

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

Application No : 14/02900/FULL1

Ward:
Darwin

Address : Land Known As Jenny's Field
Blackness Lane Keston

OS Grid Ref: E: 541000 N: 162504

Applicant : Mr Ian Stell

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Erection of 1m high boundary fencing and change of use from rough grazing to apiary (beekeeping)

Key designations:

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
Green Belt
London City Airport Safeguarding

Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the following:

- beekeeping with a maximum of 20 hives
- a wooden shed with a floor area of 1.26 x 0.86m² is proposed with a height of 0.93m to the north of the site
- 1m high wooden fence and hedge to enclose the apiary
- vehicle access to the site via an entrance adjacent to Keston Fruit Farm Cottages
- the applicant has confirmed that beekeeping is for a hobby rather than a business

Location

The site is located close to Keston Fruit Farm and is designated Green Belt land. The site and surroundings comprise agricultural and open land. There are residential properties to the east and south that are over 450m away on Blackness Lane and Leaves Green Road.

The site is currently used for rough grazing.

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and comments received are summarised as follows:

- increase in traffic
- narrow private road
- not suitable for heavy traffic
- access via private properties
- not fit for increase in traffic
- concerns over facilities for bee keep and staff?
- risk of litter
- no refused collection
- hives can contain 50,000 bees- can be intimidating for people
- bees can swarm
- risk of being stung
- hives would need to be sited high off ground
- what is to stop current bee keeper selling plot to less experienced keeper
- eye sore
- leads the way for other businesses to open

A full copy of the letter is available on the file. Any further comments will be reported verbally at the meeting.

Comments from Consultees

Highways- no objections in principle

Planning Considerations

The application falls to be determined in accordance with the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan and the London Plan:

BE1 Design of New Development
G1 Green Belt
T3 Parking
T18 Road Safety

The National Planning Policy Framework and the London Plan are also considerations.

The site is subject to an Article 4 Direction, which restricts certain 'permitted development' rights, in the interests of maintaining the openness of the Green Belt.

Planning History

None.

Conclusions

The main issues relating to the application are the effect that it would have on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt and the impact that it would have on the amenities of the occupants of surrounding residential properties.

Policy G1 of the UDP states that changes of use within the Green Belt may be considered appropriate provided that they maintain the openness of the land and do not conflict with the purposes of retaining land in the Green Belt. In this case, the proposal includes 1m high fencing, the small shed and hives, and will provide an outdoor recreational use for the Applicant. The proposed fencing will enclose this section of land to enable the use of the land as an apiary to be separated from the remaining part of the field. Members will be aware that in October 2013, an Article 4 Direction was imposed on Keston Fruit Farm which requires new enclosures, formation of an accesses and moveable structures (under Class A of Part 2 of Schedule 2 and Class A and Class B of Part 4 of Schedule 2). The main purpose of the direction is to prevent the subdivision of the existing plots to maintain the openness of the Green Belt. Although the use of the site as an apiary in itself may be an acceptable use within the Green Belt, the enclosure of the site would be contrary to the purposes of the Article 4 Direction and may result in difficulty in resisting similar sub-divisions of adjacent plots. It will impact on the openness and character of the land.

The NPPF states in Para 89 that the provision of outdoor recreational facilities may not be considered inappropriate. In this case, the proposed use is for outdoor recreation for a personal use, that use would have no discernible harm to the rural character and openness of the site. The proposed change of use would not, therefore, conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and would entirely retain its openness and rural character. However, Members may consider that the required boundary enclosure would be detrimental to the visual amenities and openness of the Green Belt.

Although one letter of objection has been received and taken into account whilst assessing the application, the proposal site is located a significant distance from neighbouring properties and therefore is unlikely to impact harmfully on the amenities of neighbouring dwellings.

Although the use itself may not be considered harmful to the openness and character of the Green Belt, the subdivision of this land will harm the Green Belt and refusal is recommended.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on the file ref. 14/02900 set out in the Planning History section above, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION BE REFUSED

The reasons for refusal are:

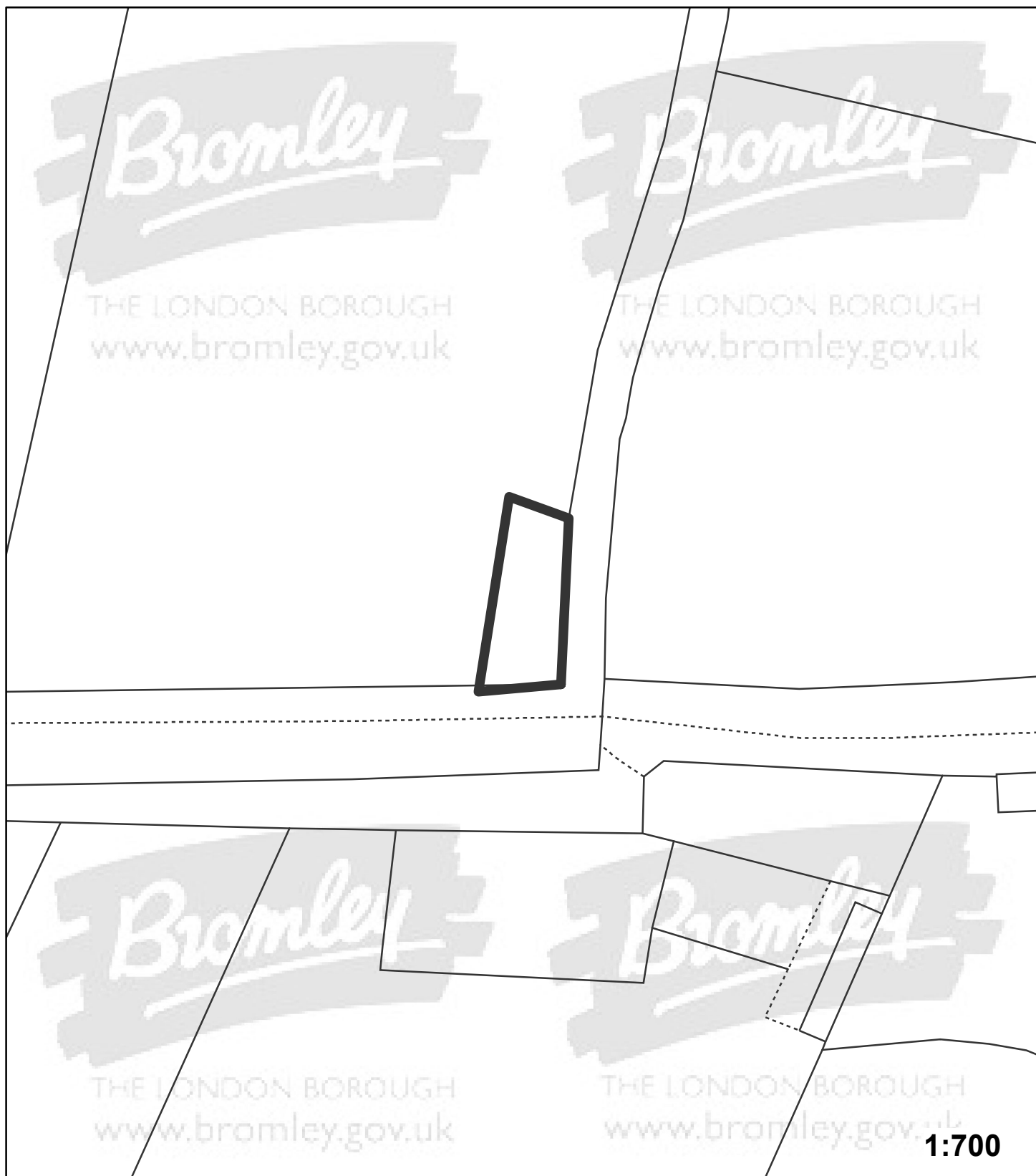
- 1 The proposed enclosure would result in an undesirable sub-division of the land which would be detrimental to the character, openness and visual

amenities of Green Belt, thereby contrary to Policy G1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

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"This plan is provided to identify the location of the site and should not be used to identify the extent of the application site"

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