

REPORT TO DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

9 October 2024

REFERENCE: HW/FUL/23/00458

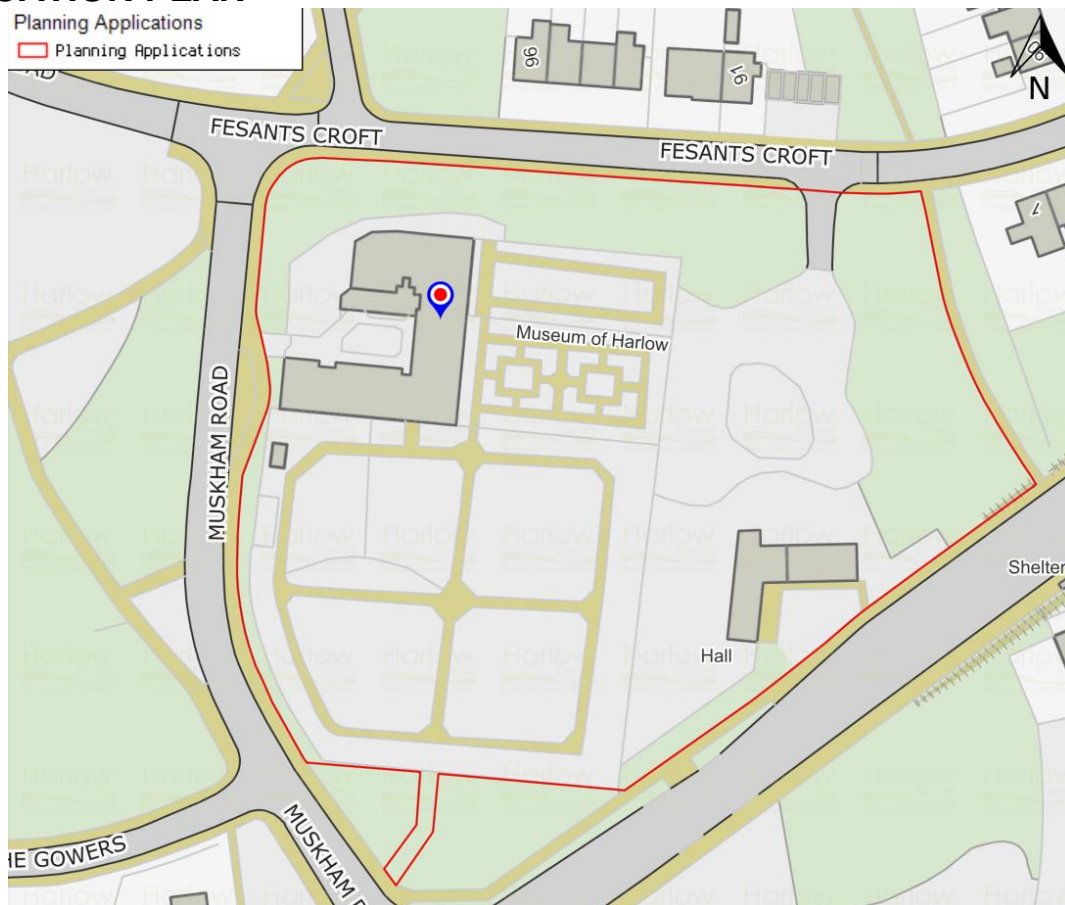
OFFICER: Mick Gavin

APPLICANT: Harlow Council (Ms A Fox)

LOCATION: The Museum of Harlow
Muskham Road
Harlow
Essex
CM20 2LF

PROPOSAL: Part demolition of modern additions to the Triple Range of Outbuildings and Mark Hall Barn and erection of new single-storey extensions comprising of new exhibition space, new reception, teaching space, washroom and ancillary spaces and new cafe/community space with associated landscaping, refuse enclosure and new openings in existing fabric of the buildings and walled gardens along with improvements to existing fabric of buildings.

LOCATION PLAN



Reason for Committee Referral

The applicant is Harlow District Council and therefore the Scheme of Delegation requires that the application is determined by the Development Committee. An associated listed building application (HW/LBC/23/00459 refers) is the following item on the agenda for consideration.

Recommendation

The proposal seeks permission for works to extend and alter buildings at Harlow Museum to enhance the exhibition facilities and provide a café to upgrade the quality of visitor experience and improve the viability of the facility. The site includes three listed buildings, the former Mark Hall stables, the perimeter wall to the walled garden and an adjacent barn. The impacts on these heritage assets are found to be acceptable, and subject to appropriate conditions and completion of a legal agreement to secure off-site biodiversity net gain, it is recommended that the proposal be granted permission.

Details of the Proposal

Planning permission is sought for development to provide new and improved facilities at Harlow Museum. The proposal follows amendments to the original submission following concerns it would have had unacceptable heritage impacts on the site. The development now proposed includes the following:

Exhibition Space/ Former stables

The existing 1980s glazed lean-to structures in the courtyard would be removed and replaced by two new galleries flanking the courtyard to provide exhibition space. These would be linked by a fully glazed link which would provide views through to the gables of the listed building. The internal courtyard would be landscaped and the forecourt to the front resurfaced. An extension of existing storage space would be added on the north side these additions.

New entrance extension

Construction of a single storey building with chamfered edges and new signage to create a visitors' entrance/ reception to the museum and exhibition spaces. This would be a flat roofed metal clad portal frame structure, sited against the southern wall of the main building to provide an entrance into the museum from the walled garden. The addition would sit beneath the eaves of the building. A glazed link would attach the new building to the existing to ensure minimal fabric interference and visual separation between the two.

Cafe extension

A new cafe extension is proposed to the scout hut/ Mark Hall Barn outside the east side of the garden wall. This would be a single storey building with twin hipped and pitched roofs. Walls and roofs would be timber. The building would be visually separated from the existing by a lightweight glazed link. A café of 146sqm would be provided. The cafe would create a versatile space capable of accommodating various events and community functions, independent of the main museum. Landscaping around the new building would include a path to a new gate opening giving access to the Walled Garden and from there to the new entrance addition described above. This would provide a more direct route from the car park. The existing scout hut would be refurbished and re-purposed as a Group Learning Space.

Site and surroundings

The Museum is housed within a Grade II listed building, a late eighteenth century range of outbuildings formerly attached to the stable block of Mark Hall. The site also contains a late eighteenth century Grade II listed garden wall, and part of a Grade II listed c.1700 outbuilding (former Scout Hut) also associated with Mark Hall. The museum site is also located within the Mark Hall North Conservation Area.

There are currently two entrances to the Site, the main entrance is located along Muskharn Road. However, there is also a car park and pedestrian route into the site from Fesants Croft. Mark Hall Barn is accessed from First Avenue, there is also an existing entrance into the Walled Garden along the southern wall fronting First Avenue.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Planning Applications

<u>App Number</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Decision Date</u>
HW/TP/20/10052	Lime - remove small diameter branches from the base to approx. 5 metres which will open up entrance to museum and improve security of site. Oak - 2 lower pendulous branches lifted over the driveway inside the gate plus removal of deadwood in the crown.	RNO	23.10.2020
HW/TP/20/10068	Various works to trees	RNO	29.01.2021
HW/FUL/22/00003	New heritage style access gates to replace the existing gates and a new wheelchair access ramp.	GTD	07.03.2022
HW/LBC/22/00004	New heritage style access gates to replace the existing gates and a new wheelchair access ramp.	GLBC	07.03.2022
HW/FUL/22/00145	Installation of a Solar PV Electricity system on independent mounting frame over the flat roof of the storeroom with no fixings required into the existing building.	GTD	16.05.2022
HW/LBC/22/00146	Installation of a Solar PV Electricity system on independent mounting frame over the flat roof of the storeroom with no fixings required into the existing building.	GLBC	16.05.2022
HW/FUL/22/00185	To carry out repair works to Grade II listed garden wall (boundary wall) for the Museum of Harlow.	GTD	22.06.2022
HW/LBC/22/00186	To carry out repair works to Grade II listed garden wall (boundary fence) for the Museum of Harlow.	GLBC	22.06.2022
HW/LBC/23/00459	Part demolition of modern additions to the Triple Range of Outbuildings and Mark Hall Barn and erection of	PCO	

	new single-storey extensions comprising of new exhibition space, new reception, teaching space, washroom and ancillary spaces and new cafe/community space with associated landscaping, refuse enclosure and new openings in existing fabric of the buildings and walled gardens along with improvements to existing fabric of buildings.		
HW/LB/99/00266	Alterations to Internal Layout. Extension of Storage Area, Construction of Glazed Link Corridor/Exhibition Area, Glazed Enclosure of Existing Access Walkway	GTD	25.02.2000
HW/CA/99/00265	Alterations to Internal Layout, Extension of Storage Area. Construction of New Glazed Link Corridor/ Exhibition Area. Glazed Enclosure of Existing Access Walkway	GTD	11.04.2000
HW/PL/07/00308	Comprising of Infilling a Covered Walkway	GTD	06.11.2007
HW/PL/07/00307	Comprising of Infilling a Covered Walkway	GTD	06.11.2007
HW/LB/03/00293	To Form Opening in Wall to Car Park And Gate to Aperture	GTD	09.10.2003
HW/PL/89/00342	Install an External Door and Window Frame, Provide a Gravel Path and Partition off a Boiler House	GTD	08.01.1990

CONSULTATIONS

Internal and external Consultees

Arboriculture Consultant

The new proposed site plan results in less trees being removed. The plans also now allow retention of the specimen pear tree within the walled gardens, which is of arboricultural value to the context of the site. Overall, the new design appears to avoid tree impacts well and with appropriate methods in place, it is likely that the impacts to trees will be minimal. The development must be undertaken in full accordance with an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) that follows the recommendations of BS 5837:2012 - Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction

A condition to secure an AMS is proposed.

Essex County Council - Highways

No comments received. Any communication received after completion of report will be contained in the update sheet.

HDC Environmental Health Services

No objection. Recommend construction noise conditions for demolition and construction phases.

Heritage Consultant

See Assessment below.

Neighbours and Additional Publicity

Number of Letters Sent: 44

Total Number of Representations Received: 8

Date Site Notice Expired: 11 January 2024

Date Press Notice Expired: 28 December 2023

Summary of Representations Received

Seven representations received relating to the original submission have been received raising the following material planning matters:

Objections

- Concern at impact on fabric of historic walls and stables; not sympathetic to fabric and integrity of site; an entrance already exists in garden wall adjacent to First Avenue and part of historic wall destroyed unnecessarily;
- Building on gardens is unnecessary and deleterious, other areas should be used; character of gardens should not be compromised;
- New building is ugly box;
- Concern at impact on parking during construction; and
- Concern at impact on flooding and utilities; and

Neutral

- Support principle but consideration should be given to extent of building footprint and use of existing openings in wall

One representation received relating to the amended submission:

Harlow Civic Society: Support many of the concerns raised in earlier consultation. The revised plan has far less impact on the gardens, doesn't impact the gin still and means only one new opening in the listed wall. Broadly in favour of the current plan but wonder if landscaping in front of the current scout hut / new cafe could allow improved pedestrian access to the cafe and new museum entrance. Considering the existing adjacent bus stop, this would allow visitors to arrive by bus and also for coach passengers on school visits to disembark at the adjacent bus stop and walk through, thereby avoiding the need for coaches to use Muskham Road / Fesants Croft. This would lighten the traffic burden in the residential neighbourhood. Also query if existing carpark needs reconfiguring to allow more efficient use of the limited space.

Officer comment: The proposed layout of the café and associated paths achieve the pedestrian access referred to.

PLANNING POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that “*where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise*”.

The Local Plan in this instance is the Harlow Local Development Plan (2020).

Harlow Local Development Plan 2020

Planning law requires that proposals should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for the site consists of the Harlow District Council (HDC) Harlow Local Development Plan 2020 (HLDP), Essex County Council (ECC) Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan 2017 and ECC Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014.

The part of the Development Plan applicable to the proposal is the HDLP. The HDLP is prepared in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – see ‘Planning Standards’ below. It is important to note that this is a very recently adopted and therefore ‘up to date’ plan in terms of NPPF Para.12.

Policies of most relevance to the proposal are:

SD1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
PL1 – Design Principles for Development
PL2 – Amenity Principles for Development
PL7 – Trees and Hedgerows
PL8 – Green Infrastructure and Landscaping
PL9 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity Assets
PL11 – Water Quality, Water Management, Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems
PL12 – Heritage Assets and their Settings
L2 – The Provision and Loss of Recreational, Sporting, Cultural and Community Facilities
L4 – Health and Wellbeing
IN1 – Development and Sustainable Modes of Travel
IN2 – Impact of Development on the Highways Network including Access and Servicing
IN3 – Parking Standards

Supplementary Planning Documents / Current Planning Guidance

Harlow Design Guide (2011) and Harlow Design Guide Addendum 2021

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) is a designated ‘Garden Community’ under the Government’s Garden Communities Programme.

The following are material planning considerations in the determination of applications and appeals:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023)

The Development Plan is prepared taking account of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (as extant at the time - the NPPF is regularly updated; currently in its 2023 version) and the associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (first published in

March 2014 but also regularly updated with the NPPF). The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of applications.

HDC Design Guide SPD (2011)

Design Guide Addendum SPD (adopted December 2021).

Essex Parking Standards (2009)

ECC Development Management Policies (2020 - living document with regular updates).

HGGT Guidance

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) is a designated 'Garden Community' under the Government's Garden Communities Programme.

NPPF Para.72 provides the national policy context for Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) as a location for larger scale (housing) development. Of particular note is the emphasis on; existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area's economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains..... plus; clear expectations for the quality of development and how this can be maintained (such as by following garden city principles).

The HGGT (Local Authorities) Partnership has published a series of documents that set the standards expected for developments in the Garden Town and are therefore relevant to this application.

The HGGT Vision elaborates on the HGGT's interpretation of garden city principles and sets expectations for high quality development to accord with the principles.

The HGGT Design Guide requires consideration of design quality in a garden city principles sense and draws attention to specific local issues.

SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

The key planning matters considered relevant to the determination of this application are as follows:

- Principle of development;
- Heritage;
- Biodiversity;
- Other matters;
- Equalities

Principle of Development

The NPPF supports provision of community facilities, including cultural infrastructure, and promotes community cultural wellbeing. The NPPF also supports appropriate proposals which secure the future of heritage assets. Policy L2 of the Local Plan supports provision of community and cultural facilities

The principle of development is therefore supported, and the development considered acceptable subject to matters of detail being appropriate.

Heritage

Policy PL12 seeks to protect the significance of heritage assets and their settings. The Council's Heritage Consultant has raised concerns on elements of the proposal which are set out below.

Museum Courtyard Extensions

The proposed glazed link to the western side of the courtyard, as noted in previous discussions, is contentious as it encloses the courtyard, obscuring views towards the gable ends of this part of the listed building from the west. This aspect of the proposal is considered to result in some harm to the significance of the listed building by further enclosing views of the building.

Whilst an appropriate red brick would match the existing listed building and the diaper-work detailing adds some texture and visual interest, the now proposed brick elevations are much more visually 'heavy' and prominent. The lightweight appearance of the previous proposal has been lost and the added visual bulk of the brickwork, particularly above the windows, is considered to be unsympathetically visually prominent.

Walled Garden Extension

The removal of the originally proposed large building within the walled garden is a significant improvement. The proposed small extension to house the museum entrance and reception, has been developed to minimise its impact on the listed building, including utilising a material which is complementary in colour to the existing red brick, ensuring it does not have a prominent form and keeping the height low so it sits below the existing eaves line. However, there remains a limited degree of residual harm due to the introduction of built form within the Walled Garden.

Scout Hut Café

The proposed extension would result in harm to the significance of the Grade II Listed outbuilding and Walled Garden due to the scale of the extension to the relatively small vernacular building and the visual encroachment on the historic wall. The design seeks to harmonise with the existing building through design and the use of materials, however, the need for the building to demarcate the entrance to the museum site results in an inevitable degree of visual prominence alongside the listed building. The proposed internal alterations are uncontentious. No historic fabric is impacted as the proposed extension connects to a modern single storey wing of the early eighteenth century building.

There is a degree of less than substantial harm to the significance of the Garden Wall due to the proposed new opening and resulting loss of historic fabric.

Conclusion

Overall, there would be some 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of the listed buildings arising from the courtyard extensions and glazed link, the proposed Walled Garden porch extension (although less than the initial proposed scheme for a much larger extension), and from the Scout Hut Café extension. As the listed buildings and the wider site are a positive element within the Conservation Area, the proposals would also result in a lower degree of 'less than substantial' harm to the Conservation Area. It is acknowledged that efforts have been made to mitigate the harm through the amended design.

Paragraph 208 of the NPPF states that harm should be balanced against any public benefits arising from the scheme, including securing the optimum viable use of the heritage assets. The proposed development would secure the future financial viability of the museum on the site. Revenue generated from the café and group space, including sales of food and

beverages, would provide a steady income stream to support the maintenance and conservation of the historic site. This financial stability reduces the reliance on external funding sources, grants, or subsidies. The removal of the 1980s additions to the main building and the refurbishment and reuse of the former Scout Hut would have a positive impact on the significance of the designated heritage assets.

It is considered that the public benefits of the scheme outweigh the less than substantial harm which has been identified. The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of impacts on the heritage significance of the site and complies with policy PL12, Heritage Assets and their Settings.

Biodiversity

The biodiversity assessment accompanying the application shows a net loss of biodiversity. The applicant states that inclusion of alternative habitats on the site would change the function of the formal landscape gardens, which they do not consider appropriate.

The applicant intends to achieve a minimum 10% net gain by securing off-site habitat gain. This can be secured by completion of a legal agreement. Subject to this the proposal is considered to meet the statutory and policy requirements with regard to Biodiversity Net Gain.

Other matters

Parking and highways

The site benefits from 23 car parking spaces, including three disabled persons spaces. No change is proposed in this respect. The level of parking is considered adequate to serve the upgraded museum and facilities.

Flooding and drainage

The site falls within Flood Zone 1, the area at least risk of flooding, and the proposal is considered acceptable in this respect.

Equalities

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which came into force on 5th April 2011, imposes important duties on public authorities in the exercise of their functions, including a duty to have regard to the need to:

“(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.”

For the purposes of this obligation the term “protected characteristic” includes:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;

- sex;
- sexual orientation.

The above duties require an authority to demonstrate that any decision it makes is reached “in a fair, transparent and accountable way, considering the needs and the rights of different members of the community and the duty applies to a local planning authority when determining a planning application.” Officers consider that the application does not give rise to any concerns in respect of the above

RECOMMENDATION

That Committee resolve to grant permission subject to completion of a legal agreement to secure an off-site Biodiversity Net Gain of minimum 10% and subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
REASON: In order to comply with Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. Prior to commencement of above ground works, specifications and samples of all external finish materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved materials and details specified and shall be permanently maintained as such.
REASON: To protect the significance of the heritage assets and comply with Policy PL12 of the Harlow Local Development Plan 2020.
3. Prior to commencement of any work, a detailed schedule of works and repairs to the existing buildings and Garden Wall shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
REASON: To protect the significance of the heritage assets and comply with Policy PL12 of the Harlow Local Development Plan 2020.
4. Prior to installation, a schedule of drawings that show details of all proposed windows, doors and glazed panels, in section and elevation at scales between 1:20 and 1:1 as appropriate, showing details of glazing type, framing, glazing bars, cills, and junctions with the existing buildings, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be permanently maintained as such.
REASON: To protect the significance of the heritage assets and comply with Policy PL12 of the Harlow Local Development Plan 2020.
5. Rainwater goods shall be painted or powder-coated metal and shall be permanently maintained as such.
REASON: To protect the significance of the heritage assets and comply with Policy PL12 of the Harlow Local Development Plan 2020.
6. The proposed development shall be completed in full accordance with the submitted arboricultural details: Arboricultural Impact Assessment At Harlow Museum, Muskham Road, Harlow by A.T Coombes Associates LTD 29/09/2023 (Revised version).
Any alterations to the agreed details must be prior approved by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in writing.

REASON: To ensure that damage to vegetation identified for retention is avoided and to comply with the duties indicated in Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and policies PL1, PL7 and PL8 of the Harlow Local Development Plan 2020.

7. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as shown listed in the table below.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

<u>Plan and Document Reference</u>	<u>Date Received</u>
HARHM-MCB-AZ-ZZ-DR-A-0401-S4 Rev P01 Proposed Sections Sheet 2 of 2	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-AZ-ZZ-DR-A-0505-S4 Rev P04 Proposed External Repairs Elevations Scout Hut Cafe	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-AZ-ZZ-DR-A-0505-S4 RevP04 Proposed External Repairs Elevations	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-BZ-00-DR-A-0200-S4 Rev P04 Existing Ground Floor & Roof Plans Scout Hut Cafe	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-BZ-00-DR-A-0250-S4 Rev P04 Demolition Ground Floor & Roof Plans Scout Hut Cafe	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-BZ-00-DR-A-0300-S4 Rev P05 Proposed Ground Floor & Roof Plans	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-BZ-ZZ-DR-A-0202-S4 Rev P04 Existing Elevations Sheet 1 of 2	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-BZ-ZZ-DR-A-0203-S4 Rev P04 Existing Elevations Sheet 2 of 2	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-BZ-ZZ-DR-A-0205-S4 Rev P04 Existing Sections Scout Hut Cafe	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-BZ-ZZ-DR-A-0252-S4 Rev P04 Demolition Elevations Sheet 1 of 2	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-BZ-ZZ-DR-A-0253-S4 Rev P04 Demolition Elevations Sheet 2 of 2	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-BZ-ZZ-DR-A-0255-S4 Rev P04 Demolition Sections Scout Hut Cafe	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-BZ-ZZ-DR-A-0400-S4 Rev P05 Proposed Sections Scout Hut Cafe	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-BZ-ZZ-DR-A-0401-S4 Rev P01 Proposed Sections Sheet 2 of 2 Scout Hut Cafe	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-BZ-ZZ-DR-A-0500-S4 Rev P04 Proposed Elevations Sheet 1 of 2 Scout Hut Cafe	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-BZ-ZZ-DR-A-0501-S4 Rev P04 Proposed Elevations Sheet 2 of 2 Scout Hut Cafe	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-SI-ZZ-DR-A-0100-S4 Rev P05 Site Location Plan	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-SI-ZZ-DR-A-0101-S4 Rev P08 Existing Site Plan	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-SI-ZZ-DR-A-0121-S4 Rev P07 Demolition Site Plan	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-SI-ZZ-DR-A-0140-S4 Rev P12 Proposed Site Plan	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-SI-ZZ-DR-A-0141-S4 Rev P12 Proposed Landscape Site Plan	18.06.2024

HARHM-MCB-AZ-ZZ-DR-A-0202-S4 Rev P04 Existing Elevations Sheet 1 of 2	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-AZ-00-DR-A-0200-S4 Rev P04 Existing Ground Floor & Roof Plans	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-AZ-00-DR-A-0250-S4 Rev P04 Demolition Ground Floor & Roof Plans	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-AZ-00-DR-A-0300-S4 Rev P05 Proposed Ground Floor & Roof Plan	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-AZ-ZZ-DR-A-0203-S4 Rev P04 Existing Elevations Sheet 2 of 2	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-AZ-ZZ-DR-A-0205-S4 Rev P04 Existing Sections	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-AZ-ZZ-DR-A-0252-S4 Rev P04 Demolition Elevations Sheet 1 of 2	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-AZ-ZZ-DR-A-0253-S4 Rev P04 Demolition Elevations Sheet 2 of 2	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-AZ-ZZ-DR-A-0255-S4 Rev P04 Demolition Sections	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-AZ-ZZ-DR-A-0400-S4 Rev P05 Proposed Sections	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-AZ-ZZ-DR-A-0500-S4 Rev P04 Proposed Elevations Sheet 1 of 2	18.06.2024
HARHM-MCB-AZ-ZZ-DR-A-0501-S4 Rev P04 Proposed Elevations Sheet 2 of 2	18.06.2024

INFORMATIVES

1. The Local Planning Authority has assessed the proposal against all material considerations including planning policies and any comments that may have been received. The planning application has been approved in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and local plan to promote delivery of sustainable development and to approach decision taking in a positive way.
2. The applicant's attention is drawn to the misidentification in the submitted arboricultural impact assessment of T9 as a sycamore when it is in fact a turkey oak. This should be changed in the submission pursuant to condition 6 as it could have impacts on construction depths for the new cafe to ensure suitable foundations.



INFORMATIVE CLAUSES