

13 DCCE2008/0098/F – RETENTION OF AND CHANGE OF USE OF HARD STANDING FOR CARAVANS WITH ASSOCIATED DRAINAGE WORKS. (RETROSPECTIVE). SHIPLEY, HOLME LACY, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR2 6LS

For: Mr. R. Macadie, Shipley, Holme Lacy, Hereford, HR2 6LS

Date Received: 15th January, 2008 Ward: Hollington Grid Ref: 55855, 35857

Expiry Date: 11th March, 2008

Local Member: Councillor GFM Dawe

1. Site Description and Proposal

1.1 The site is located on the south eastern side of the B4299 on the eastern edge of Holme Lacy and falls within the open countryside as identified in the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007. The site occupies a corner position bordering the main road and an unmade track to the south west leading to a property known as Shipley. To the north is a farm and west and south west are residential properties. Levels within the site fall away from the main road in a south easterly direction with dropping away steeply beyond. The north west and south west boundaries of the site are enclosed by mature landscaping comprising a mixture of trees and shrubs, the remaining boundaries remain open to agricultural land beyond.

1.2 Retrospective planning permission is sought for the retention of an area of hardstanding used for the siting five touring caravans along with a vehicular access track. In addition, drainage works have been undertaken including the provision of a septic tank for foul drainage and electric hook-ups.

2. Policies

2.1 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007:

S2	-	Development requirements
S7	-	Natural and historic heritage
S8	-	Recreation, sport and tourism
DR1	-	Design
DR2	-	Land use and activity
DR3	-	Movement
LA1	-	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
LA2	-	Landscape character and areas least resilient to change
LA3	-	Setting of settlements
LA6	-	Landscaping schemes
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

3. Planning History

- 3.1 CE2002/0005/F - Change of use of agricultural land and buildings to rural visitor attraction, with alterations to vehicular access. (including gardens and woodland walks, sale of plants, trees and garden bric-a-brac). Approved 22nd February, 2002.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 None required.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Traffic Manager: No objections subject to improvements to the visibility, width and surfacing of the principal access off the B4399.

- 4.3 Conservation Manager (Landscape):

The site is within the Wye Valley AONB and whilst small in scale, will introduce not only a number of large touring caravans, but bring about a change in the character and use of the land that could be considered as detrimental to the 'intrinsic natural beauty' of the area. I do not consider the application to make a positive contribution to the quality of the landscape or enhance the biodiversity of the area. Although the provision of touring caravan sites may contribute to tourism activities in the area, conducive to economic well-being, this should be balanced against any reduction in the quality of experience. Immediate views of the site are limited by the presence of existing vegetation, but wider views primarily from and in the vicinity of the B4224 will be detrimentally effected. The test in policy LA1 of the UDP are not met.

The change in use of land from agricultural to amenity establishes a permanent change in the character of the landscape. Small scale changes are often symptomatic of a general direction in change and quality and whilst no specific studies into the changing quality and character of this part of the county have been undertaken, a precautionary approach would be recommended considering the national designation of AONB.

The site is located in a landscape type defined as 'Principal Settled Farmland' in the Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment. Whilst the combination of elements in this type of landscape and the historic development of land use is generally considered to have resulted in a robust landscape, the predominant characteristics are of mixed agricultural use defined by a strong pattern of hedgerows. This landscape character type has been seriously degraded in the last quarter of the twentieth century and into the twenty first. Subtle changes in lands use can result in significant changes in the overall character of the landscape and, again, a precautionary approach should be taken to any development that requires a change in land use and the introduction of incongruous elements. It should be noted that whilst not necessarily intervisible the proposed site is in close proximity to the existing Lucksall static caravan site.

Whilst the proposed landscaping of the site would go some way to mitigating the impact of the proposal, details have not been provided and the topography and visibility of the site would require detailed assessment of the location and scale of landscaping required to mitigate any impact.

If this application is approved I would recommend the attachment of a condition requiring a detailed scheme of landscaping to be submitted and approved by the LPA.

5. Representations

5.1 Holme Lacy Parish Council:

1. There is already a lorry trailer being used as living accommodation on site which is very noisy as a generator runs all night and is also unsightly. This appears to be used for permanent living accommodation. No planning permission has been seen by the Parish Council for this.
2. The site was used by caravan and tents in 2007.
3. Concerns regarding the safety of the access to and from the site by caravans. No visibility for traffic coming up the hill from the causeway makes it dangerous for long, slow-moving vehicles turning into and out of the entrance.
4. The site is very visible in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

5.2 Six letters of objection have been received from Summit View, Holme Lacy; Longmead House, Shucknall Hill; Red Bank, Holme Lacy; Berringtons Chartered Surveyors, The Sheiling, Holme Lacy; and Hillcrest, Holme Lacy the main points raised are:

1. The site is very prominent and exposed especially from an easterly direction.
2. More appropriate sites nearer the applicants existing dwelling are available.
3. The access is unsafe and there have been a number of accidents in recent times in the locality.
4. There is already considerable noise from the site as a result of generators running continuously.
5. Works have already been undertaken therefore the application is retrospective.
6. There is already a permanent caravan on site which is being lived in.
7. There is an existing established caravan and camp site less than a mile away.
8. The development will lead to increased light pollution.

5.3 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. Officer's Appraisal

- 6.1 The site falls within the open countryside, which is also designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The primary consideration in the assessment of this application is therefore the landscape and visual impact of the development. It should first be clarified that the development applied for is the retention of a hardstanding and other infrastructure such as septic tank, electric hook-ups and water connection points. The use of the land for the siting of up to five touring caravans enjoys permitted development rights under Class A of part 5 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. This is subject to obtaining an exemption certificate from the Caravanning and Camping Club. This is being applied for and is likely to shortly be issued.
- 6.2 Policy LA1 sets out criteria for development within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In this regard it is considered that the hardstanding and other ancillary infrastructure constitutes a small scale development which will inevitably have an impact on the landscape and that the character of the land, it does not adversely affect the intrinsic natural beauty of the landscape in its own right. As such, it is not

considered that the impact of the physical development on the land warrant refusal of the application.

- 6.3 The greater and undoubtedly more harmful impact arises from the actual use of the land for the siting of touring caravans. The site is elevated and relatively exposed when viewed from an easterly direction. Whilst the retention of the hardstanding enables, and to some extent facilitates the use of the land as a touring caravan site, the land is sufficiently flat that it could be used for the stationing of up to five touring caravans even if the hardstanding was not in place. This fall back position is a material planning consideration. The Caravan and Camping Club also advise that the hardstanding and drainage infrastructure is not a pre-requisite to obtaining a five-caravan exemption certificate and it is likely that subject to the provision of basic facilities such as refuse storage area, water hook-ups, a certificate would be granted on this site.
- 6.4 The Landscape Officer has concerns with the use of the land as a touring caravan site and the gradual degradation of the wider landscape, which has occurred in the last quarter of the 20th Century. He also considers that further landscaping along the eastern boundary of the site would go some way to mitigating the impact of the proposal. The landscape officer, however, considers that it would be difficult to defend an appeal on landscape grounds in relation to that applied for under this application, namely the hardstanding and drainage infrastructure.
- 6.5 The Traffic Manager confirms that subject to the increase in the width of the access to 4.5 metres to enable vehicles to enter and exit the site simultaneously and the provision of a bound surface for the first 50 metres of the access, the access is satisfactorily safe to accommodate the development proposed. The Traffic Manager also confirms that there are no accident records for the last five years up to the end of 2007 for approximately 150 metres either side of the access. Subject to these improvements, which can be achieved by condition, the access is satisfactorily safe.
- 6.6 There is presently a large touring caravan stationed on site which it is understood has been on site for some time and may even be occupied residentially. This matter is currently being investigated by the Enforcement Officer. Other matters such as lighting can be controlled by condition and the applicants are in the process of installing electric hook-ups, which will remove the need for any noisy generators to be running continuously as is presently the case.
- 6.7 It is considered that the use of the land is likely to have a harmful impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but the development applied for under this application, in its own right is not contrary to the landscape policies of the Unitary Development Plan. This application provides an opportunity to achieve controls over the use of the land and mitigate the visual impact including enhancement and restoration of landscape that would not otherwise exist, given the fall back position. On balance, therefore, the application is considered acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1. F18 (Scheme of foul drainage disposal).**

Reason: In order to ensure that satisfactory drainage arrangements are provided.

- 2. F39 (Scheme of refuse storage).

Reason: In the interests of amenity.

- 3. E35 (Caravan Numbers limitation).

Reason: To clarify the terms of the permission and minimise visual intrusion.

- 4. G04 (Landscaping scheme (general)).

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

- 5. G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general)).

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

- 6. H05 (Access gates).

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

- 7. H06 (Vehicular access construction).

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

- 8. E34 (Removal of touring caravans during winter months).

Reason: To protect the visual amenity of the area during the winter months.

Informatives:

- 1. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC
- 2. N19 - Avoidance of doubt

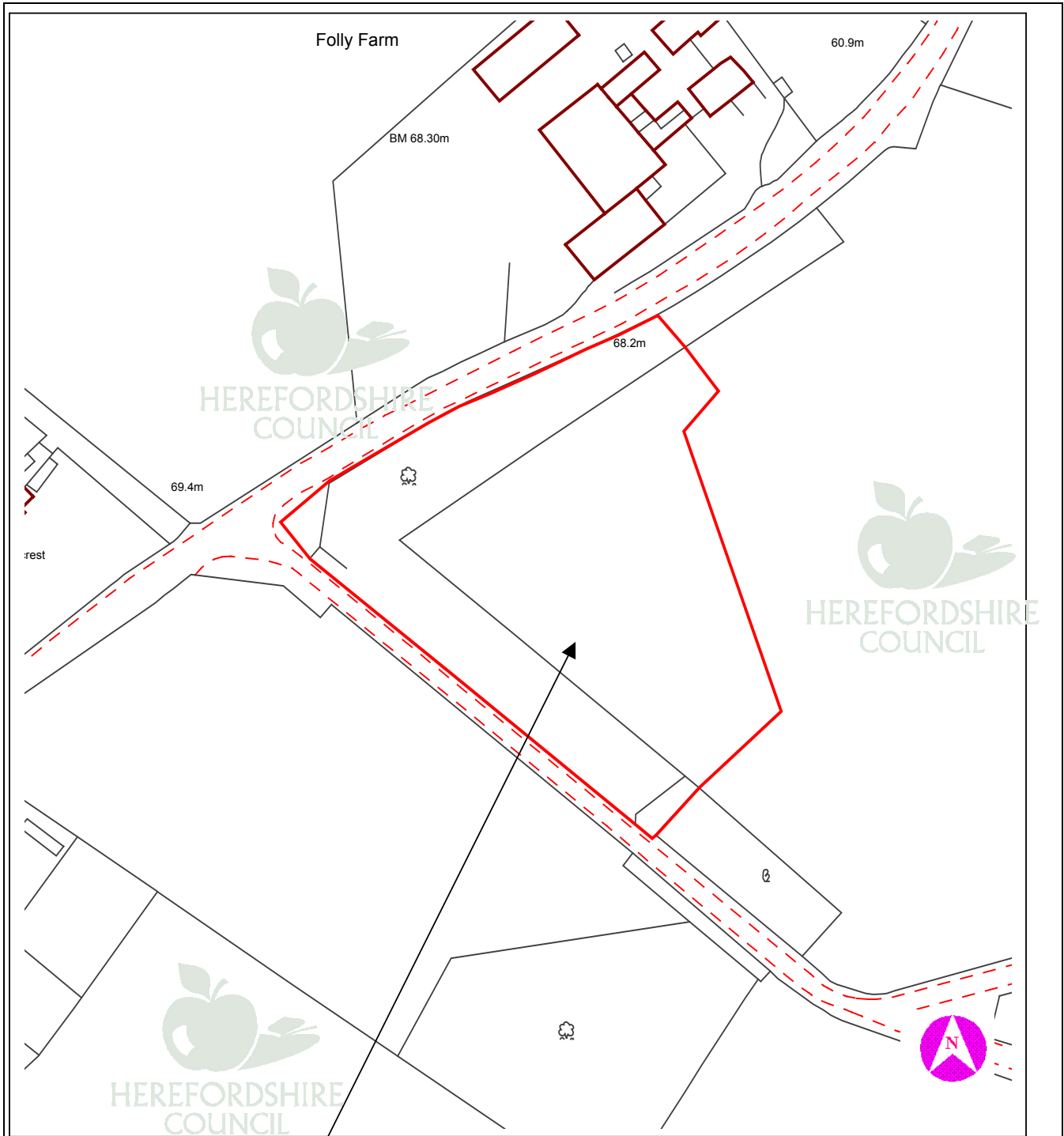
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Shipley, Holme Lacy, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR2 6LS

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