

**8 DCCE2007/0283/F - RETENTION OF EXISTING PONTOON, STEPS AND STORAGE AREA FOR MAX. 30 CANOES. LUCKSALL CARAVAN PARK, MORDIFORD, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR1 4LP****For: Mr. & Mrs. G. Williams, Wall, James and Davies,  
15-23 Hagley Road, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8  
1QW****Date Received: 1st February, 2007    Ward: Backbury    Grid Ref: 56775, 36240****Expiry Date: 29th March, 2007**

Local Member: Councillor Mrs. J.E. Pemberton

This application was deferred at the meeting of the Central Area Planning Sub-Committee on the 4th April, 2007 in order to carry out a Members' site visit. This site visit was carried out on the 17th April, 2007.

**1. Site Description and Proposal**

1.1 This application seeks permission for the retention of a floating pontoon, access steps, and canoe storage area at Lucksall Caravan Park, Mordiford together with the provision of a terraced enclosure. The application site is located in the open countryside and is within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site is found to the west of the B4224, north of Fiddlers Green, and south of the river crossing and the junction with the B4399. The River Wye is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

1.2 The area subject of this application is to the north of the camping and caravan site, to the side and rear of the existing reception building. The application seeks to secure permission for a storage area to the rear of the reception building to provide a protected facility for canoes. The canoes are only available for hire to persons staying at the site. The pontoon and associated steps are to the west of the canoe storage area and are intended to provide river access to campers and caravanners hiring canoes on site, as well as a formalised landing and launching area for visiting organisations. The steps are of timber construction with the pontoon of metal/plastic construction and effectively replace a long established an informal river access point slightly further to the north.

**2. Policies****2.1 Planning Policy Guidance:**

PPS1	-	Delivering sustainable development
PPS7	-	Sustainable development in rural areas
PPS9	-	Biodiversity and geological conservation
PPG21	-	Tourism

## 2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007

S1	-	Sustainable development
S2	-	Development requirements
S6	-	Transport
S7	-	Natural and historic heritage
S8	-	Recreation, sport and tourism
DR1	-	Design
DR2	-	Land use and activity
DR7	-	Flood risk
T11	-	Parking provision
LA1	-	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
LA2	-	Landscape character and areas least resilient to change
RST1	-	Criteria for recreation, sport and tourism development
RST2	-	Recreation, sport and tourism development within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
RST14	-	Static caravans, chalets, camping and touring caravan sites
NC1	-	Biodiversity and development
NC2	-	Sites of international importance
NC3	-	Sites of national importance
NC4	-	Sites of local importance

## 3. Planning History

- 3.1 DCCE2007/0286/F - Improvement to existing access, re-use of existing storage building and store as office, sales and cafe. Undetermined.
- 3.2 DCCE2006/3365/F - Proposed park vehicle access way - part retrospective. Approved 4th December, 2006.
- 3.3 DCCE2006/0351/F - Repositioning of existing caravans and addition of 13 static caravans to include change of use of part of land. Approved 31st May, 2006.
- 3.4 DCCE2005/2119/F - Repositioning of existing caravans and addition of 13 static caravans to include change of use of part of land. Withdrawn 24th August, 2005.
- 3.5 DCCE2004/2207/F - Low level lighting. Approved 26th August, 2004.
- 3.6 DCCE2004/2208/A - Fascia sign. Approved 27th August, 2004.
- 3.7 SH931333PF - Change of use of part of barn to form reception area. Approved 5th January, 1994.
- 3.8 SH930192PF - Septic tank. Approved 6th December, 1993.
- 3.9 SH911310PF - Change of use to extend park and erect a toilet block. Approved 9th June, 1992.
- 3.10 SH780187PF - Use of land as a holiday camping and caravan site. Approved 10th May, 1975.

#### 4. Consultation Summary

##### Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Environment Agency: No objection subject to an informative advising of the requirement for Land Drainage Consent.
- 4.2 Natural England: No objection to the proposal in the context of landscape impact or the SSSI/SAC but advise of the requirement to secure Land Drainage Consent from the EA and note concern over the unauthorised works carried out.

##### Internal Council Advice

- 4.3 Traffic Manager: No objection.
- 4.4 PROW Manager: No objection.
- 4.5 Conservation Manager (Ecologist): No objection
- 4.6 Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager: No objection.

#### 5. Representations

- 5.1 Fownhope Parish Council: No objection.
- 5.2 Holme Lacy Parish Council: Raised the following objections:
- Unhappy pattern for retrospective planning applications;
  - Support tourism and leisure activities but these must be sympathetic to the environment, and its impact upon the area and neighbouring properties fully assessed;
  - Impact upon wildlife requires full consideration;
  - Unauthorised work to a SSSI requires careful consideration.
- 5.3 Local Residents: Four letters of objection have been received from the following sources:
- D.M. & S.A. Parker, Deepwood, Fownhope;
  - A. Harris & R. Ensor, Evendene, Mordiford (x3).

The comments raised can be summarised as follows:

1. Unacceptable access arrangements;
  2. Highway safety issues due;
  3. Adverse impact upon the visual amenities of the locality;
  4. Adverse impact upon AONB;
  5. Impact upon residential amenities caused by canoe related activities;
  6. Boundary/ownership issue;
  7. A site less harmful to neighbouring residential amenities would be available;
  8. The business activities on site have expanded to an unreasonable level.
- 5.3 Three letters have also been submitted in support of the application from the following sources:

- Ian Scott, Panel Secretary, Severn and Wye Expedition Panel (Duke of Edinburgh's Award);
- P.F. Daines, Mill Farm Barn, Fownhope;
- Worcester County Council [Malvern Hills Outdoor Centre]

The comments raised can be summarised as follows:

1. Few access points to the River Wye Navigation are available and access is dependent upon 'friendly landowners';
2. Lucksall is the only access point between Hereford and Hoarwithy, a distance of 16 miles;
3. The owners of this site have welcomed canoeists for more than 50 years;
4. The launch provides for both individuals and hire companies;
5. The site offers a good, safe access to the river and new facilities will improve this;
6. Re-siting the launch would require canoeists passing through the camping/caravan site itself;
7. The EA is looking for 5 new access points along the river in addition of this one, and as such the loss of this facility would be a great pity;
8. The loss of this facility would make the distance between access points 43km, beyond the ability of some river users;
9. The site is an essential link in the camp site chain as 'wild' camping is not supported by teh DofE's Award;
10. The tourist activity associated with canoeists are an important part of the tourist industry in this area;
11. Canoeing is a low impact activity appropriate for a rural environment;
12. Restricting hours of activity on site would compromise the safety of river users;
13. The loss of the launch/landing facility will make the Malvern Hills Outdoor Centre's canoe expedition programme unviable.

5.4 The full text of these letters can be inspected at Central Planning Services, Garrick House, Widemarsh Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

## **6. Officers Appraisal**

6.1 It is considered that the principle issues for consideration in this application are as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Residential Amenities
- Visual Amenities
- Highway Issues
- Ecology

### Principle of Development

6.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007 Policy S8 considers recreation, sport, tourism. The enhancement of existing facilities is offered broad support, subject to consideration of the site specific factors. Policy RST1 considers these matters in more detail and advises that proposals will be permitted where they are appropriate for the location, will not harm the amenities of neighbouring properties, respect the environment, and are accessible by a choice of transport modes. Policy RST2 specifically considers new development such as that proposed in this application and which falls within an AONB. In such circumstances, development must have particular

regard to the landscape impact, be small in scale and of appropriate materials, and make a positive contribution to the understanding and quiet enjoyment of the natural beauty of the area.

- 6.3 On the basis of the above it is considered that the principle of this development can be accepted, with the acceptability or otherwise of the proposal resting upon the details of the application.

#### Residential Amenities

- 6.4 In the context of disturbance to residential amenities the principal property for consideration is Evendene. Although the residential curtilage of this dwelling does not run down to the river, the canoe storage area is nevertheless adjacent to the property boundary to Evendene and together with the pontoon is in relatively close proximity to the dwelling, and its associated residential curtilage. The formalisation of launching/landing may result in an increased activity level and the amenity implications of this activity are of note. However it must be stressed that the use of this section of the bank for access to the river is a long established activity over which the local planning authority has no regulatory control. The siting of the pontoon is such that it would reduce the impact on Evendene when compared to the long established access point. Nevertheless it is considered appropriate to ensure that the use of the canoes in the storage area, which represent Lucksall's own hire facility, are for the benefit of persons staying at the site only. In this way the actual activity will be maintained at an acceptable level in the context of this established use of the site.

- 6.5 The use of the pontoon and canoe storage area, particularly in the summer months, offers the potential to cause a degree of disturbance which inevitably results from the use of the storage area and launching/recovery craft. However, this impact must be weighed up against the benefit to rural tourism represented by this launch/landing point, the long established nature of landing/launching in this area, and the limited number of launch/landing points that are available along this stretch of the River Wye. It is significant that the Environmental Health Officer has not raised an objection to the impact of these uses in this location and, with the condition suggested above, it is considered that the impact will be within acceptable limits.

#### Visual Amenities

- 6.6 The physical alterations proposed are relatively limited. The canoe storage area is to the rear of the existing reception facility and integrates with it visually. The steps and pontoon are small in scale and limited visibility is afforded to them. They are considered to be an appropriate form of development for a riverbank location such as this.
- 6.7 Turning to the AONB implications, it is considered that the actual physical alterations are of a scale that will ensure that the high quality of this landscape is maintained. In terms of the implications of the use proposed, canoeing activities can be carried out on the river regardless of this permission. It is assessed that the provision of this formal landing/launching facility will not adversely affect the intrinsic natural beauty and amenity of the area and will make a positive contribution to the ability of river users to enjoy the natural beauty of the AONB.

Highway Issues

- 6.8 Informal landing/launching activity in this location is long established, however, it is recognised that the formalisation of the landing and launching facility may result in an intensification of its use. In this context the condition proposed in Para. 6.4 above, restricting the users of the canoes in the storage area to persons staying at the site, is again relevant. Such users will not result in additional traffic generation and in this way it can be ensured that the traffic generation. The Traffic Manager has confirmed that he has no objection to the proposal and on this basis it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in the context of highway safety matters.

Ecology

- 6.9 The importance of the River Wye as a SAC, SSSI, and Special Wildlife Site is significant having regard to the steps and pontoon and the associated formalisation of landing/launching in this location. An Ecological Survey, particularly focused upon otter and water voles, was submitted with this application and has been assessed by the Council's Ecologist. It is advised that the otter, water vole, and other protected species will not be significantly affected by the development. This position is supported by Natural England, who raise no objection in the context of ecological matters.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. A01 (Time limit for commencement (full permission)).**

**Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**

- 2 C02 (Approval of storage area fencing details).**

**Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area.**

- 3 The canoes stored within the canoe storage area shall be for the benefit of persons staying at the Lucksall Camping and Caravan Park only.**

**Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the locality and in the interests of highway safety.**

**Informatives:**

- 1 N01 - Access for all.**
- 2 N03 - Adjoining property rights.**
- 3 N04 - Rights of way.**
- 4 HN02 - Public rights of way affected.**
- 5 N11A - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) – Birds.**

- 6 N11B - Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Conservation (Nat. Habitats & C.) Regs 1994 – Bats.
- 7 N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC.
- 8 N19 - Avoidance of doubt.

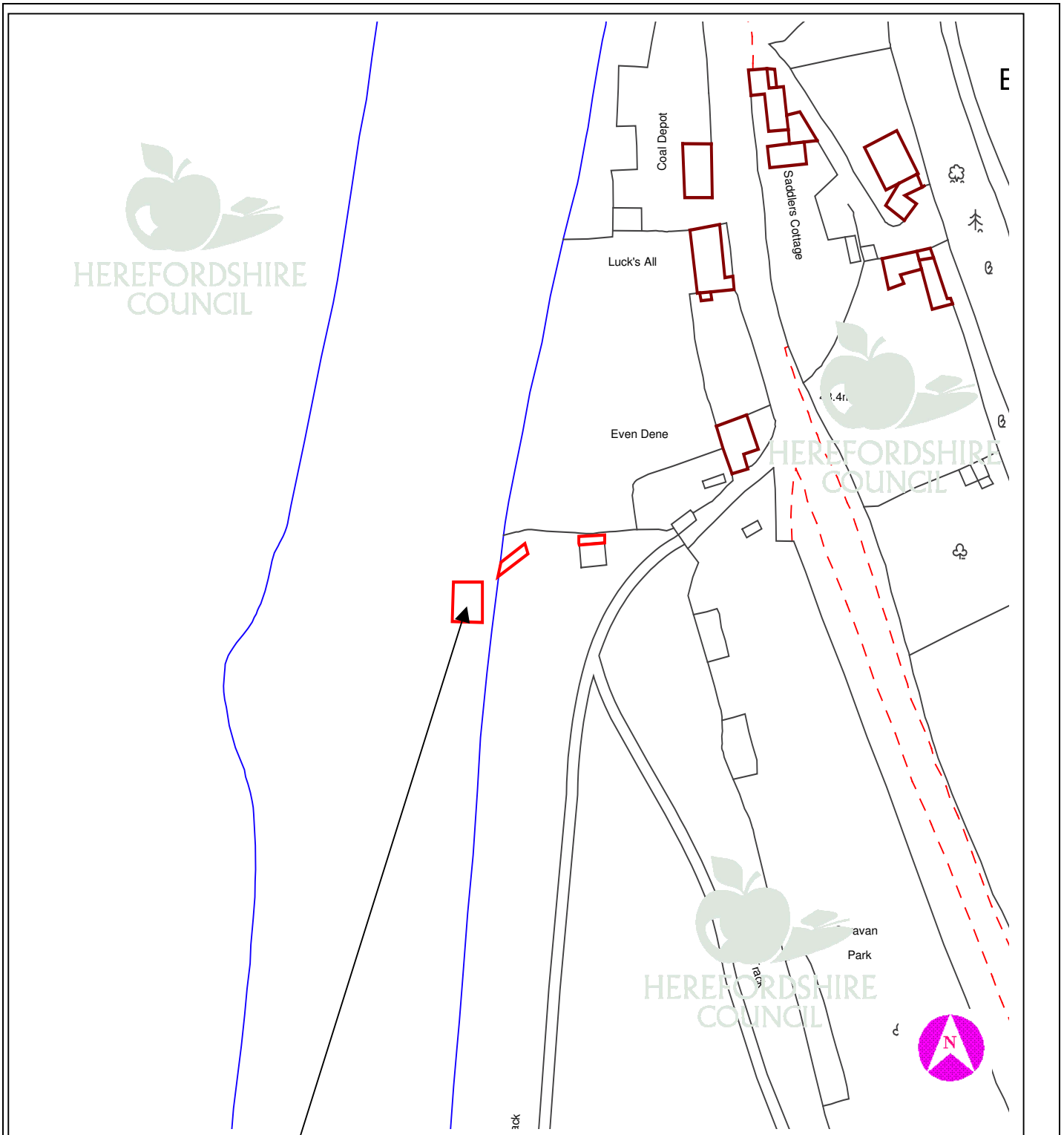
Decision: .....

Notes: .....

.....

**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.



This copy has been produced specifically for Planning purposes. No further copies may be made.

**APPLICATION NO:** DCCE2007/0283/F

**SCALE :** 1 : 1250

**SITE ADDRESS :** Lucksall Caravan Park, Mordiford, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR1 4LP

Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Herefordshire Council. Licence No: 100024168/2005