

Date of Meeting	10 th December 2015
Application Number	15/07022/FUL
Site Address	The Coach House, Winterbourne Monkton SN4 9NF
Proposal	Erection of new general purpose building to be used as a learning centre, office and storage space and creation of new access and parking area.
Applicant	Tonic Construction
Town/Parish Council	WINTERBOURNE MONKTON
Electoral Division	WEST SELKLEY – Jemima Milton
Grid Ref	409955 172991
Type of application	Full Planning
Case Officer	Ruaridh O'Donoghue

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

This application is brought to committee at the request of Divisional Member, Cllr Milton.

1. Purpose of Report

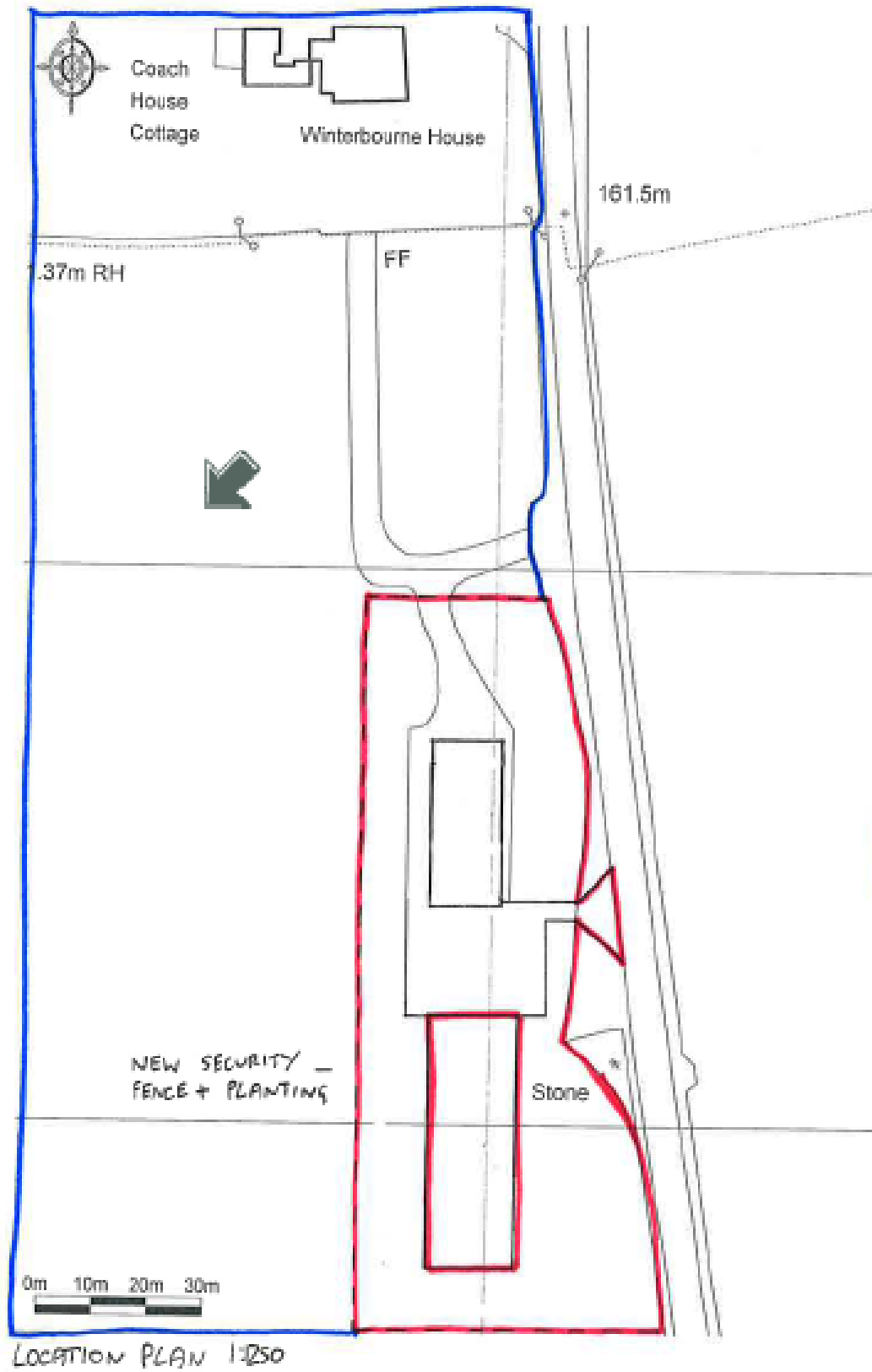
The purpose of the report is to assess the merits of the proposal against the policies of the development plan and other material considerations and to consider the recommendation that the application be refused.

2. Report Summary

The key issues for consideration are the principle of development (whether it is located in a location supported by national and local planning policy) and the impact on the character and appearance of the area.

3. Site Description

The application concerns Tonic Construction who are based at The Coach House, Winterbourne Monkton near Swindon. In planning policy terms, the site lies within the open countryside, outside of the defined built up area for Winterbourne Monkton and closer to the hamlet of Berwick Bassett. The site and its surroundings lie within the North Wessex Downs AONB. There is a Public Right of Way (PRoW) running to the west of the site approximately 150m away (BBAS3).



LOCATION PLAN 1:250

Site Location

4. Planning History

K/57696/F	Erection of agricultural building and construction of a pond – approved 2008
E/09/1199/FUL	Retrospective application for change of use from agricultural barn/workshop to office and agricultural barn/workshop - refused
E/10/0661/FUL	Retrospective application for change of use from agricultural barn/workshop to office and agricultural barn/workshop - approved
14/00351/FUL	Extension to existing building and replacement area of hardstanding - approved.

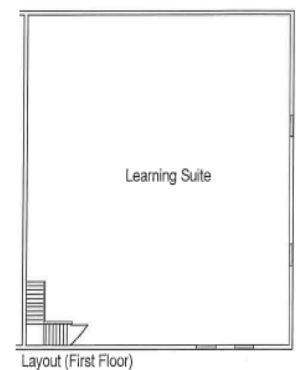
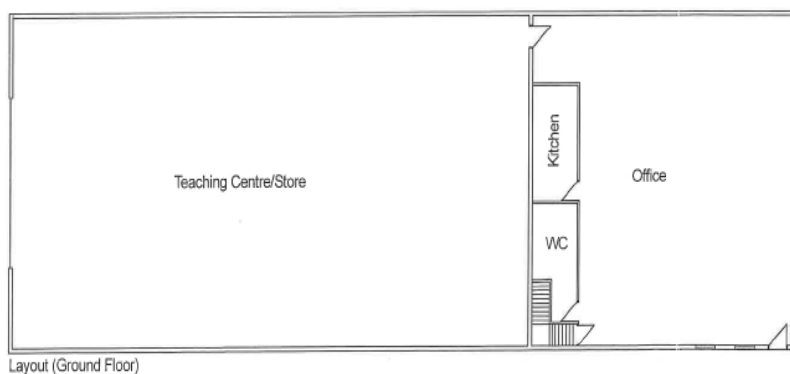
5. The Proposal

The application is for the erection of a new general purpose building to be used as a learning centre, office and storage space and the creation of a new access from the A4361 and a parking area.

The proposed building will measure 45m in length, 16m in width and 8m in height. The existing building on the site to the north is approximately 24m in length, 12m in width and 6m in height. The proposed building represents a 134% increase in floor area and would be 2m higher than this existing building.

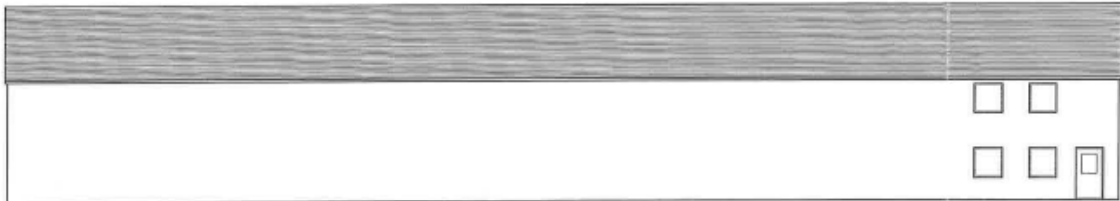
The new access will be located between the existing and proposed building. The space between the two buildings will form the parking area for the business.

The existing building currently has planning permission for use of approximately 1/3 of the building for the offices of Tonic Construction.





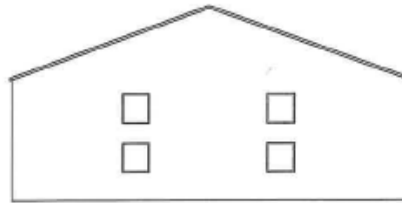
Side Elevation



Side Elevation



Front Elevation



Rear Elevation

6. Planning Policy

Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS):

- Core Policy 1 – Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 2 – Delivery Strategy
- Core Policy 14 – Marlborough Area Strategy
- Core Policy 51 – Landscape
- Core Policy 57 – Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 61 – Transport and New Development

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy (2005)
- Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (December 2005)

Other Material Considerations

- AONB Management Plan 2015

- North Wessex Downs: Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (March 2002)

7. Summary of consultation responses

Wiltshire Council Highways (initial response)

No objection, subject to the provision of visibility splays and parking.

Winterbourne Monkton and Berwick Bassett Parish Council

This is to confirm that at a meeting of the Winterbourne Monkton and Berwick Bassett Parish Council on 14th August 2015 the Council decided unanimously that it had no objections to this planning application.

8. Publicity

The application has been advertised by way of a site notice and consultations with the neighbours.

One letter of objection has been received from a local resident who considers that the proposal is wholly inappropriate in this setting and represents a further incursion into the rural landscape, extending development further towards Winterbourne Monkton.

9. Planning Considerations

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act states that “*determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise*”. Paras 2 & 11 of the NPPF reiterate and confirm this requirement. This is the starting point for determination from a policy point of view.

9.1 Principle of Development

The site lies well outside the limits of development of any settlement in the area. Core Policy 2 states that development will not be permitted outside of these limits, unless it meets the exceptions set out in the list at paragraph 4.25 of the Strategy. One of these exceptions is for employment land, as long as it is in accordance with the requirements of Core Policy 34 (Additional employment Land). This policy permits development for employment purposes outside of the limits of development, but only where it is adjacent to a principal settlement, market town or local service centre. None of these exceptions apply here in this isolated rural location.

The proposal is therefore in entirely the wrong location in relation to the policies of the Core Strategy, which seek to encourage the siting of facilities such as these in locations where people actually live and can access without having to commute outwards from the existing settlements.

9.2 Landscape Impact

The site is located within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). National Planning Policy recognises the importance of the countryside in its core planning principles where at paragraph 17 it states the planning system should recognise *“the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.”* It expands upon this point in Section 11 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment. At Paragraph 115 the NPPF states that *“Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in...Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.”*

At the local level, Core Policy 51 of the WCS emphasises the conservation, protection and where possible enhancement of Wiltshire’s distinctive landscapes. Proposals will need to demonstrate that landscape character has been conserved and where possible enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures and that, in relation to AONB’s, great weight should be afforded to their conservation and enhancement. It also states that proposals within the AONB need to demonstrate that they have taken account of the policies, objectives and actions of the relevant management plans.

In addition to this, Core Policy 57 of the WCS states that new development proposals will need to demonstrate how they will make a positive contribution to the value of the natural environment and its landscape setting. No reference has been made to this policy or indeed how the development complies with it.

The proposal involves the erection of a large and bulky building that has no intrinsic architectural merit and is simply a large box that will create an intrusive feature in the landscape, and when taken with the existing smaller agricultural building that has a partial change of use to employment purposes, creates a mini- industrial complex in the open countryside within the area of outstanding natural beauty.

The proposal will clearly cause harm to the character and appearance of the landscape, and whilst some screening may be possible from the A4361, this is reduced by the

punching through of the new vehicular access and in any event, the building will be in prominent view from the nearby public footpath that runs close to the stream to the west. The proposal conflict with both national and local planning policies designed to protect the landscape of the area of outstanding natural beauty.

Council Officers have sought to explore whether a smaller building that would not have the harm of a structure of this bulk and size could be possible, but the plans have not been amended.

9.3 Highways Safety / Parking

The proposed access has demonstrated visibility standards that are acceptable to the Council's Highways Department. They are also satisfied that the adjoining road network can accommodate the extra traffic likely to be associated with the development. As such, they raise no objections to the access with regards to highway safety as set out in the tests at paragraph 32 of the NPPF.

9.4 Other material considerations

The proposal would provide a 'learning centre' additional office and storage space. The justification for it is that the applicants are bringing their external training back 'in house' and that the existing building is used at maximum capacity. Whilst it is understandable that the applicants may wish to bring training and construction storage 'on site', this is not sufficient justification for a building of this bulk and size to be constructed in a countryside location within the area of outstanding natural beauty.

10. Conclusion (The Planning Balance)

In determining this application the local planning authority is fully aware that if development accords with an up-to-date Local Plan it should be approved, and that proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

In consideration of the above it is concluded that the development of a training facility with office and storage facilities outside of the Limits of Development in open countryside, would harm the landscape character and scenic quality of the North Wessex Downs AONB and would conflict with both national planning policy that states that AONB's should have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Furthermore, the application site is located in an unsustainable location where policies within the WCS and the Framework taken as a whole are not supportive of new

development of this scale and nature. The limited economic benefits of providing such a training centre in this entirely unsuitable location are not considered to warrant the significant departure from planning policy that this proposal would represent and do not provide a level of benefit that would outweigh the planning harm identified above.

In light of this, the proposal is considered to be contrary to policies CP1, CP2, CP51, CP57, CP60 and CP61 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and to central government guidance contained within the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the application be refused for the following reasons:

1) The site is located in open countryside in a remote location outside of the built up area of nearby settlements. The development is not permissible under any of the exceptions policies listed at paragraph 4.25 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015. As such, the proposal would conflict with Core Policies 1, 2, 14, 60 and 61 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015, which seeks to properly plan for sustainable development in Wiltshire.

2) The proposed development by virtue of its design, height, size and prominent location would cause significant harm to the landscape character, scenic quality and to that of views and visual amenity of the North Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is recognised in Paragraph 112 of the NPPF as having the highest status of protection in landscape terms. The proposal is therefore contrary to Core Policies 51 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 and to central government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.