



TO: Planning Committee (North)
BY: Development Manager
DATE: 7 March 2017
DEVELOPMENT: Change of use of land for recreational camping including the siting of 2no. yurts and a facilities block together with access, car parking and associated landscaping
SITE: Holme Farm Orchard Winterpit Lane Mannings Heath Horsham
WARD: Nuthurst
APPLICATION: DC/16/2492
APPLICANT: Delcraven Ltd

REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA: At the request of Councillor Bradnum

RECOMMENDATION: To grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 7

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

To consider the planning application.

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

- 1.1.1 The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of a parcel of land measuring some 0.45 hectares for low key recreational camping. The proposal includes the construction of an access track and car parking area, the siting of two yurts and an amenity shed and associated landscaping.
- 1.1.2 The yurts will be of a traditional design, with a circular footprint, a cone shaped roof and a fabric cover. They will have a diameter of 5.8 metres, an overall height of 2.7 metres and an eaves height of 1.55 metres. The yurts will stand on skids so that they can be moved if and when necessary.
- 1.1.3 The amenity shed will measure some 7 metres by 3.1 metres and provide kitchen, bathroom and washing/drying facilities for the users of the yurts. The building will be 3.8 metres to the ridge and 2.3 metres to the eaves. It will be clad in timber boarding with a lightweight clay tile style roof. The unit will be connected to the water supply and waste water Klargestor by flexible hoses, which can be detached if the unit is moved and the facility can be plugged into the site's electricity supply.
- 1.1.4 A new access track will be formed off the existing access off Winterpit Lane and will utilise an existing gateway. The track and car parking area, providing parking for 4 vehicles, will be formed of a geotextile sheet with a plastic grid, filled with soil and shingle and seeded

with grass. New planting is proposed around the car parking area with a post and rail fence forming the northern boundary.

- 1.1.5 Since the submission of the application, and following concerns raised by the Council's Landscape Officer, the layout of the proposal has been amended to address the landscape impact of the proposal.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 1.2.1 Holme Farm Orchard lies within a rural area on the southern side of Winterpit Lane, approximately 500m (as the crow flies) south east of the built-up area boundary of Mannings Heath. The land to the north of Winterpit Lane lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 1.2.2 The site itself relates to an area of land, some 0.45 hectares, to the east of the access track off Winterpit Lane that provides access to the applicant's property (Holme Farm Orchard) along with a number of other residential properties to the south. The access track is also a bridleway.
- 1.2.3 To the immediate south of the application site lies a number of mature trees and a pond, and beyond this residential properties and land associated with the nearby racing stables. To the east of the site lies 'Brookfield Barn' which hosts weddings and other functions along with having a golf course to the south. To the north and west of the site lies land within the ownership of the applicant (amounting to some 10 hectares) which comprises a stable building adjacent to Winterpit Lane which has been granted permission for conversion to residential, and the applicant's property, garage and storage building to the west.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 STATUTORY BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2.2 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICY

- 2.2.1 The following sections of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) (NPPF) are relevant to the consideration of this application (Note: This list is not exhaustive and other paragraphs of the Framework are referred to where necessary within the contents of the report):

- Section 1: Building a strong, competitive economy
- Section 3: Supporting a prosperous economy
- Section 4: Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 7: Requiring good design
- Section 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 2.2.2 National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 (NPPG).

2.3 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICY

- 2.3.1 Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) – the following policies are of particular relevance:

Policy 1 – Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development

Policy 2 – Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
 Policy 3 – Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
 Policy 4 – Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
 Policy 7 – Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
 Policy 10 – Rural Economic Development
 Policy 11 – Tourism and Cultural Facilities
 Policy 24 – Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
 Policy 25 – Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
 Policy 26 – Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
 Policy 30 – Protected Landscapes
 Policy 31 – Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
 Policy 32 – Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
 Policy 33 – Development Principles
 Policy 35 – Strategic Policy: Climate Change
 Policy 37 – Sustainable Construction
 Policy 40 – Sustainable Transport
 Policy 41 – Parking

2.4 RELEVANT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2.4.1 The Parish of Lower Beeding was designated as a Neighbourhood Development Plan Area on 30 December 2015.

2.5 PLANNING HISTORY

2.5.1 Various applications have been submitted for development within the wider Holme Farm site over the last 25 years. Such applications include conversion of barns and business uses to residential uses, agricultural storage buildings and access tracks.

2.5.2 Most recently a stable building to the north of the application site was granted permission on appeal for conversion to a dwelling (DC/15/1251) and permission has been granted for an extension to an existing tractor storage building at Holme Farm Orchard (DC/16/2759).

3. OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS

3.1 Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk.

3.2 INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

3.2.1 **Landscape Officer** – No objections.

3.2.2 **Ecology Consultant** – No objection subject to a condition relating to external lighting.

3.2.3 **Environmental Health** – No objection subject to conditions.

3.2.4 **Drainage Engineer** – No comments.

3.2.5 **Economic Development** – Support the application as it will begin to deliver the Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study and the Horsham District Economic Strategy priority 5 (promoting the district officer).

3.3 OUTSIDE AGENCIES

3.3.1 **Southern Water** – No objection and advises that the applicant should consult the Environment Agency directly regarding the use of a package treatment plant which disposes of effluent to sub-soil irrigation.

3.3.2 **WSCC Highways** – No objection.

3.4 PARISH COUNCIL

3.4.1 Lower Beeding Parish Council – Object on the grounds that the proposal would result in the overdevelopment and overuse of green field land in an extremely rural area, increased highway traffic into the property and in Winterpit Lane and concerns about drainage, sewerage and plumbing.

3.4.2 Nuthurst Parish Council – Object on the grounds of the site is in the countryside and would increase traffic in Winterpit Lane.

3.5 MEMBER COMMENTS

3.5.1 Councillor Bradnum – Strong objections to the application.

3.6 PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

3.6.1 9 letters/emails of objection from 6 households have been received to the application as originally submitted which raise the following concerns:

- Greenfield, countryside location, outside of any village
- Use and proposed buildings out of keeping with location
- Single track access off Winterpit Lane which is also a bridleway
- Highway safety concerns
- The site is not used for agricultural purposes and is not therefore farm diversification
- Future redevelopment of the site or expansion of the campsite
- Permission refused by the Caravan Club for the site
- Adverse impact on neighbouring uses (wedding venue, racing stable and riding stables)
- No social, economic or environmental benefits identified
- No operating hours, control mechanisms or on-site management outlined to avoid foreseeable issues
- Issues of noise
- No demand for 'glamping'
- Precedent for other glamping sites in rural areas
- Permanent features proposed – sewerage systems, electricity supply etc

3.6.2 4 letters/emails of objection have been received to the amended scheme which raise the same issues as those outlined above.

4. HOW THE PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION WILL PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS

4.1 Article 8 (Right to respect of a Private and Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 are relevant to this application, Consideration of Human rights forms part of the planning assessment below.

5. HOW THE PROPOSAL WILL HELP TO REDUCE CRIME AND DISORDER

- 5.1 It is not considered that the development would be likely to have any significant impact on crime and disorder.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENTS

- 6.1 The main issues in the consideration of the application are:
- Principle of development
 - Impact on character and appearance of the locality
 - Highway safety
 - Impact on occupiers of neighbouring properties

Principle of development

- 6.2 Section 3 of the NPPF requires local and neighbourhood plans to promote a strong rural economy. Bullet point 3 of paragraph 28 of the NPPF requires plans to support sustainable rural tourism developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. The paragraph goes on to say that *“This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres...”*.
- 6.3 The preamble to Policy 11 of the HDPF, which relates to tourism and cultural facilities, sets out that tourism is a source of local employment, and around 5% of those employed in the district work in the sector, whilst although a small proportion of total local employment, is higher than the south east and national average. The policy recognises that there is a need for more accommodation as the District has very few hotels and most of the visitors to the area are day visitors.
- 6.4 Policy 11 sets a number of criteria that needs to be met. Tourism development should 1) reinforce the local distinctiveness and improve existing facilities; 2) focus major tourism and cultural facilities in Horsham town centre; 3) seek to ensure that facilities are available within the towns and villages in the district and are in keeping with their relationship with the urban area and countryside around them especially in and around the High Weald AONB and the South Downs National Park; 4) develop the opportunities associated with rural diversification and rural development initiative, particularly where they assist farm diversification projects, benefit the local economy, or enable the retention of buildings contributing to the character of the countryside; and 5) do not result in the loss of a cultural resource.
- 6.5 The Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study prepared in July 2016 shows that there is potential for a range of hotel and visitor accommodation opportunities in the rural parts of the District including some new touring and caravan and camping sites, eco-camping sites, camping pod developments and glamping sites. The report advises that *“...the demand for glamping in the District shows strong weekend break demand for this type of accommodation from April to September, with glamping operations generally fully booked on Friday and Saturday nights, and turning business away on these nights, especially in the main summer months. Depending on the size and type of glamping unit, weekend break customers are either couples or families travelling from London or Brighton. Midweek demand is not as strong for all glamping operations. Some are fully booked with full week lets for family holidays in the summer school holidays in July and August. Midweek demand is much lower in the summer months. Glamping tends to be largely seasonal, particularly for canvas glamping units. Shepherd’s huts and camping pods with heating attract some winter demand.”*

- 6.6 Concern has been raised by neighbours in respect of the need for such accommodation in the District. The yurts proposed would provide relatively inexpensive basic accommodation for visitors to the area who might not have the equipment or appetite for conventional camping. The yurts would contribute to the range and availability of low-cost accommodation within the District as shown to be required in the Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study.
- 6.7 Given the findings of the Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study, the relevant policies of the HDPF which are supportive of tourism facilities and the comments of the Council's Economic Development team, it is considered that the principle of providing a glamping site in this location is acceptable.

Impact on character and appearance of the locality

- 6.8 Policy 32 of the HDPF requires developments to be of a high quality and inclusive design based on a clear understanding of the context for development. It further requires development to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environment which complements locally distinctive characters and heritage of the district. Policy 33 relates to development principles and requires development, amongst other matters, to recognise any constraints that exist, to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout, are locally distinctive, favour the retention of important landscape and natural features and create safe environments.
- 6.9 Concerns have been raised by neighbours in respect of the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and the use of the site for glamping and proposed structures being out of keeping with the rural countryside location.
- 6.10 In this respect and following initial concerns raised by the Council's Landscape Officer, the layout of the site and the proposed scheme of planting have been amended. The plans show the yurts and amenity building repositioned on the site to make best use of the undulating nature of the site to screen the structures. The proposed hedge planting along the northern boundary has been replaced with a post and rail fence more in keeping with the area, the use of a plastic grid filled with soil and shingle and seeded with grass rather than hardcore to create the access and parking area, and an amended landscaping scheme showing more mature planting than that originally proposed.
- 6.11 The Council's Landscape Officer has advised that she is now satisfied with the scheme. Given that the level of activity anticipated on the site and the minimal structures proposed, it is not considered that the development will have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the locality.

Highway safety

- 6.12 Policy 40 of the HDPF states that development will be supported where it, amongst other things, provides safe and suitable access for all vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, public transport and the delivery of goods.
- 6.13 Concerns have been raised by neighbours in respect of the impact of the proposal on the existing private access to the site and Winterpit Lane. Neighbours are concerned about the impact an increase in traffic will have on equestrian users and users of the neighbouring public right of way, namely the racing and riding stables in the vicinity. In addition the owners of the neighbouring wedding venue are concerned, amongst other things, that there would be a significant safety risk to guests attending functions that decide to stay in the yurts and will be required to walk some 180m along an unlit section of tree-lined country road to reach their accommodation.

- 6.14 WSCC has raised no concerns in respect of highway safety. It is advised that the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe. In conclusion, WSCC has advised that they do not consider that this development would result in an impact on the local highway network that could be considered severe.
- 6.15 The application as submitted proposes the siting of two yurts with associated amenity block, which is considered will be self-limiting in terms of the number of people staying on the site and the number of additional vehicle movements associated with the use. Yurts generally provide open plan accommodation for 4-6 people. It is therefore likely that the yurts will be occupied by couples or families the majority of the time, with vehicle movements limited to some 1-2 vehicles per yurt. This is reflected in the number of car parking spaces being proposed.
- 6.16 Therefore given the advice of the Local Highway Authority in respect of the application, it is considered that the proposed development accords with Policy 40 of the HDPF and provides a safe and suitable access.

Impact on occupiers of neighbouring properties

- 6.17 Policy 33 of the HDPF requires development, amongst other matters, to not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding occupiers.
- 6.18 Concerns have been raised by neighbours in respect of the impact of the proposal on the neighbouring commercial uses (wedding venue, racing stable and riding stables), no operating hours, control mechanisms or on-site management being identified and the potential for noise nuisance from occupiers of the site.
- 6.19 The nearest non-associated residential properties are some 260 metres to the south west of the site, with Brookfield Barn (wedding venue) is some 120 metres to the north east. Cisswood Racing Stables are located some 1.1 kilometres to the south of the site in Lower Beeding although the gallops extend within approximately 35 metres of the application site. It is understood that Cisswood Racing Stables along with the riding school and livery at Forest Farm (450 metres to the north west of the site on the edge of Mannings Heath) use the private access off Winterpit Lane as it is a public bridleway (ROW1707).
- 6.20 Whilst there are a number of dwellings within the immediate vicinity of the site (some 275 metres to the south east) along with a number of commercial uses, given the type of activity proposed and the minimal vehicle movements likely to be associated with the use, it is considered that there would be no detrimental impact upon the amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring residential and the neighbouring commercial uses.

Conclusion

- 6.21 For the reasons as set out above, it is considered that the proposal would provide relatively inexpensive basic accommodation for visitors to the area who might not have the equipment or appetite for conventional camping and would contribute to the range and availability of low-cost accommodation within the District as shown to be required in the Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study. It is not considered that there would be a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the rural location, highway safety or the privacy and amenity of occupiers of the neighbouring residential properties or nearby commercial uses sufficient to warrant refusal of the application.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that planning permission be granted 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: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. No development shall commence until a drainage strategy detailing the proposed means of surface water disposal has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the development is properly drained and to comply with Policy 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

3. Notwithstanding the details submitted, details of the colour of the yurts shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to their siting on the site. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and none of the yurts shall be altered or amended in any way or replaced with any other structures or caravans without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4. The landscaping scheme submitted with the application (drawing no's 1423.30/04B and 1423.30/05 received 07.02.2017) shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development unless agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants/grassed areas which within a period of 5 years from the date of planting die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size, species and quality, unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

5. Neither of the units hereby permitted shall be occupied unless and until provision for the storage of refuse/recycling has been made for that use in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These facilities shall thereafter be retained for use at all times.

Reason: To ensure the adequate provision of recycling facilities in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

6. Prior to the first occupation (or use) of any part of the development hereby permitted, the parking turning and access facilities shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details as shown on plan (1423.30/04B) and shall be thereafter retained as such.

Reason: To ensure adequate parking, turning and access facilities are available to serve the development in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

7. No more than two yurts and one amenity shed shall be sited on the site at any one time.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

8. The yurts and amenity shed shall be sited as per drawing no. 1423.30/04B received 07.02.2017.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

9. No external lighting shall be installed unless details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and to provide ecological protection and enhancement in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Background Papers: DC/16/2492