

11 DCSE2005/1284/F - ERECTION OF FOUR CHALETs AT STERRETTs CARAVAN PARK, SYMONDS YAT, HEREFORDSHIRE**For: Sterrett's Caravan Park per Boyer Planning Ltd,
33-35 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF11 9HB****Date Received: 21st April 2005 Ward: Kerne Bridge Grid Ref: 55460, 17003****Expiry Date: 16th June 2005**

Local Member: Councillor Mrs R F Lincoln

Introduction

The application was reported to the Southern Area Planning Sub-Committee on 21st December 2005 when it was deferred for a site visit. Following the visit the application was considered again at the meeting on 18th January 2006 when it was recommended for refusal. Notwithstanding this Members resolved that they were minded to grant planning permission.

The recommendation for refusal was based on planning policy SY2 of the South Herefordshire District Local Plan which applies specifically to this site and the adjoining fields in the vicinity of Symonds Yat. That policy is also supported by related policies in the Structure Plan and the emerging Unitary Development Plan. The intention of the policy is to defend this land against development pressures given its location in the AONB, the AGLV and critical position at the entrance to the gorge at Symonds Yat. The Sub-Committee felt that sufficient justification had been given to allow the development in conflict with the policy given the potential benefits to tourism and the local economy and taking account of the detailed design.

The Head of Planning Services has considered the proposal and refers the application to the Planning Committee for decision on the basis that, notwithstanding the benefits identified by Members of the Southern Area Planning Sub-Committee, there is a direct conflict with development plan policy and the development would damage the interests the policy is intended to protect.

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Sterrett's Caravan Park is situated at Symonds Yat West. It is accessed off the C1258 and is adjacent to the Leisure Park. The site has pedestrian access off the B4164, which is to the southwest of the site. The site and surrounding area are within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Great Landscape Value and within the floodplains of the River Wye.
- 1.2 At present the site, as a whole comprises a caravan park, with areas containing static vans and an area for touring caravans. There is a site office etc and informal area for dog walking and play area. The site is generally flat where the existing static vans are sited, but land levels start to rise to the western part of the site with a steep ascending slope to the western boundary to the B4164.

- 1.3 It is proposed to erect four, detached, single storey holiday chalets to the western part of the site. The chalets would be set into the existing bank and a new access driveway is proposed to the front of the chalets, with a turning head. A line of existing trees would visually separate the proposed chalets from the existing hardstanding and grassed area used for touring vans. Amended plans have been received which have altered the design of the chalets to provide a steeper roof pitch and made modest changes to their external appearance. Each chalet would have a floor area of some 8.4 metres by 7.1 metres (including a terrace to the front elevation) and a height of 5.2 metres to the roof ridge. The roof would have a pitch of 35 degrees and would overhang the footprint of the buildings. The accommodation provided in the chalets would be two double bedrooms, a bathroom and open plan kitchen, dining and living areas.

2. Policies

2.1 Planning Policy Guidance/Statement

PPS1	-	Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS7	-	Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPG13	-	Transport

2.2 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

Policy CTC1	-	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy CTC2	-	Area of Great Landscape Value
Policy CTC9	-	Development Criteria
Policy E20	-	Development of the Tourist Industry
Policy TSM1	-	Criteria for Tourism Related Development

2.3 South Herefordshire District Local Plan

Policy GD1	-	General Development Criteria
Policy C1	-	Development within Open Countryside
Policy C3	-	Criteria for Exceptional Development outside Settlement Boundaries
Policy C5	-	Development within Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy C8	-	Development Within Area of Great Landscape Value
Policy C44	-	Flooding
Policy C45	-	Drainage
Policy TM1	-	General Tourism Provision
Policy TM5	-	Proposals for Small Guesthouses, Bed and Breakfast and Self-Catering Accommodation
Policy TM6	-	Holiday Caravan/Chalet/Camp Parks
Policy TM7	-	Improvements to Existing
Policy TM10	-	Proposals within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Part 3 – Chapter 22		
Policy SY2	-	Re-development of Open Fields
Policy SY3	-	Improvement of Tourism Developments
Policy SY5	-	New Commercial/Tourist Facilities
Policy SY6	-	Further Development of Leisure Facilities

2.4 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Deposit Draft)

Part 1

- Policy S2 - Development Requirements
- Policy S8 - Recreation, Sport and Tourism
- Policy DR1 - Design

Part 2

- Policy LA1 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Policy LA2 - Landscape Character and Areas least Resilient to Change
- Policy LA3 - Setting of Settlements
- Policy RST1 - Criteria for Recreation, Sport and Tourism Development
- Policy RST2 - Recreation, Sport and Tourism Development within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Policy RST12 - Visitor Accommodation
- Policy RST14 - Static Caravans, Chalets, Camping and Touring Caravan Sites

3. Planning History

- 3.1 SE2004/0167/F Erection of four chalets - Refused 19.04.04

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Environment Agency - No objection, in principle, to the proposed development.
- 4.2 Welsh Water - No objections, recommend conditions.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.3 The Traffic Manager raises no objections as the parking provision would be adequate. Turning head could be increased to accommodate larger vehicles (i.e. refuse vehicles)
- 4.4 The Conservation Manager advises that:

Opportunities for views to the area of the proposed chalets are limited, due to the topography of the Wye Valley in the locality of the site and the 'presence of boundary and intervening vegetation'. The issue of long distance views into the site is not the key issue. The key issue is the visual impact of the chalets in the context of the north-west facing wooded slopes of Great Doward. The existing static caravans at Sterretts Caravan Park, on the riverside meadows at the foot of these slopes are already a significant visual detractor in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The wooded slope which runs up from the meadows to the B4164 does act as a visual buffer zone between the caravan park and the quite densely settled slope above the road. I would not support the siting of the cabins on this bank because it would extend built development into this buffer zone, compounding the degradation of this part of the Wye Valley AONB. In my view it would be contrary to Policies C5: Development within AONB and C8: Development within AGLV, of the South Herefordshire District Local Plan (1999) and Policy LA1: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Draft 2002).

It would be preferable for the chalets to be sited on the flat part of the application site, adjacent to the existing static caravans. New woodland could be planted around the chalets to create a more secluded environment and to differentiate the site of the cabins from the remainder of the site. This choice of siting would ensure that new development on the site was as tightly contained as possible, resulting in no adverse visual impact, and there would be an environmental gain – new woodland planting, which would enhance the site.

5. Representations

5.1 The applicant's agent has submitted a Planning Statement and an Initial Landscape Assessment in support of the application. The main points raised are:

- Only limited views to and from the area, largely due to existing development within the caravan park and amusement centre and site boundary vegetation.
- Modest scale of development, retention of much of existing vegetation, and any vegetation lost would be compensated by new planting.
- Negligible visual impact, not discordant with character of area or surrounding land uses.

5.2 Whitchurch Parish Council - Support.

5.3 Two letters of representation have been received from Garth Lamb of The Grove and Stephen Strefford of Wye Valley View (formerly Gwyndine) in respect of the originally submitted plans. The main points raised are:

- No major objection in principle, consider that it would be a positive improvement to the facilities in the area
- Chalet positioned to the east of the site would be very close to my boundary (The Grove) and there is currently no intact physical boundary. Would like the boundary to be delineated with an appropriate fence or similar barrier to prevent unintended ingress.
- Our property overlooks the site and amusement park (Wye Valley View) and the lack of a detailed landscaping appraisal does not enable a full assessment of the impact to be made.
- We want assurance that the conifers would be retained.
- The developer could take this opportunity to plant trees in and around the caravan and amusement park to reduce their impact upon the scenic qualities of the landscape, ensure the facilities are absorbed into the landscape and would not be visually intrusive.

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

6. Officers Appraisal

6.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application are the principle of development on this site and the impact it would have on the character and appearance of the area and neighbouring properties.

- 6.2 The Local Plan acknowledges that the entire Symonds Yat study area is of national importance, but within it there are tracts of land that are more vulnerable to the threat of development and hence they warrant particular identification and protection. Policy SY2 – Redevelopment of open fields, of Part 3 of the Local Plan states that further development or new building on certain identified fields (as shown on Map 22B) will be resisted. The site subject to this application lies within the area shown on the map between the riverside meadows down to and around The Paddocks Hotel. The policy does not provide any exceptions to this presumption to resist development within the defined areas. The proposal does not include the replacement or removal of any existing buildings and therefore cannot be considered as a planning gain, resulted in an enhancement of the scenic quality of the landscape. As such, in principle, the proposal is contrary to policy SY2 of the Local Plan.
- 6.3 Policy SY3 states the Council's support of redevelopment or improvement of existing tourist sites. The proposal is for new development and is not considered to be an improvement of the existing site, but rather an extension of it and the introduction of a different form of accommodation. Therefore this policy does not override the principle objection as set out in policy SY2.
- 6.4 The proposed development, introducing buildings, decking and an access road, would extend the existing caravan site into the wooded slope. The static caravans already represent a visual intrusion in the landscape and it is considered that the extension of the built form into this 'buffer zone' would further compound the negative visual impact in this part of the Wye Valley AONB. Therefore the proposal is contrary to policies CTC1 and CTC2 of the Structure Plan and C5 and C8 of the Local Plan.
- 6.5 With regards the impact on residential amenity, the proposed chalets would be some 8 metres from the southern boundary and taking into account the proposed height of the buildings, their design and the existing land levels, the development would not impinge upon amenity. Additional landscaping could be provided to supplement the existing and to define the southern boundary and also in the interests of the visual amenities of the area. It would not be relevant to this proposal to require new planting in the caravan site and the leisure park is in different ownership.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be refused for the following reason:

- 1 Having regard to Policy SY.2 of Part 3, Chapter 22 of the South Herefordshire District Local Plan the proposal is unacceptable in principle as the site is within an area of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty recognised as being vulnerable to the threat of development, thus warranting particular identification and protection. Notwithstanding this, as the development would neither complement the existing facilities whilst having no detrimental impact upon the Symonds Yat Study Area nor would it be an improvement to the existing development with some overall gain to the area, it would be contrary to Policies SY.3 and SY.6 of Part 3 of the South Herefordshire District Local Plan. In addition, by virtue of the siting, scale and design the proposal would be harmful to the appearance of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Great Landscape Value and therefore would be contrary to Policies CTC.1, CTC.2, TSM.1, TSM.5 and TSM.6 of the Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan, and GD.1, C.5, C.8, TM.1 and TM.6.**

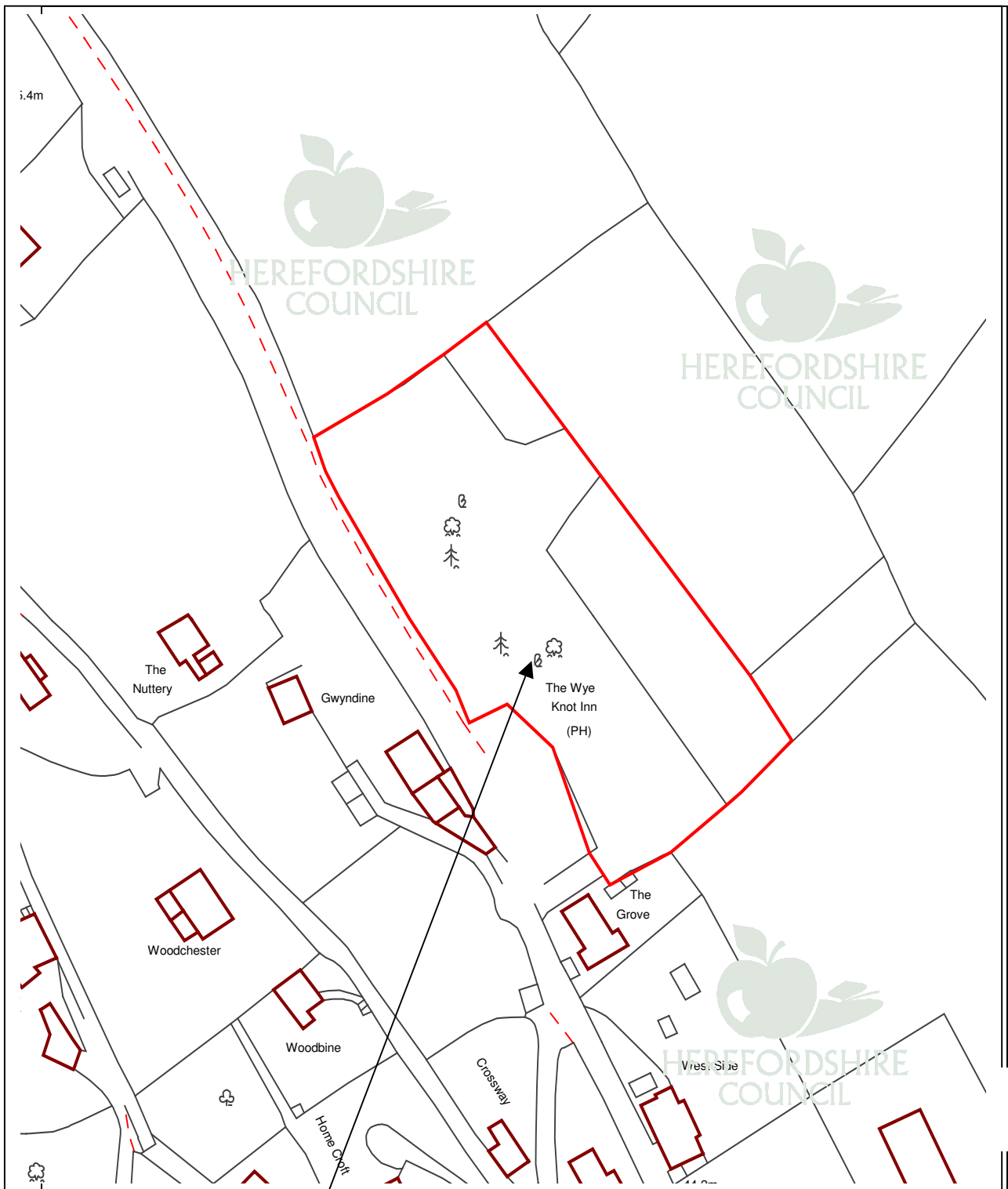
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCSE2005/1284/F

SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Sterretts Caravan Park, Symonds Yat, Herefordshire

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