

APPLICATION NUMBER:	LW/07/0891	ITEM NUMBER:	3
APPLICANTS NAME(S):	Mrs E Hemingway	PARISH / WARD:	Ringmer / Ouse Valley & Ringmer
PROPOSAL:	Planning Application for Change of use & extensions from nursery outlet to premises for restoration of classic & vintage cars		
SITE ADDRESS:	Merlins, Uckfield Road, Ringmer, East Sussex, BN8 5RU		
GRID REF:	TQ 4414		

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1. SITE DESCRIPTION / PROPOSAL

1.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use and extensions of the existing nursery buildings to a new use for the restoration of classic and vintage cars at Merlins, Ringmer. The site is located to the east of the A26 and is outside the Ringmer planning boundary. The plot of land is approximately 40 metres wide on the road frontage, widening to approximately 60 metres wide at the rear (east) of the site, and approximately 130 metres deep. It comprises of the main dwelling house known as Merlins, two existing outbuildings and a number of disused poly-tunnels and other temporary structures. The site is well screened to the north by a continuous tree and hedge line and also from the A26 road frontage. There is a single neighbouring dwelling located to the north of the site called Averys and also a number of disused industrial units.

1.2 During the course of the application and following consultation with Highway Authority, amended plans were submitted to relocate the access 18 metres to the north the existing access. The two existing buildings on site are to be converted, with an additional two buildings added. Of the two existing buildings, Block A is a traditional small industrial building measuring approximately 12.5 metres wide, by 9.5 metres deep by 4.2 metres high with a shallow pitched roof. It is proposed that a small corner is infilled to match the existing. The second existing building is Block B which is located approximately 7.5 metres to the west of Block A. It is approximately 18.5 metres wide by 6 metres deep by 3 metres high with a pitched roof. From a site inspection the building appeared to be in a very poor state of repair and largely open fronted. Additional information submitted suggests that the frame of the building will be maintained and re-clad and re-roofed.

1.3 The first new building, Block E, would be located in-between Blocks A & B and run parallel to the northern boundary of the site. It would measure approximately 7.5 metres wide by 6 metres deep by 3.1 metres high with a pitched roof. It would be clad to match the re-clad Block B. The second new building, Block F, would adjoin the southern end of Block A. It would measure approximately 12 metres wide by 6 metres deep by 3.9 metres high with a pitched roof. It would have a brick stock plinth and the have wooden cladding to also match Block A.

1.4 Additional information submitted by the applicant states that the proposed business is currently located in Isfield having been established ten years ago. The business would not only restore vintage cars but also 'R & R taxis' and funeral cars. Other servicing would be provided to two funeral limousines and hearses, two school mini-buses and executive hire vehicles. It is proposed that the business would operate from 8 am till 5pm on weekdays and from 8am till 1pm on Saturdays.

2. RELEVANT POLICIES

LDLP: – ST03 – Design, Form and Setting of Development

LDLP: – ST13 – Noise and Development

LDLP: – RES06 – New development in the Countryside

LDLP: – E01 – Planning for Employment

LDLP: – E09 – Re-use of Rural Buildings

LDLP: – CT01 – Planning Boundary and Countryside Policy

3. PLANNING HISTORY

LW/90/1648 - Single storey granny flat at side and single storey rear extension. - **Approved**

LW/07/0402 - Retention of a directional sign & two hanging signs (both non-illuminated) – **Awaiting decision**

LW/07/0893 - Erection of four domestic garages with an Annex above to provide a residential unit ancillary to the existing dwelling - **Withdrawn**

LW/07/0896 - Erection of three prefabricated timber stables, tack room and formation of sand school with post and rail fencing - **Approved**

4. REPRESENTATIONS FROM STANDARD CONSULTEES

Main Town Or Parish Council – “This application represents a change of use from the base for a family-run landscape contractors and dog breeding business, in largely temporary buildings and with no other employees, to an engineering business operating on a substantial scale and with substantial new purpose-built industrial units and (we were told by the applicant's agent at our meeting) nine employees.

Ringmer has an employment policy (adopted 2006), that seeks to develop and expand the number and quality of employment opportunities at suitable sites within the parish. The business for which this application is made is exactly the sort of business that we would to attract. We have identified a number of suitable employment sites in Ringmer, including sites which offer opportunities for significant expansion, one of which directly adjoins this site. The requirements for such sites are that they should be well screened, should not cause nuisance to neighbours and should have appropriate access to the parish road network.

We considered but rejected inclusion of this site, prior to the application for a number of reasons, including highway concerns and impact on neighbouring property, Averys.

We would however very much wish to encourage this business to locate to suitable premises in Ringmer, and we would be minded to extend the

adjoining commercial site at Averys from the site if (a) a new and better access were provided from the site to the A26 and (b) the amenities of occupiers of the bungalow at Averys were protected.”

Environmental Health – None received.

ESCC Highways – Following amended plans to alter the access the Highway objection was removed. Conditions suggested.

5. REPRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS

5.1 None received.

6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 It is considered that the principal planning issues relevant to the determination of this application are: location, impact on the countryside, impact on residential amenities and policy.

6.2 The site is located outside the Ringmer Planning Boundary where there is a presumption against new development. Policy E1 - Planning for Employment, states that new industrial uses are only acceptable if: (a) they are on specifically allocated sites; (b) on sites within planning boundaries which have existing industrial uses, or (c) on unidentified sites within planning boundaries. Policy CT1 - Planning Boundaries & Key Countryside Policy, further supports this by stating that development will be contained within planning boundaries. The site is not allocated, the existing nursery business has a ‘sui generis’ use and the site is outside the planning boundary. It is therefore considered that any new industrial or commercial buildings would be contrary to Policies E1 & CT1.

6.3 It is further considered that the proposed site is not an appropriate location for a car restoration and servicing business. A countryside location is not required for a car restoration and vehicle servicing business and it does not qualify as an essential service for which a rural location is required. The development is also not considered ‘minor’ and therefore does not accord with Policy CT1. The activity would be better suited to an urban area and not a semi-rural location outside the planning boundary.

6.4 Of the two existing structures on site, Block A & B, only Block A is capable of conversion which would adhere with Policy E9 - Re-use of Rural Buildings. Policy E9 states that conversions of existing buildings for commercial uses are only acceptable if (a) the building is of permanent and substantial construction and (d) they are capable of conversion without major reconstruction. Block B is of a very poor quality and not capable of conversion without considerable reconstruction. The building is largely open fronted and needs to be entirely re-clad and re-roofed. It is considered that this would be tantamount to a re-build and not conversion and is thus contrary to Policy E9.

6.5 At the closest point the new business would be located approximately 23.5 metres east of the neighbouring property Averys. Although there is tree and hedge boundary screening between the two sites, it is considered that the new activities are likely to have a detrimental impact on residential amenities. Additional information submitted by the applicant suggests that a number of industrial tools are to be used on site including: sand blaster, lathe, milling machine and belt sander. This is likely to have a detrimental impact on Averys through undue noise nuisance in what is a semi-rural location. Policy ST3 - Design, Form & Setting of Development, states that conversions should respect neighbouring amenities in terms of noise, while ST13 - Noise & Development, furthers this stating: planning permission will not be granted for development which results in people being exposed to unreasonable levels of noise.

6.6 Also submitted as additional information during the course of the application was a copy of Ringmer Parish Council's employment strategy, adopted in 2006. The Parish Council have stated in their comments that subject to safe access and no impact on the neighbouring property's amenities they would consider the Merlins site for inclusion in their employment strategy as they are eager to encourage new jobs to the Parish. Although this has been duly noted the site is not currently allocated within the employment strategy and does not accord with Local Plan Policy, which is the adopted planning policy document for the District. Any potential employment benefits are outweighed by the above considerations.

7. RECOMMENDATION

That the application is refused.

Reason(s) for Refusal:

1. The car restoration and servicing business, by virtue of its countryside location outside of the planning boundary, non-rural appearance, and increased commercial activity, will have a detrimental impact on the countryside location contrary to Policies ST3, E1 & CT1 of the Lewes District Local Plan.

2. The site does not lie within the Ringmer Planning Boundary as defined in the adopted Lewes District Local Plan. The proposal will result in new buildings and uses in the countryside unrelated to the essential needs of agriculture and is therefore contrary to Policy S10 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011 and Policies ST3, E1 and CT1 of the Lewes District Local Plan.

3. The proposal would involve major reconstruction of the building identified as Block B on Block Plan 333.02, dated 06.07, which is not capable of conversion without a substantial alterations, contrary to Policy S10 (b) (i) of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011 & Policies E9, ST3 & CT1 of the Lewes District Local Plan.

4. The proposed development would have a detrimental impact on residential amenities at the adjacent property known as Averys through an intensification of uses on site resulting in greater levels of noise disturbance, contrary to Policies ST3 & ST13 of the Lewes District Local Plan.

This decision is based on the following submitted plans/documents:

<u>PLAN TYPE</u>	<u>DATE RECEIVED</u>	<u>REFERENCE</u>
Design & Access Statement	5 July 2007	
Location Plan	24 July 2007	1:1250
Block Plans	24 July 2007	333.02
Proposed Floor Plans	5 July 2007	333.03
Proposed Elevations	5 July 2007	333.04
Planning Layout	24 July 2007	333.09
Photographs	5 July 2007	1
Photographs	5 July 2007	2
Photographs	5 July 2007	3
Photographs	5 July 2007	4