

Development Control Board Visiting Group Site Visit		Date: 5 January 2017
Application No:	16/01409/FUL	Ward: Eastbrook
Reason for Referral to DCB as set out in Part 2, Chapter 9 of the Council Constitution	The previously approved application to use the Farmhouse as an events venue was determined by Members. As such, any subsequent application to vary the conditions imposed by Members should be subject to their agreement.	
Address:	Farmhouse Venue, Dagenham Road, Dagenham	
Development:	Application for removal of conditions following grant of planning permission: Removal of conditions 9 and 11 of 14/01256/FUL to allow temporary buildings and structures e.g. marquees to be erected on site and to remove limit on number of attendees.	
Applicant:	Mr G A Chowdhury	
Contact Officer Simon Bullock	Title: Principal Development Management Officer	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8227 3803 E-mail: simin.bullock@lbbd.gov.uk
Summary:		
<p>The Farmhouse Venue (formerly Farmhouse Tavern) has planning permission for use as an events venue subject to conditions restricting the number of guests attending seated events, and the erection of marquees or other structures within the curtilage of the building.</p> <p>The purpose of conditions 9 and 11 of the existing permission is to limit traffic generation in view of the access arrangements and limited on-site parking capacity, and to prevent harm to the visual amenity and openness of the Green Belt.</p> <p>The applicant seeks the deletion of these conditions in order to enable the operation of the venue without any restriction on the number of attendees and to enable the use of marquees.</p> <p>The capacity of the building alone is approximately 180 for seated events, and therefore the installation of a marquee within the curtilage of the site is required in order to provide sufficient seating capacity for larger events which the applicant wishes to accommodate.</p> <p>The Council's constitution states that one of the functions of the Development Control Board is to appoint at the commencement of each municipal year a Visiting Group to undertake inspections of buildings and sites as directed by the Board and to make recommendations to the Board.</p> <p>Members agreed at the Board meeting held on 12 December 2016 that it would be beneficial for the Visiting Group of the Development Control Board to undertake a site visit in respect of the application and to report back to a forthcoming Development</p>		

1. Introduction and Description of Development

- 1.1 The Farmhouse Venue, formerly the Farmhouse Tavern, is located at the junction of Dagenham Road and The Chase. It backs onto Eastbrookend Country Park and is situated within the Green Belt.
- 1.2 The building is a locally listed former public house and is now in use as a function venue following the grant of planning permission for this change of use by the Development Control Board in 2015.
- 1.3 Officers recommended refusal of the above application on the grounds of the loss of the public house, harm to highway safety due to concentrated traffic movements at the site entrance, and the impact of overspill parking.
- 1.4 Members considered that the development would be acceptable and therefore granted planning permission, but sought to limit the impact of the development by imposing conditions including conditions 9 and 11 which the current application seeks to delete.

- 1.5 Condition 9 states:

No temporary buildings, marquees, tents, other structures, or external seating shall be utilised at the site unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order prevent harm to visual amenity and the openness of the Green Belt and to prevent an increase in venue capacity resulting in additional traffic and parking demand and in accordance with policy CM3 of the Core Strategy and policies BR10 and BP11 of the Borough Wide Policies Development Plan Document.

- 1.6 Condition 11 states:

A maximum of 180 seats shall be in use by patrons of the venue at any one time.

Reason: In order to limit venue capacity in view of the limited parking availability and to minimise on street parking and in accordance with policy BR10 of the Borough Wide Policies Development Plan Document.

- 1.7 The effect of the proposed deletion of the conditions would be that there would be no restriction on the erection of temporary marquees or other structures within the curtilage of the site, and there would be no restriction on the number of guests attending.

2. Background

- 2.1 The following planning applications have been submitted since 2011 and are relevant to the current proposal.

- 2.2 11/00966/FUL - Erection of pavilion within public house garden and erection of ramp to front entrance and side staircase extension to the Farmhouse Tavern in connection with use of the premises for wedding and other events, and associated car parking and boundary fencing and gates; REFUSED AND DISMISSED ON APPEAL.
- 2.3 The above application followed the unauthorised erection of the pavilion though the use did not commence. An enforcement notice was issued and a subsequent appeal was dismissed. The notice requiring removal of the pavilion and associated fencing was then complied with.
- 2.4 13/00333/FUL - Change of use to function venue with ancillary restaurant use; REFUSED.
- 2.5 14/01256/FUL - Change of use to function venue with ancillary restaurant use and associated erection of single storey side extension and ramp to provide wheelchair access and accessible toilet; PERMITTED.
- 2.6 The latter case is the planning permission referred to above under which the business is now operating.

3. Consultations

Adjoining occupiers

- 3.1 Consultation letters were sent to 11 local residents. The site has no immediate neighbours but letters were sent to those who had submitted comments in respect of the previous planning application that granted consent for the use.
- 3.2 In response four letters were received objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:
- Insufficient parking onsite has resulted in overspill parking on pavements during events
 - On 11 June 2016 cars parked on The Chase restricted two way traffic movements resulting in vehicles needing to reverse in order to pass oncoming traffic
 - If restrictions are removed it could result in a marquee at the site becoming a permanent feature (the marquees already take two to three days to erect and two days to dismantle)
 - The original application proposed an ancillary restaurant that has never materialised so the site does not serve local residents other than those wishing to book private parties
 - There have been no changes in the circumstances that resulted in the restrictions being imposed
 - Use of marquees may result in additional noise nuisance to users of the Country Park and would harm its tranquillity
 - A marquee is large and visually intrusive
 - The proposal would reverse the reasonable restrictions that were imposed by the Council following a public debate

3.3 Councillor McCarthy a ward Member for Eastbrook also submitted comments on the application.

3.4 He states that he opposes the application, and that previous events have caused traffic congestion in The Chase causing inconvenience to users of the Country Park and anglers using White Hart Lakes adjacent to The Chase. He also states that there have been incidents of conflicts arising between guests at the Farmhouse Venue and regular users of the park and angling facilities.

4. Local Finance Considerations

4.1 None.

5. Further information

5.1 The purpose of this report is not to set out a recommendation or provide an analysis of the proposed development but to provide Members with information about the proposal.

5.2 The key issues are considered to be the impacts on the Green Belt, the locally listed Farmhouse building, the quiet enjoyment of the Country Park by visitors and on highway safety.

5.3 The proposed removal of the condition restricting marquees has the potential to result in the semi-permanent retention of marquees within the grounds of the site. It is, however, considered that a permanent structure would require a separate grant of planning permission as it would constitute new development. The applicant has previously applied on a number of occasions for consent to erect a marquee for individual events under the current condition.

5.4 The retention of a marquee at the site would take on the character of a permanent development if it is not periodically dismantled. Even if marquees are only erected occasionally when they are up they will have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt for the period of installation.

5.5 The National Planning Policy Framework defines such development within the Green Belt as inappropriate, and states that such proposals should be refused permission unless there are very special circumstances where the harm caused by inappropriateness together with any other harm is clearly outweighed by other circumstances.

5.6 With regard to transport considerations since the submission of the application the applicant has submitted some additional information in support in the form of some travel surveys of guests attending the venue.

5.7 These relate to four marquee events that took place at the venue between April and June 2016 and record all vehicles arriving at the site including those dropping off passengers, and the number of guests arriving within each vehicle.

5.8 The events took place on 2 April, 10 April, 7 May, and 11 June.

- 5.9 The result in order of the scale of the events starting with the smallest are as follows.
- 5.10 At a 248 guest event 51 cars or minibuses were parked at the site.
- 5.11 During a 334 guest event 77 cars or minibuses were parked at the site.
- 5.12 At an event attending by 335 guests 50 cars were parked on site.
- 5.13 At the largest event with 384 guests attending 18 cars and minibuses, 2 motorcycles and 5 coaches were parked on site.
- 5.14 The applicant has stated that the latter event was a community celebration of the Queen's 90th birthday and was attended by many residents living within walking distance of the site, plus several groups arriving by coach, resulting in a different travel pattern to the other events which it is understood were weddings.
- 5.15 Whilst the majority of guests arrive in family groups by car, a proportion arrive by minicab thereby not contributing to parking demand.
- 5.16 The number of parking spaces on site is 59 therefore if this data is accepted only one of the events has resulted in an overflow of parking from the site. In addition, the applicant has stated that it is possible to double park cars on site, since for most events the majority of attendees will be departing at approximately the same time. This has the effect of boosting the parking capacity of the site whilst such double parking takes place.

Conclusion

- 5.17 Members agreed at the Board meeting held on 12 December 2016 that it would be beneficial, before reaching a decision on the proposal, for the Visiting Panel to attend the site in order to view the access and parking arrangements and to view the site from the adjoining Country Park in order to better appreciate the highway, heritage and Green Belt considerations.