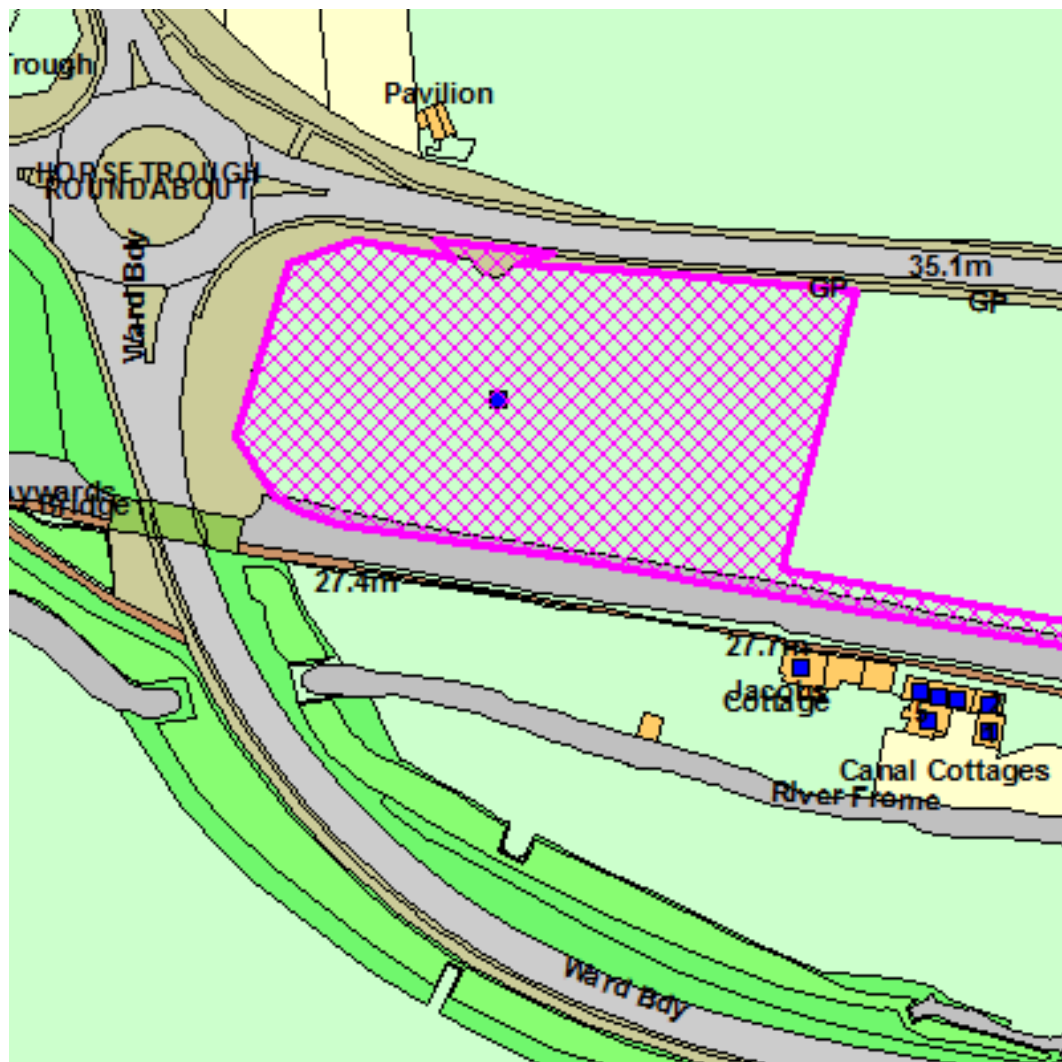




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Item No:	02
Application No.	S.19/1905/FUL
Site No.	
Site Address	Land Near Horsetrough Roundabout, Ebley Road, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire
Town/Parish	Stonehouse Town Council
Grid Reference	381068,204730
Application Type	Full Planning Application
Proposal	Erection of Auction Showroom (Sui Generis) along with associated parking and landscaping. Resubmission of S.18/0105/FUL
Recommendation	Refusal
Call in Request	Stonehouse Town Council





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Applicant's Details	Stroud Auctions Ltd C/O AC Planning Solutions Ltd, 12 Marling Crescent, Paganhill, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 4LB
Agent's Details	AC Planning Solutions Ltd 12 Marling Crescent, Paganhill, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 4LB
Case Officer	John Chaplin
Application Validated	08.10.2019
CONSULTEES	
Comments Received	Stonehouse Town Council Contaminated Land Officer (E) SDC Water Resources Engineer Canal Team (E) Development Coordination (E) Environmental Health (E) Arboricultural Officer (E) Natural England (E) Flood Resilience Land Drainage Archaeology Dept (E)
Constraints	Adjoining Canal Affecting the Setting of a Cons Area Consult area Conservation Area Flood Zone 2 Flood Zone 3 Key Wildlife Sites - Polygons Within 50m of Listed Building Neighbourhood Plan Stonehouse Town Council SAC SPA 7700m buffer Settlement Boundaries (LP) Village Design Statement
OFFICER'S REPORT	

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Archaeology and Heritage Assets
- Landscape impact
- Ecology
- Flood risk
- Highways
- Residential Amenity
- Contaminated land
- Planning Balance



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DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is a green field site located adjacent to the Canal and the Horsetrough Roundabout at Stonehouse. The field has mature boundary treatment with hedging and trees along the road and canal boundaries. An existing field access is provided on to the B4008. The site is located within the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area and parts in Flood Zone 2. The site is located in an open countryside being outside of any defined settlement limit.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the erection of a new build two storey auction building. This includes 2 large sales halls, office and staff accommodation space along with associated 70 space car parking and landscaping. A similar application was refused in 2018 (S.18/0105/FUL).

REVISED DETAILS

Revised and additional drainage information received.

Revised site plan (1232-05 N) received on the 18 November 2019.

Updated Tree report and tree protection plan 27 January 2020.

MATERIALS

Roof: Eternit Farmscape - anthracite

Walls: Fair faced concrete block, Vertical timber boarding and vertical 'hit and miss' timber boarding

Fenestration: Dark grey aluminium frames, with non-reflective glazing

REPRESENTATIONS

Statutory Consultees:

Stonehouse Town Council's Environment Committee agreed at a meeting of 25 November 2019 to support planning application 19/1905/FUL and to request that it is called in to the Development Control Committee. Please see the full response below:

SUPPORT AND REQUEST CALL IN: The following exceptional circumstances and overriding benefits apply to this application and are justifications to both support the application and request that it is called in for consideration by the Development Control Committee.

a) The application fits well with most of the Strategic Objectives of the current Local Plan (SDC Local Plan November 2015 para 2.6).

SO2 Local Economy and Jobs: The proposed development will enhance the local economy and provide jobs as well as encouraging visitors to the auction site itself and the enhanced canal area proposed as a benefit of the development. The nature of the applicant's business means that a considerable proportion of the turnover is returned to local people selling items at auction. We note that the application has considerable support from Stonehouse businesses.

SO3 Town Centres and Rural Hinterland: It is located close to Stonehouse Town Centre and the canal, providing a potential link site which may encourage visitors to the canal and Stroud Auctions to use town centre facilities.

SO4 Transport and Travel: The site is close to good public transport links including a major cycle path, bus routes and Stonehouse Station.



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SO5 Climate Change: The design makes some attempt to minimise its carbon footprint by including PV panels and the provision of electric car charging points in car parks.

SO6 Our District's Distinctive Qualities: The buildings are designed to blend in by having a low roof line and using timber, brick and glazing. The design does not dominate the landscape. The smaller scale business use fits with the original ethos of the canal as a place of work and would therefore not be detrimental to the rural and industrial character of the site.

b) Canal restoration and improving links between the canal and town centre The applicant has worked closely with Stroud Valleys Canal Company and will contribute towards restoration and improvement work close to the site and will allow some use of their car parking and public access to the moorings across their land. They have also worked with the Boatmobility project and will either carry out works or make a contribution to the latter. The proposed development fits with an aim of ensuring that the Cotswolds Canals restoration plays a positive role in the District (SDC Local Plan, Nov 2015, paras 89-92). The development would also "improve physical accessibility between canal and town centre" (SDC Local Plan Nov 2015, para 3.17/5), one of the guiding principles for development in the Stonehouse cluster.

c) The proposed development meets some of the requirements of CP11: New Employment Development. It appears to be of a type and scale of activity that does not harm the character, appearance or environment of the site or its surroundings or to the amenity of occupiers of nearby Properties. It is readily accessible by public transport, bicycle and foot. It has a layout, access, parking, landscaping and facilities that are appropriate to the site and its surroundings. There is some use of sustainable construction techniques and provision for renewable or low carbon energy sources in association with the proposed development.

d) An argument could be made that it meets the requirement of CP15: A quality living and working countryside, which is concerned with development outside settlement boundaries, in that the proposal would "support the rural economy" by providing employment and encouraging visitors to the area. The proposed access to the canal and additional moorings etc will "promote public enjoyment of the countryside". The developer has made some effort to find an alternative site with no success.

GCC Archaeology

Thank you for consulting me concerning the above planning application. I wish to make the following observations regarding the archaeological implications of this scheme. I advise that I have checked the proposed development area against the County Historic Environment Record and there is no archaeology known at this location. In my view there is a low risk that this development proposal will have any adverse impact on archaeological remains. I therefore recommend that no archaeological investigation or recording need be undertaken in connection with this scheme. I have no further observations.



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GCC Highways:

I recommend that no highway objection be raised subject to the following condition(s) being attached to any permission granted:-

1. Prior to commencement of any highway works the subject of any ensuing S38 Adoption Agreements / S278 Highway Works Agreement for the site, the Applicant is required to establish and maintain, and keep maintained for the duration of those highway works, a 'Residents Liaison Group' ("RLG") to comprise of one representative each from:

- The Applicant/Developer
- The Council as LHA
- The Local Council as LPA, and
- Local Residents representative

Reason:- To reduce the potential impact on the public highway in accordance with paragraphs 108 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. The vehicular access hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the existing roadside frontage boundaries have been set back to provide visibility splays extending from a point 2.4m back along the centre of the access measured from the public road carriageway edge (the X point) to a point on the nearer carriageway edge of the public road 54m distant in both directions (the Y points). The area between those splays and the carriageway shall be reduced in level and thereafter maintained so as to provide clear visibility between 1.05m and 2.0m at the X point and between 0.26m and 2.0m at the Y point above the adjacent carriageway level.

Reason:- To reduce potential highway impact by ensuring that adequate visibility is provided and maintained and to ensure that a safe, suitable and secure means of access for all people that minimises the conflict between traffic and cyclists and pedestrians is provided in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. The vehicular access shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with the submitted plan drawing no. 1232/05M, with the area of driveway within at least 10.0m of the carriageway edge of the public road surfaced in bound material, and shall be maintained thereafter.

Reason: - To reduce potential highway impact by ensuring that a safe and secure access is laid out and constructed that minimises the conflict between traffic and cyclists and pedestrians in accordance with paragraph 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. The building hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the vehicular access, pedestrian footways, parking and turning and loading/unloading facilities have been provided in accordance with the submitted plan drawing no. 1232/05M, and those facilities shall be maintained available for those purposes thereafter.

Reason:- To ensure that a safe, suitable and secure means of access for all people that minimises the conflict between traffic and cyclists and pedestrians is provided in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.



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5. No development shall commence on site until a scheme has been submitted for the provision of fire hydrants for the benefit of the commercial development in a location agreed with the Council and should meet the requirements of Building Regulations Approved Document B Volume 2 Sections 15 & 16 (Fire Hydrants/Water Supplies and Vehicle Access). The commercial development buildings shall not be occupied until the hydrants have been provided to the satisfaction of the Council.

Reason: To ensure adequate water infrastructure provision is made on site for the local fire service to tackle any property fire.

6. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall:

- i. specify the type and number of vehicles;
- ii. provide for the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- iii. provide for the loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- iv. provide for the storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- v. provide for wheel washing facilities;
- vi. specify the intended hours of construction operations;
- vii. measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction
- viii. provide annotated plan demonstrating all of the above

Reason: To reduce the potential impact on the public highway and accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies in accordance paragraph 108 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the cycle storage facilities have been made available for use in accordance with the submitted plan ref: 1232/05M, and those facilities shall be maintained for the duration of the development.

Reason:- To give priority to cycle movements by ensuring that adequate cycle parking is provided, to promote cycle use and to ensure that the appropriate opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up in accordance with paragraph 108 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. Prior to occupation of the proposed development hereby permitted details of the proposed arrangements for future management and maintenance of the proposed streets within the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The streets shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the approved management and maintenance details until such time as either a dedication agreement has been entered into or a private management and maintenance company has been established.

Reason: To ensure that safe, suitable and secure access is achieved and maintained for all people that minimises the scope for conflict between traffic and cyclists and pedestrians in accordance with paragraph 108 and 110 the National Planning Policy Framework Framework and to establish and maintain a strong sense of place to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit as required by paragraph 127 of the Framework.



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9. Prior to the occupation of the building(s) hereby permitted, until 2% of the total proposed car parking spaces shall be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

Reason:- To ensure that the development incorporates facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in accordance with paragraph 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives:

1. GCC currently has no technical specification for shared space. This is an adoption matter to which GCC are not obliged to adopt any highway. GCC will only adopt roads that meet our published technical specification.

2. The proposed development will involve works to be carried out on the public highway and the Applicant/Developer is required to enter into a legally binding Highway Works Agreement (including an appropriate bond) with the County Council before commencing those works.

Natural England:

Natural England has no comments to make on this application.

Natural England has not assessed this application for impacts on protected species. Natural England has published Standing Advice which you can use to assess impacts on protected species or you may wish to consult your own ecology services for advice.

Natural England and the Forestry Commission have also published standing advice on ancient woodland and veteran trees which you can use to assess any impacts on ancient woodland.

For applications within or near the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) we recommend you seek the advice of the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

The lack of comment from Natural England does not imply that there are no impacts on the natural environment, but only that the application is not likely to result in significant impacts on statutory designated nature conservation sites or landscapes. It is for the local planning authority to determine whether or not this application is consistent with national and local policies on the natural environment. Other bodies and individuals may be able to provide information and advice on the environmental value of this site and the impacts of the proposal to assist the decision making process. We advise LPAs to obtain specialist ecological or other environmental advice when determining the environmental impacts of development.

We recommend referring to our SSSI Impact Risk Zones (available on Magic and as a downloadable dataset) prior to consultation with Natural England. Further guidance on when to consult Natural England on planning and development proposals is available on gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-planning-authorities-getenvironmental-advice>

SDC Tree Officer

The tree protection plan needs to be dimensioned so the fencing and ground protection can be accurately set out.



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SDC Biodiversity:

After considering the submitted ecological surveys and proposed site plans my comments are as follows:

During assessment of the previous application the Biodiversity Team had concerns that the proposed removal of trees and vegetation along the canal edge and along the boundary of the site near the Horsetrough roundabout would result in negative impacts to the sites habitat connectivity and ultimately species such as bats using the canal as a navigation route. The Biodiversity Team suggested that the scheme should aim to accommodate existing trees along the canal to in order to retain the wildlife corridor and the ecological network to enable the proposed development be considered acceptable in accordance with Local Plan Policy ES6, and the proposals were considered likely to result in a net loss in biodiversity and as such the proposals would not have been considered to accord with the July 2018, NPPF, paragraph 170 and 174.

The revised scheme has considered comments made by the Biodiversity Team and as such has amended the scheme. The revised scheme will look to retain the majority of tree cover along the canal corridor and the section of the site adjacent to the roundabout. The proposed scheme subject to the above conditions is considered acceptable in accordance with paragraph 170 and 174 of the NPPF and Local Plan Policy ES6.

Acceptable subject to the following conditions:

No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) until a construction environmental management plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP shall include the following:

- Methods and Measures that will be taken to safeguard and mitigate any identified impacts to water-voles on the canal bank; the CEMP will identify clear zones where water-voles have the potential to impacted.
- Methods and Timings for the removal of vegetation likely to support breeding birds and common reptile species
- Details of site fencing.
- Details of site lighting.
- The role and responsibilities of the onsite ecological clerk of works ECOW or similarly competent person.

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that protected and priority species and priority habitats are safeguarded in accordance with The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended, The Hedgerow Regulations 1997, Circular 06/2005, the National Planning Policy Framework (in particular section 11), and Policy ES6 of the Stroud District Local Plan 2015, and in order for the Council to comply with Part 3 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.



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Prior to the commencement of development a lighting design strategy for biodiversity shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy will;

- identify the areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for foraging bats;
- show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their commuter route.

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Reason: To maintain dark corridors for nocturnal wildlife and in accordance with Local Plan Policy ES6.

An ecological design strategy (EDS) shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by the local planning authority addressing mitigation and enhancement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The EDS shall include the following:

- Full details of hedgerows to be retained and protected during construction;
- Full details of enhanced bat commuting corridors that will aim to provide connecting unlit habitat between identified/ newly constructed bat roosts and the wider landscape beyond the identified red line area of the development footprint;
- Details of planting, such as hedgerows, wildflower planting and establishment;
- Type and source of materials to be used where appropriate, e.g. native species of local provenance;
- Details for the erection of bird boxes;
- Details of remedial measures if planting fails;
- Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance.
-

The approved EDS shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect and enhance the site for biodiversity in accordance with paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy ES6 of the Stroud District Local Plan 2015 and in order for the Council to comply with Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

A landscape and ecological management plan (LEMP) shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the local planning authority to commencement of the development. The content of the LEMP shall include the following:

- Description and evaluation of the features to be managed.
- Aims and objectives of management
- Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives
- Prescription for management actions



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- Preparation of work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a 25 year period)
- Details of body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan.
- Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The LEMP shall include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery. The plan shall also set out how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect and enhance the site for biodiversity in accordance with paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy ES6 of the Stroud District Local Plan 2015 and in order for the Council to comply with Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

SDC Environmental Health

With respect to this application, I would recommend that any consent should have the following conditions and informative applied:-

Conditions:

1. No construction site machinery or plant shall be operated, no process shall be carried out and no construction-related deliveries taken at or dispatched from the site except between the hours 08:00 and 18:00 on Mondays to Fridays, between 08:00 and 13:00 on Saturdays and not at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

2. The proposed opening hours should be conditioned.

Burning Informative:

The applicant should take all relevant precautions to minimise the potential for disturbance to neighbouring residents in terms of smoke/fumes and odour during the construction phases of the development by not burning materials on site. It should also be noted that the burning of materials that give rise to dark smoke or the burning of trade waste associated with the development, are immediate offences, actionable via the Local Authority and Environment Agency respectively. Furthermore, the granting of this planning permission does not indemnify against statutory nuisance action being taken should substantiated smoke or fume complaints be received.

SDC Senior Contaminated Land Officer

Thank you for consulting me on the above application. I have no comments.



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SDC Water Resources Engineer:

I have reviewed the above and object to the application in principle; please see my comments as follows:

The applicant proposes to discharge into the canal via a headwall, however no permission has been submitted with the letter from SVCC. This means that in effect the applicant does not have a viable scheme.

The applicant has not included any drainage proposals (other than to say it will be permeable) for the car park to the east of the site, calling into question whether or not the applicant has the correct figures regarding their runoff and storage calculations. Furthermore there are no proposed methods for cleansing this water and as such this site would contribute hydrocarbon pollution to the groundwater. Some areas of the northern car park are not drained either.

I cannot see that infiltration is a viable option for this site, and therefore the permeable car park is unlikely to function without additional drainage. Furthermore I have not seen that any infiltration testing has been submitted to support this method of discharge.

The applicant has proposed to sink the building below the existing ground level however they have not proposed drainage for this area, all that is proposed is the downpipes. If this area is not drained the site will flood in the 3%AEP and this will be in contradiction to the NPPF and Stroud Local Plan ES3&4. Furthermore I cannot see that the levels will work to enable an outfall from the sunken building to the canal - is the canal higher than the building?

The drainage plan contradicts the flood risk assessment, which states that the site will infiltrate entirely, however the submitted plan shows a mixed solution which (as shown above) is not anticipated to work.

The site is within the modelled flood zone 2, and with the site's level reduction this may put the site at additional risk during these events.

GCC Local Lead Flood Authority:

The LLFA is a statutory consultee for surface water flood risk and management for major planning applications and has made the following observations and recommendation.

Flood Risk

The applicant has supplied a Flood Risk Assessment (5th September 2019), which shows that the southern portion of the site is in flood zone 2. The applicant has positioned the auction hall outside of this zone, reducing the risk of it flooding. The Risk of Flooding from Surface Water mapping from the Environment Agency, was not included in the Flood Risk Assessment but shows that the site is at low risk.



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Surface water management

Discharge strategy:

There is some inconsistency in information submitted by the applicant. The Application Form and Flood Risk Assessment mention the site will be drained via soakaways, whereas the proposed site plan (Drawing no.: "1232/05 M") suggests they will discharge surface water into the canal at the southern boundary of the site. No infiltration tests have been provided so I presume the applicant is proposing the latter. This strategy is acceptable in principle considering the site is on Blue Lias Clay, making infiltration unlikely, and given the proximity of the site to the canal, however, there doesn't appear to be any agreement for the discharge or construction of the headwall on the canal.

Without this agreement, this discharge strategy is not considered a viable option.

Discharge rates:

The applicant is proposing to discharge at a maximum rate of 2.2l/s which approximately equals the greenfield runoff rate for QBar. This is also their strategy for volume control as well.

Drainage strategy and indicative plan

Assuming drawing "1232/05 M" is the proposed strategy, the applicant will be storing surface water from the building and access road in an underground tank. This provides the Water Quantity aspect of SuDS but nothing on Amenity or Biodiversity. Water Quality will be dealt with through gully pots and a petrol interceptor.

The location and depth of the underground tank is concerning. Drawing "1232/05 M" suggests the outfall of the tank will be at least 1.2m deep and, given its proximity to the canal, I am concerned about its ability to drain effectively. Can the applicant provide levels for the tank compared to the water level in the canal as well evidence that it will be able to function properly? Also, is installing an underground storage tank so close to the bank of the canal safe? I'm concerned that it could put the structural integrity of the canal in jeopardy.

There are also concerns over the strategy for the car park. The applicant is proposing to use permeable paving, which is OK in principle, however, they are not connecting it to the rest of the drainage network and are relying on infiltration. Given the geology is clay, surface water is not likely to infiltrate into the ground very readily and could accumulate on the surface. The Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage, which the LLFA uses as guidance to assess drainage strategies, states there should be no flooding on site in a 1 in 30 year rainfall event. From what the applicant has provided, this cannot be guaranteed. The drainage network can be designed to meet these criteria in detailed design but the car park, if left as it is, cannot be.

Climate change

The applicant is using 20% for climate change. While they have used this correctly to calculate the storage volume, the LLFA would prefer to see 40% be used. This will likely mean slightly larger storage tank.

Exceedance flow paths

The applicant hasn't provided a specific plan showing where surface water will flow in events that exceed the design of the drainage network or a topographical survey, however, given the general slope of the land is towards the canal, it should be possible to direct exceedance flows so they do not risk flooding the building.



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LLFA Recommendation

The LLFA recommends an objection to the proposal. The applicant has not demonstrated that they have a viable discharge strategy or that the site meets the Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage. There are concerns over its ability to discharge effectively into the canal.

Revised GCC as LLFA:

To be reported.

SDC Specialist Conservation Officer:

Section 72 of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Section 66(1) of the Act requires that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest, and in particular, listed buildings.

These requirements extend to all powers under the Planning Acts, including the Stroud District Council Local Plan, Adopted 2015, Delivery Policy ES10 and Paragraphs 126-141 of the NPPF.

Historic England's Note 3 (the Setting of Heritage Assets) states that, 'settings of heritage assets which closely resemble the setting in which the asset was constructed are likely to contribute to significance.' The Framework (NPPF) defines the setting of a heritage asset as the surroundings in which it is experienced. The extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset; may affect the ability to appreciate that significance; or, may be neutral. Historic England guidance indicates that setting embraces all of the surroundings from which an asset can be experienced, or that can be experienced from or within the asset. Setting does not have a fixed boundary and cannot be defined, in perpetuity, as a spatially bounded area, or as lying within a set distance of a heritage asset. Indeed, the guidance notes that the construction of a distant but high building may extend what might previously have been understood to comprise setting.

The site lies within the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA). The Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA) was conceived as a linear Conservation Area, following the valleys of the River Frome and the Nailsworth Stream, extending to the east, west and south of Stroud. In addition to these watercourses, the course of the IHCA follows the various transport infrastructures, which developed over the 18th and 19th centuries. These include the Stroudwater Canals, which were the 'arteries' of the locality and represented a new era in the industrial basis of the Stroud Valleys.

The IHCA was designed to preserve not only the 'set pieces' of the significant mill sites, but also the infrastructure and the context of Stroud's industrial legacy. The form, the patterns of development and settlement, and the transport links embody the social, economic and cultural history of the Valleys; because of this, the IHCA represents the preservation of more than just the buildings.



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In 2008, the Council undertook an appraisal of the IHCA; in order to facilitate this, several distinct 'character parts' along the length of the IHCA were identified. Following the appraisal, policies were drawn up to ensure that any development within the IHCA would be appropriate in each of the character parts. These policies were adopted as a supplementary planning document, and are therefore a material consideration. The relevant policies in the SPD are readily apparent and have been picked up in the applicant's heritage appraisal; therefore I will not repeat them here.

It is a misapprehension that the IHCA is entirely industrial. The proposed development site is in the 'Green Corridor: Rural Frome Vale' character part; as its name suggests, this part of the IHCA is overwhelmingly rural, with only sporadic, small scale development related to former mills and canal infrastructure. Whilst in places it is extremely expansive, in other places it appears as surviving pockets of undeveloped land. These open spaces are hugely important in balancing the built form of the conservation area.

The importance of gaps in development was explicitly stated in the Council's Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA) Appraisal:

'Gaps between mills, industrial groups and clusters of settlement are particularly crucial to the special interest and appearance of this linear conservation area since, by its nature, much of its character is perceived in transit- passing through the area or along transport routes.'

The nearby settlement of Ryeford contains listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets that are highly typical of the canal and mill-related development that has occurred within the IHCA: these tend, historically, to be relatively isolated, located at intervals along the canal's length. They were sited for specific reasons, such as at important crossing points, wharfs, locks, proximity to mills etc.

The row of Canal Cottages on the opposite bank of the canal, are key buildings within this part of the conservation area and can be deemed to be non-designated heritage assets. Nearby is the group of Grade II listed buildings clustered around the crossing point at Ryeford; Tankard House, Ryeford House, Ryeford Bridge and the Coal Pen near Canal Cottages.

The proposed development site is crucial to the setting of these heritage assets, contributing fundamentally to the sense of their isolation, particularly on the approach along the canal from the west.

Furthermore, the site plays an absolutely key role in the understanding of the settlement in its wider historic setting, allowing uncluttered views from the A419, out over the landscape, including the sight of the tree-lined cut of the Stroudwater Navigation.



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By its nature, any built form on this site would fundamentally alter the character of the conservation area. The infilling of such a significant amount of the buffer zone between the separate settlements, and the resulting erosion of the isolation of the historic built form that is such a key part of the significance of the designated and undesignated heritage assets and a major contributor to the character and appearance of the IHCA, cannot fail to cause significant harm. These proposals are therefore not considered to comply with the provisions of duties, policies and guidance contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF, the adopted Stroud District Local Plan Policies ES10 and ES11, November 2015, nor the Council's adopted Industrial Heritage Conservation Management Plan of 2008.

In Framework terms, bearing in mind that the Conservation Area is wide in its compass, the harm that would be caused to the significance of the designated heritage assets affected, would be less than substantial, however, it should be remembered that the development of this individual site must be evaluated in the context of the erosion of such spaces in the context of the wider proliferation of development on mill sites and land adjacent to the canals; the loss of individual sites potentially impacts the whole of the Conservation Area, because of the cumulative nature of harm.

This is particularly important given that the IHCA has been added to Historic England's Register of Heritage at Risk. Historic England's commentary on the conservation area's vulnerability noted that:

"...the extensive nature of the CA means that its significance is in danger of being eroded through continued incremental and cumulative change from development pressure on a wide range of sites. We recognised that part of the "threat" was perhaps the lack of understanding of the heritage significance of the area among those offering advice and decision makers and thought should be given to how awareness can be raised in key quarters and used effectively in development scheme negotiation."

Public:

154 support comments have been submitted. These are in the form of a shared proforma and support the proposal highlighting; Support local business, will attract visitors, moorings will bring people to Stonehouse, provide job opportunities, will have a positive effect on the local economy.

48 similar support forms from previous application have also been submitted by the agent.

Support from SVCC and Boatmobility have also been received

NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework 2.2.

Available

to

view

at:<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf>

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 72(1).



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Stroud District Local Plan.

Policies together with the preamble text and associated supplementary planning documents are available to view on the Council's website:

https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/1455/stroud-district-local-plan_november-2015_low-res_for-web.pdf

Local Plan policies considered for this application include:

- CP1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- CP2 - Strategic growth and development locations.
- CP3 - Settlement Hierarchy.
- CP4 - Place Making.
- CP11 - New employment development.
- CP12 - Town centres and retailing.
- CP13 - Demand management and sustainable travel measures.
- CP14 - High quality sustainable development.
- CP15 - A quality living and working countryside.
- EI11 - Promoting sport, leisure and recreation.
- EI12 - Promoting transport choice and accessibility.
- ES1 - Sustainable construction and design.
- ES3 - Maintaining quality of life within our environmental limits.
- ES4 - Water resources, quality and flood risk.
- ES5 - Air quality.
- ES6 - Providing for biodiversity and geodiversity.
- ES7 - Landscape character.
- ES8 - Trees, hedgerows and woodlands.
- ES10 - Valuing our historic environment and assets.
- ES11 - Maintaining, restoring and regenerating the District's Canals.
- ES12 - Better design of places.

The proposal should also be considered against the guidance laid out in:

Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA) Character Appraisal SPA (2008), Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA) Management Proposals SPD (2008), Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA) Design Guide SPA (2008), Stroud District Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2016), Stroud District Landscape Assessment SPG (2000) & SDC Planning Obligations SPD (2017).

A Heritage Strategy for Stroud District has also been adopted as supplementary planning advice (SPA) in February 2018,

Stonehouse Neighbourhood Development Plan was made/adopted on 22nd February 2018 and now forms part of the development plan.

<https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/356555/snp-referendum-10-17-web.pdf>



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INTRODUCTION

This is a 2nd application for a new build auction building on this green field adjacent to the Canal. The 1st application (S.18/0105/FUL) was refused planning permission in November 2018.

Being in a countryside location the scheme was not in accordance with the adopted Local Plan and Stonehouse NDP and no overriding benefit was demonstrated to justify a departure from the development plan ahead of more sustainable locations within settlements. Significant impacts on the landscape character and that of the Conservation Area were also identified and not outweighed by the public benefits. Insufficient information on the drainage and ecological impacts was provided.

No appeal was submitted for this 1st application and a 2nd application has now been submitted. This second application is for the same proposal with more information to address the technical reasons for refusal and a hope that the planning balance will have altered.

The application has a number of considerations which both cover the principle of development and the details of the proposed scheme which will be considered in turn below:

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The Local Plan has been adopted and full weight should be given to its contents, in accordance with paragraphs 11 and 12 of the revised NPPF. There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development as applied locally through the policies contained within the Local Plan. Consequently, decision makers should approve proposals that accord with the Local Plan without delay, but should refuse proposed development that conflicts with the Local Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposal is for the erection of an auction showroom and the creation of an associated car park on previously undeveloped land, lying outside the Stonehouse development limit, in what is considered open countryside as defined by the Local Plan. The site is conspicuous and is affected by multiple constraints and designations.

At the heart of the Local Plan and the revised NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Local Plan seeks to prevent the proliferation of development outside existing settlements and aims to steer new development of all sorts towards the District's larger and more sustainable settlements (settlements in Tiers 1-3 of the Plan's settlement hierarchy). The concept of settlement development limits is at the core of the Local Plan (CP3, CP15) and there is a presumption that development outside this boundary is not acceptable, unless the proposal meets a series of specific criteria and exceptions.

Although Stonehouse is one of the District's highest tier settlements (and this site does lie immediately adjacent to its settlement development limit), the settlement limit has been very deliberately drawn: the 'boundary' marks the extent of the town's 'core' and it is drawn here in order to protect the functional and visual character of the town's hinterland. The transition from urban to 'rural' character here on Stonehouse's southern edge is abruptly marked by the A419 Bristol Road/Ebley Road, as a narrow wedge of green canal-related tranquillity extends between Wycliffe College and Upper Mills Trading Estate. This edge of Stonehouse is



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particularly sensitive, not only because of the multiple environmental, natural, and heritage-related constraints (which will be addressed below), but also because of the proximity of other settlement development limits: Stroud's limit lies just 950m to the east, Kings Stanley 500m to the south and Leonard Stanley 820m to the southwest.

Core Policy CP4 requires all development proposals throughout the District to accord with the Local Plan's "Guiding Principles" for the relevant parish. Guiding Principles 3 and 8 for the cluster of parishes around Stonehouse (p54) are pertinent to this site and the proposed development: here, the Plan makes clear that one of its key aims is to avoid physical and visual coalescence between Stonehouse and other settlements "by resisting development at key gaps, such as west of Ebley / Ryeford" and avoiding "urbanisation and linear sprawl" along the A419 corridor, which is acknowledged as a 'gateway' to Stonehouse and to the Stroud Valleys beyond.

The proposed development does not fit within any of the 'exceptional' circumstances in which development is considered acceptable outside settlement development limits (criteria 1-6, CP15). CP11 deals with new employment development and it does recognise the value of employment growth in the countryside (i.e. outside settlement development limits). However, CP11 speaks in terms of "rural diversification", which is very different from employment development tacked onto the edge of a large urban settlement. CP11 (like CP15) also highlights that the acceptability of any new employment development is a balance of factors, including the avoidance of harm to the character, appearance or environment of the site or to the amenity of neighbours. The NPPF is a material consideration but doesn't outweigh an up-to-date Local Plan, which is what determines what is sustainable development in this specific Stroud District context.

The proposal is therefore considered contrary to the principles and policies of the Local Plan and Stonehouse NDP. This is acknowledged by the agent who considers that material considerations indicate that a decision should be made contrary to the adopted development plan. This is addressed in the planning balance below.

ARCHAEOLOGY & HERITAGE ASSETS

Section 72 of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Section 66(1) of the Act requires that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest, and in particular, listed buildings. These requirements extend to all powers under the Planning Acts, including the Stroud District Council Local Plan, Adopted 2015, Delivery Policy ES10 and Paragraphs 126-141 of the NPPF.



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Development outside settlement development limits will only be permitted where it does not have an adverse impact on heritage assets or their setting. Policy ES10 requires the potential impact of proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset (whether designated or undesignated) to be appropriately assessed; while ES7 requires consideration of landscape impact. Policy ES11 requires all development adjacent to the canal to respect its character, setting, biodiversity and historic value, as well as having regard to improving and enhancing views along and from the canals. The Policy also states that regard should be had to the adopted Industrial Heritage Conservation Area Design Guide SPA, which is relevant to this site.

The whole site falls within the Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA), not "adjacent to it", as the submitted Heritage Assessment incorrectly states (paragraph 6.1 of the Planning, Design and Access Statement). The Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA) was conceived as a linear Conservation Area, following the valleys of the River Frome and the Nailsworth Stream, extending to the east, west and south of Stroud. In addition to these watercourses, the course of the IHCA follows the various transport infrastructures, which developed over the 18th and 19th centuries. These include the Stroudwater Canals, which were the 'arteries' of the locality and represented a new era in the industrial basis of the Stroud Valleys.

The site contributes to the setting and character of the canal corridor (the entire Stroudwater Navigation, which is part of the Cotswold Canals network, is a non-designated heritage asset of local significance); it contributes to the setting of the row of (unlisted) Canal Cottages on the opposite bank of the canal, which are key buildings within this part of the conservation area; it also contributes to the wider setting and context of a nearby group of Grade II listed buildings at Ryeford (approx. 150m east of the site): Tankard House, Ryeford House, Ryeford Bridge and the Coal Pen near Canal Cottages.

The IHCA was designed to preserve not only the 'set pieces' of the significant mill sites, but also the infrastructure and the context of Stroud's industrial legacy. The form, the patterns of development and settlement, and the transport links embody the social, economic and cultural history of the Valleys; because of this, the IHCA represents the preservation of more than just the buildings.

A conservation area statement (CAS) has been adopted as supplementary planning advice (SPA) for the IHCA. The CAS characterises the site as part of the "Green Corridor: Rural Frome Vale", a particular sub-area of the conservation area that forms part of the distinctive 'spine', which runs the length of the IHCA and incorporates the canal, river and rail routes. The Character Appraisal explains that these Green Corridor areas play an important role in separating and punctuating the distinct historic mill sites and industrial hamlets that sit at intervals along the conservation area's various watercourses. The green 'spine' and rural gaps are important to the conservation area's overall significance and fundamental heritage interest (paragraphs 8.12-8.14 on p94 of the IHCA Character Appraisal). These open spaces are hugely important in balancing the built form of the conservation area.



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The close juxtaposition of historic industry with agriculture is clearly identified as a significant aspect of the conservation area's character and heritage interest. The conservation area's Character Appraisal and the IHCA Management Proposals SPD identify these green gaps as particularly vulnerable and in need of protection (see Key Issue 1 on p120 of the Character Appraisal).

It should be noted that, whilst the Planning, Design and Access Statement (para. 5.41-5.43) does identify that the site lies within the correct "Green Corridor: Rural Frome Vale" character area, the specific passages quoted here from the CAS (ref. para. 3.14 and 3.20 of the Character Appraisal) relate to parts of the conservation area much further west. Paragraphs 3.17 - 3.21 are more relevant.

The nearby listed buildings are highly typical of the canal-related development that has occurred within the IHCA: these tend, historically, to be relatively isolated, located at intervals along the canal's length. They were sited for specific canal-related reasons, such as at key crossing points (e.g. Ryeford), wharfs, locks, etc. The 'green corridor' around them contributes to their setting and significance. It should be remembered too that the canal and towpath, being linear, offer a unique perspective on the conservation area and on these listed buildings: their "setting" certainly extends as far as this site.

The site plays an absolutely key role in the understanding of the settlement in its wider historic setting, allowing uncluttered views from the A419, out over the landscape, including the sight of the tree-lined cut of the Stroudwater Navigation.

By its nature, any built form on this site would fundamentally alter the character of the conservation area and erode the separation and isolation of the historic built form. In terms of the detail and design of this proposed development, place-making policy ES12 seeks to achieve 'Better design of places', requiring new development to be based upon thorough site appraisal (which should include reference to the IHCA Design Guide SPA and relevant parts of Stonehouse NDP) and to demonstrate the design's suitability in its local context. The submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement (para. 5.41-5.43, 8.18-8.26, 3.3) does acknowledge the site's location within the conservation area and engages in some analysis to explain the agricultural-inspired design rationale. The proposed landscaping of the car park aspires to evoke orchard-style plantation (orchards are certainly characteristic of the Frome vale's landscape heritage), which is a nice idea; and the use of agricultural rather than a domestic or industrial vocabulary has some initial merit. However, when given further thought you are unlikely to see any agricultural building particularly one of such large size or imposing scale on such a small isolated parcel of land adjacent to the canal. The scale of the building and the extent of the site would be likely to have significant and detrimental effects on the character, significance and historic interest of the conservation area and canal corridor. The creation of moorings along the canal bank is also fundamentally at odds with the historic character of the Stroudwater Navigation (the canal). These are however related to a modern use of the canal and any actual harm to the character and significance of the conservation area will come down to matters of detail and design and a planning balance of this element of the scheme.



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Overall, the submitted Heritage Assessment (part of the Planning, Design and Access Statement) fails to adequately assess the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of any of the heritage assets identified above (ES10 criterion 1); it does not demonstrate how these assets will be protected, conserved or enhanced by the proposals (ES10 para. 6.57); nor does it address the need to justify potential harm and loss that this proposal might cause to some or all of these assets and their significance (ES10 criterion 5 and para. 6.58).

The identified harm that would be caused to the significance of the designated heritage assets affected, would be less than substantial. Our Specialist Conservation Officer has also highlighted the cumulative harm on the wider Conservation Area and Historic England recognition of the vulnerability and threat also has to be appreciated.

The County Archaeologist has checked the proposed development area against the County Historic Environment Record and there is no archaeology known at this location, or in the immediate locality. Given the size of the scheme including the proposed developable area being only approx half a 1ha the County Archaeologist is satisfied that this development proposal will have a low potential to have an adverse impact on archaeological remains. Therefore, no archaeological investigation or recording is required in connection with this scheme.

LANDSCAPE IMPACT

Policy ES7 seeks to ensure that development proposals conserve or enhance the special features and diversity of the District's different landscape character types, in terms of the location, materials, scale and use, as well as the appropriate retention and management of natural features on the site.

The Council's Stroud District Landscape Assessment SPG (2000) characterises this site as at the periphery of the 'Escarpment Foothills', a sub-category of the Rolling Agricultural Plain, where it abuts the 'Frome River Valley'. Paragraph 5.40 of the Planning, Design and Access Statement quotes parts of the SPG's text, but crucially omits that a key priority for action for these character areas is to "control sporadic development along the major routes and at the edges of small settlements". As outlined above, a key objective of both Policy CP15 and the Guiding Principles for Stonehouse is the avoidance of visual and physical coalescence between settlements.

The Council's 2016 Stroud District Landscape Sensitivity Assessment identifies this site as part of a parcel of land (St12) on Stonehouse's south-eastern edge that has "high-medium sensitivity" to employment development. It states: *"The sensitivity of the area lies in its role as a valuable wooded and open green gap in the ribbon development frontage along the Bristol Road/Ebley Road and north of the canal which allows fine views across to the southern valley sides and to the canal buildings from the Ebley Road ... this area, combined with the playing fields to the north, is effectively the only green gap between Stonehouse and Ebley/Stroud"*.



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Whilst the agricultural design approach is noted the size and scale of the building along with the parking, would not relate to this rural setting and is unlikely to be affectively softened by the retention of a few trees and poorly maintained hedgerow vegetation and the limited proposed landscaping. The proposal will still have a significant impact on this open green space and important undeveloped gap.

It is therefore considered the proposal will neither conserve or enhance the surrounding landscape character but cause significant harm.

ECOLOGY

The canal forms part of the River Frome Key Wildlife Site (KWS), designated for mammal interest and as such is a priority habitat. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been submitted to inform the consideration of the planning application. This includes addressing the potential impacts of the proposed development on the Key Wildlife Site and particularly on the otters (European Protected Species).

Policy ES6 is clear that "all stages of sustainable development are informed by relevant ecological information" and "all effects should be considered, including positive and negative, direct and indirect [and] cumulative ... over the lifetime of the development" (para 6.38).

The proposed development originally proposed substantial loss of mature vegetation (trees) within the site particularly adjacent to the roundabout and the Stroud Water Canal. Our ecologist previously raised concern the proposed removal of trees and vegetation along the canal edge and along the boundary of the site near the Horsetrough roundabout would result in negative impacts to the sites habitat connectivity and ultimately species such as bats using the canal as a navigation route.

Two of the trees originally proposed to be removed in order to accommodate landing stages are considered to offer high and moderate potential to support roosting bats T4 and T3 and furthermore T4 does offer a potential holt (resting place) for otters which are known to use the canal. It was therefore suggested that the scheme should aim to accommodate existing trees along the canal to in order to retain the wildlife corridor and the ecological network to enable the proposed development be considered acceptable in accordance with Local Plan Policy ES6. Without this the proposal was considered likely to result in a net loss in biodiversity and as such the proposals would not have been considered to accord with the national policy and guidance.

Also, the vegetation along the canal likely forms a wildlife corridor for commuting bats, the opposite side of the canal (south bank) is relatively well developed with limited vegetation indicating that the vegetation along the northern bank (the site) will be an important feature for wildlife within the wider landscape context. Its loss would further degrade the wildlife corridor along the canal and result in a net loss in biodiversity.

The submitted ecological surveys recommend that further bats surveys are required to be undertaken for trees T4 and T3 if they are proposed to be removed. These trees are important and should be accommodated within the scheme to retain the wildlife corridor and the ecological network and not have a net loss of biodiversity.



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Therefore, the revised details including the tree protection plans now show the trees along the canal being retained and only a no dig pathway being provided. The vegetation/species rich hedgerow adjacent to the roundabout is also shown as being retained. Additional surveys have therefore not been requested.

The retention of the trees is welcome, however, no information has been submitted to demonstrate how the mooring will be 'constructed' around them without any adverse impacts. With the 'in principle' issues a method statement has not been progressed, however, our ecologist is satisfied this could be conditioned.

Therefore, with further details required via condition and the tree and hedgerow retained this overcomes the previous ecological refusal reason.

FLOOD RISK

This revised application includes part of the canal channel which is Flood zone 3. Whilst the proposed built form is located within Flood zone 1 part of the application field is within Flood zone 2.

Details of a provisional drainage strategy have been submitted. Both SDC Water Resource Engineer and the Sustainable Drainage Engineer at GCC as the Local Lead Flood Authority have raised concern about the drainage strategy and the level of detail submitted.

Drawing no. 1234/051 Rev N shows an underground storm water storage tank with petrol interceptor and hydro brake. This shows sustainable drainage has been considered for the site and some surface water calculations for the attenuation tank have been submitted.

Parts of the proposed car park is shown with a permeable surface with the drainage for other areas remaining unclear. The SDC Water Resource Engineer has raised concern about whether infiltration is a viable option for this site so without infiltration testing to support this method of drainage the large permeable area would need to be incorporated into the main drainage system. This could further affect the drainage calculations and the required size of the storage tank. In addition as a permeable element no methods for cleansing the water has been outlined and as such this site could contribute hydrocarbon pollution to the groundwater.

Further information has been provided by the agent which goes some way to addressing the in-principle issue and lack of full information on the drainage strategy. Whilst this additional information addresses the fall between the attenuation tank and an outfall into the Canal which they have now demonstrated they have consent from SVCC as landowner to discharge into the canal, it does not demonstrate that the rest of the site and the proposed drainage system has sufficient capacity including the proposed drainage network/pipes to take the required surface water runoff for flood events including climate change from all areas of the site.

GCC as LLFA have asked for more information, however, the agent does not wish to carry out additional work on the drainage strategy at this time with the 'in principle' concerns regarding the scheme still in place. GCC as LLFA comment on whether sufficient details



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have been submitted to confirm the principles of the drainage strategy are satisfied and that the detailed design can be controlled via conditions will be reported to committee.

This is a major application and it is a mandatory requirement to provide sufficient information relating to the proposed surface water drainage strategy and consideration must be given to the provision of a SuDS. This is to comply with the requirements set out in Technical Guidance to the NPPF and the Non Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage. A refusal reason on insufficient drainage information has therefore still been recommended but is subject to the further comments from GCC as LLFA.

HIGHWAYS

The development site is located adjacent to the Horsetrough Roundabout. A current field access is on site with the proposal seeking access directly of Ebley Road. This is a class 2 highway subject to a 30 mph speed limit, with footways either side of the carriageway.

The County Highways Officer confirmed on the previous 2018 application, after researching the relevant personal incident collision data, that no recorded incidents have been reported within the vicinity in relation to the site access in the past 5 years which is unsurprising given the limited use of the field and its access.

It is proposed to make improvements to the access which would result in a 6.0m wide carriageway into the site, with junction radii increased to 7.0m. The general access/layout arrangement is shown on the submitted drawing (within in the submitted transport statement Drg No 1801DWG02 rev A), with the vehicle tracking demonstrates that the largest expected vehicle can enter, turn and park without conflict.

The illustrative access and parking layout plan displays 70 car parking spaces, 26 bicycle parking spaces and 4 motorcycle parking spaces. There will also be 9 visitor canal moorings. The adopted Stroud District Local Plan recommends disabled parking bays are provided at a ratio of 1 space per 10 ordinary spaces. Accordingly, seven spaces are to be designated for blue badge holders and will incorporate an additional width of 1.2m side and rear to facilitate wheelchair access. The allocated vehicle parking provides sufficient room to accommodate the expected vehicles and ensure they enter and leave the site in forward gear. There is adequate provision to meet the anticipated number of vehicles at any one time. The County Highways Officer does not anticipate that any parking generated will be detrimental to highway safety.

The County Highways Officer is satisfied that the proposed development has provided a robust assessment of the likely trip demand of the existing applicant's activity, which is contained within the supporting statement.

Therefore, given the above, the County Highways Officer concludes that there will not be any detrimental impact caused to the surrounding highway network and recommends no highway objection.



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RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The site is located in a rural location which create distance to the nearest neighbouring residential properties. Whilst the development will create additional noise and movement of visitors and vehicles the impact on the tranquillity and general character of the immediate area (including the canal and towpath are addressed elsewhere in the report. With controls over the hours and use of the building and the construction phase it is considered that the direct noise from an auction use will not have a significant adverse impact on the residential amenities of local residents to warrant a refusal.

CONTAMINATED LAND

As an existing undeveloped greenfield this site is not considered to have any contaminated land issues which could be a constraint. The Council's Senior Contaminated Land Officer has raised no comment or concerns regarding the site. No further investigation or remediation is requested.

PLANNING BALANCE & RECOMMENDATION

The principle of developing this land for sui generis auction/employment use is not compatible with CP15 or CP11, which outline that employment development outside a defined settlement limit are not acceptable, unless the type of development proposed is one of a few specific exceptions and meets a series of specific criteria - including the avoidance of harm to the historic or natural environment and the amenity of neighbours. With no rural justification the scheme is clearly contrary to policy which is acknowledged by the agent who is advocating a departure.

The agent has outlined how this local firm has established and the recent growth in business with sales being increasingly popular, including online. Financial information submitted shows this growth and potential and it has been outlined that being a local auction a large amount of the turnover remains within the local area. It is hard to test this suggestion and quantify the planning/community benefit. The agent has also outlines that the business now employment 7 full time staff, 3 fte (5) part time and 1.3 fte (8) sales day staff. The proposal therefore does provide jobs and growth for this local company which is clearly an economic benefit.

The agent has outlined an unsuccessful sequential style search for alternative sites within the Stroud Valleys. This work is noted but with limited details it is hard to test the outcomes and it is difficult to understand that there are no other sites possible given the number of employment, regeneration and brownfield land allocated and protected within the Local Plan.

The sensitive nature of the site, being within the conservation area, the canal corridor and a landscape buffer has not been mitigated. The proposal will have an urbanising impact and result in the loss of this open green field which prevent the coalescence of Stonehouse and Ryeford. The green and tranquil character of the part of the Conservation Area will also be harmed.



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The agent is also suggesting that the popularity of sales and viewing days will bring customers to the site who will then link their visit and make use of the shops and facilities in Stonehouse town centre. Whilst there may be some customers traveling between the site and the town centre and the post office will potentially see an increase in sale items being sent out, the slight separation and limited number of sales this impact is not likely to be overly significant. The loss of the benefits of the Auction use from its existing site and local post office are also noted.

The positive of providing mooring and connecting Stonehouse with the canal have also been highlighted. Significant restoration work is taking place along the canal and to maintain the character and attractiveness is essential to its future prosperity. These moorings are not necessarily only connected with the development and could take place along the canal even if the scheme does not go forward. The impact on the character of the canal is addressed above and the provision of moorings does not provide such an overriding benefit to justify a departure given the potential harm.

The highway impacts of the scheme have been considered to be acceptable but at time of writing it has not been fully demonstrated that the drainage strategy is appropriate.

Whilst the above benefits are all acknowledged and there is a willingness to help the applicant find a suitable site, even together these benefits do not outweigh the harm to the local character, landscape and heritage interest and do not justify a departure from the adopted Local Plan and Stonehouse NDP.

RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, the proposal is recommended for refusal.

HUMAN RIGHTS

In compiling this recommendation we have given full consideration to all aspects of the Human Rights Act 1998 in relation to the applicant and/or the occupiers of any neighbouring or affected properties. In particular regard has been had to Article 8 of the ECHR (Right to Respect for private and family life) and the requirement to ensure that any interference with the right in this Article is both permissible and proportionate. On analysing the issues raised by the application no particular matters, other than those referred to in this report, warranted any different action to that recommended.



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For the following reasons:

1. The site is located outside of any settlement limits or employment sites on a Greenfield in a rural and countryside location. No rural or a policy compliant reason has been provided and it has not been demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist or overriding benefits provided to justify a departure from the development plan ahead of more sustainable locations within settlements. The proposal is therefore contrary to the Policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP11, CP15 and E110 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015 and the adopted Stonehouse Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018.
2. Due to the location and scale, the proposal will have an urbanising effect which will erode this important green gap and cause unacceptable harm to the local landscape character, the tranquillity, appearance and distinctiveness of this part of the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area and the setting of other nearby heritage assets. The wider cumulative impact on the IHCA would also be harmful. The public benefits of the scheme do not outweigh the harm therefore the proposal is contrary to the policies and guidance contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF, Policies CP4, CP14, ES7, ES10, ES11 and ES12 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015, Policy ENV4 of the adopted Stonehouse Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018 and the adopted Industrial Heritage Conservation Management Plan of 2008 and the Heritage Strategy for Stroud District 2018.
3. Insufficient drainage detail has been provided to demonstrate the effectiveness and suitability of the proposed surface water drainage strategy and that SuDS provision has been fully considered. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CP14 (2,3,4), ES3 and ES4 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan November 2015, the requirements set out in Technical Guidance to the NPPF and the Non Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage.