existing polytunnels is therefore considered acceptable with regard to Policy DM43 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Impact on the landscape

- 6.6. The existing nursery and garden centre site is well concealed by virtue of the surrounding landscape and boundary features. This includes a well-established mature hedgerow along the boundary with Wayford Road, with the only gap being at the vehicle entrance to the site, although glimpses of the site are possible at other points. At the entrance the existing polytunnels are visible, and the proposed glasshouse would also be visible, however this is with a backdrop of trees and within the context of an established business, so would not be unexpected or detrimental to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. There are buildings adjacent to the site which are more prominent in the landscape than the nursery and garden centre by virtue of their height, which helps emphasise how the height of the proposed glasshouse will ensure that it is a reasonable scale of development in this setting.

- 6.7. There are no public vantage points which allow views of the site aside from the Wayford Road, and taking into account surrounding landscape features the proposed glasshouse would not be visible as part of the wider Broads landscape.
- 6.8. The proposed glasshouse is therefore considered acceptable with regard to Policy DM16 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Amenity of residential properties

- 6.9. There are residential properties around the site, although only one in proximity of the proposed development. This is an established use and taking into account the siting and scale of the glasshouse, along with its use, it is considered that the proposed glasshouse will not result in an undue impact on the amenity and privacy enjoyed by neighbouring residents, with regard to Policy DM21 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Highways and public rights of way

- 6.10. Norfolk County Council as Highway Authority has assessed the proposed scheme and responded raising no objections. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable with regard to Policy DM23 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Other issues

- 6.11. The BA ecologist has assessed the proposed scheme and advised that there would be no impact on protected species or habitats. New lighting is known to affect the foraging and commuting success of some bat species, but as glasshouses and industrial buildings are already in existence and there are few natural features within the development site to support bat use, potential impact is considered negligible. There is a risk that birds may collide with the new glasshouses, therefore measures to avoid bird strikes are proposed and would be secured by planning condition, along with suitable biodiversity enhancements. In this respect the proposal is considered acceptable with regard to Policy DM13 of the Local Plan for the Broads.
- 6.12. The proposal would provide broad sustainability benefits. The proposed glasshouse can be more efficiently heated than the polytunnels and would have a higher insulation value which would better retain the heat. The provision of a glasshouse removes the reliance on single use plastic polytunnel covering and its periodic replacement.
- 6.13. A further sustainability benefit is that the glasshouse allows for the introduction of rainwater harvesting in this area of the site. Surface water drainage would be dealt with through the provision of two rainwater tanks with a total capacity of 190 cubic metres, connected to the existing irrigation pump set. This would accord with Policy DM6 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The proposed provision of a glasshouse and connected covered area in place of an existing row of polytunnels and adjacent open air area is acceptable in principle, is acceptable in terms of design and appearance, would not result in an unacceptable

landscape impact, would not impact on residential amenity and would not be detrimental to highway safety.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1. That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:
- i. Time limit
 - ii. In accordance with plans
 - iii. Provision of measures to avoid bird strike
 - iv. Biodiversity enhancement in form of provision of habitat for wildlife
 - v. Works to trees, hedges, or shrubs outside of main bird breeding/nesting season or checked by ecologist prior to works
 - vi. Use of glasshouse for growing of stock for sale on site only
 - vii. External lighting plan

9. Reason for recommendation

- 9.1. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies DM6, DM13, DM16, DM21, DM23, DM43 and DM51 of the Local Plan for the Broads, along with the National Planning Policy Framework which is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

Author: Nigel Catherall

Date of report: 23 July 2024

Background papers: BA/2024/0066/FUL

Appendix 1 – Location map

Appendix 1 – Location map

BA/2024/0066/FUL - Wayford Nursery, Wayford Road, Wayford Bridge



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