

5 DCNC2003/2101/F - CHANGE OF USE FOR THE PROVISION OF 17 STATIC CARAVANS, WASTE TREATMENT PLANT, RECEPTION POINT, NEW INTERNAL ACCESS AND LANDSCAPING AT FAIRVIEW CARAVAN PARK, HATFIELD HR6 OSD

For: Mr & Mrs Morgan per Mr Griffin ADAS The Patch Elton Newnham Gloucester GL14 1JN

Date Received:

28th July 2003

Ward:

Hampton Court

Grid Ref:

57683, 59224

Expiry Date:

22nd September 2003

Local Member: Councillor K Grumbley

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Fairview Caravan Park lies on the north side of the C1059 road to Hatfield. It lies within the historic grounds of Hatfield Court and within an Area of Great Landscape Value.
- 1.2 The proposal is for the stationing of a further 17 caravans, an office building for reception use and a new sewage treatment plant. The proposal involves the creation of a new access drive through a spur off the existing access to the site together with significant screen planting.

2. Policies

2.1 Leominster District Local Plan

A2(D) – Settlement Hierarchy
A9 – Safeguarding the Rural Landscape
A39 – Holiday Chalet, Caravan and Camping Sites
A54 – Protection of Residential Amenity
A70 – Accommodating Traffic from Development

2.2 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

CTC2 – Areas of Great Landscape Value
E20 – Tourism and Development

2.3 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Deposit Draft)

RST14 – Static caravans, chalets, camping and touring caravan sites
LA2 – Landscape character and areas least resilient to change
LA4 – Protection of historic parks and gardens

2.4 PPG7: The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development

PPG21: Tourism

3. Planning History

74C461 - Site for 13 holiday caravans. Permission granted 11.4.75, expiring 31.12.85.

75C416 - Additional 23 static holiday caravans. Permission granted 23.10.75.

77C532 - Use of holiday caravan as temporary residential unit. Refused 20.7.77.

87C44 - 5 additional caravans and continued use of the site for 13 caravans. Permitted 27.4.87.

93C441 - Use of land for 3 additional caravans. Approved 1.9.93.

97/0132/C - 2 further caravan pitches. Approved 24.3.97.

N98/0105/N - Modification of planning permission to allow caravan site to be open from 16 March to 30 November. Approved 25.6.98.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 The Environment Agency has no objections subject to the provision of a foul drainage works being approved by the local planning authority.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Head of Engineering and Transport: No objection.
- 4.3 Chief Conservation Officer: Raises concern about the visual impact of the development and compounding the damage already done to the historic park land.

5. Representations

- 5.1 The applicants and their agents have submitted a number of letters in support of the proposal, which can be summarised as follows:
- 1) The site is currently licensed for 46 caravans, only 45 are presently used. Expansion to 62 pitches is more commercial in size.
 - 2) Wish to extend occupation from 16 March to 30 November to 1 March to 31 January inclusive, i.e. closed Februarys.
 - 3) Caravan park was purchased 2 1/2 years ago and needs upgrading to make it viable.
 - 4) Manufacturers are producing ever larger caravans which need to be accommodated when owners replace older ones.

- 5) Wish to achieve 5* status by creating new access, reception and improved layout with facilities for disabled.
- 6) Do not consider the proposal to be visually intrusive.
- 7) The new treatment plant will serve the new caravans plus 22 of the existing.
- 8) The existing access is shared with Hatfield Court and a number of converted barns.
- 9) Planting is proposed to minimise the visual impact generally and in particular to the lodge.
- 10) The proposal has policy support in UDP policies RST13 and RST14, PPG21, PPG17, PPG7 and PPG13.

5.2 In addition in response to the concern about landscape impact consider that:

1. For the proposed expansion site to be detrimental to the landscape there would have to be a significant change in the character and fabric of the landscape compared to what is there now, and we do not consider that the expansion creates such a change.
2. The existing site is more visible from the viewpoint than the proposed site. The proposed site as amended is largely behind existing tree planting and the proposed additional planting further screens the area.
3. 'Substantial earthworks' will not be involved to create areas for the caravans. Caravans have adjustable supports to accommodate sloping ground.
4. We are not proposing an access road, but an un-metalled track 3m wide that follows the contours and it is tucked in behind new hedge planting for much of its extent.
5. The reference is 'too large in scale' we feel is unfair, as it is an established aim of Caravan Tourism Sites to have less dense caravan sites. Larger areas allow for planting within sites.
6. The revised scheme and landscaping proposed does make the site acceptable in the context of it being an established site – we are not applying for a new site, but to extend an existing site, at a lower level than the existing site.
7. Landscaping is a subjective issue, and the applicants ask that Members view the site from the identified viewpoint.

5.3 The Parish Council has a few concerns regarding this application. These are:

- 1) The visual impact on surrounding areas.
- 2) Is the road suitable for extra volume of traffic which will be generated?
- 3) The UDP (proposed) is still in draft form and has not been adopted and therefore is irrelevant to this application.
- 4) The caravan site should be restricted to a 10 1/2 month opening time, not for 12 months of the year.

5.4 Objections have been received from the following residents:

Mr and Mrs Bufton, The Lodge, Hatfield
Mrs A Harcourt, Little Sherrington, Pembridge
T Kray, The Mill, Hatfield
Mr E Hughes, Lower Bilfield Farm, Hatfield
Mrs C Morgan, Coach House, Hatfield Court
T J, Mrs S E, A J and G Bishop, Court Farm, Hatfield
Mr and Mrs W Qualter, Old Stable House, Hatfield Court
B J and J J Bufton, Foxhalls, Hatfield
S Perrett, Beech House, Hatfield Court
R A and S R Standing, Three Shires Cottages, Hatfield Court

The objections are summarised as follows:

- 1) More vehicles passing close to The Lodge cause more detriment to amenity through noise, dust and fumes. Additional planting close to the boundary will make the garden and property even darker.
- 2) Roads are narrow in places with few spaces for 2 vehicles to pass.
- 3) Additional screen planting is not sympathetic to the landscape. The site is very visible from Grafton Road and from the Public Right of Way at Rock Cottage.
- 4) Caravans are largely self-sufficient with little benefit to the local economy.
- 5) Will it provide local employment?
- 6) Pollution to the stream from the sewage treatment plant.
- 7) The new access drive would spoil the approach to the site which has already 2 existing drives, the new drive being provided at a higher ground level.
- 8) Permission should not be granted for 12 months licence.
- 9) This is not a farm diversification scheme since the applicant is not a farmer.
- 10) Devaluation of property.
- 11) Already sufficient holiday lets in the area.
- 12) Many of the caravans are not used.
- 13) No benefit to local residents of this additional intrusion.

5.5 Letters of support have been received from:

J & J Chapman, Barn Cottage, Hatfield
Mrs Morgan, Green Gables, Bodenham
Mrs L Burke, The Haven, 7 Hopyard Gardens, Leominster
Stephen Morris, Cherrydean, Boraston, Tenbury Wells
Mr and Mrs Lloyd of Westfield, North Road, Kingsland

In summary:

- 1) No problem caused by the caravan park.
 - 2) It does not impinge on the enjoyment of the countryside.
 - 3) We should provide support for local businesses.
- 5.6 The full text of these letters can be inspected at Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officers Appraisal

- 6.1 This proposal requires a balanced judgement of the policies supporting tourism and local business uses against those of the protection of the countryside, of amenity of nearby residents and traffic issues.
- 6.2 As the Head of Engineering and Transportation has no objection to the proposal it is considered that there are no sustainable reasons for refusal on traffic generation or highway safety grounds. Furthermore, it is not considered that the additional traffic movements associated with 17 caravans, an increase of just over a third of the existing number, will be so detrimental to amenity of local residents that permission could be refused on this ground.
- 6.3 It would appear that the most critical issue is one of landscape impact. The site is currently visible from a number of locations around the locality and sits on elevated ground in comparison to the main approach road to the site. The application includes significant woodland planting both within the extended caravan site area and along the new driveway and close to The Lodge, in an attempt to reduce this impact. Notwithstanding this proposed planting scheme, which would take a number of years to mature, it is considered that the proposal would be detrimental to the visual amenity of this part of the Area of Great Landscape Value. It is not considered that local employment benefits outweigh this concern.
- 6.4 Policies referred to in the Deposit Draft of the UDP are subject to objections against those policies. Consequently, no weight can be given to those at this time. This includes that seeking to protect unrequested historic parkland.
- 6.5 As a consequence, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policies A39 and A9 of the Leominster District Local Plan and Policy CTC2 of the Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be refused for the following reason:

It is considered that the proposal would be contrary to the visual amenity of this part of the Area of Great Landscape Value. Consequently the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy A9 and A39 of the Leominster District Local Plan (Herefordshire) and CTC 2 of the Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan.

Decision:

Notes:

.....

Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.