expires 16/3

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0028/09 **Recommendation - Application Permitted**

Site: **Grazing Land East Of Marquis Of Granby West Street Sompting West Sussex**

Proposal: **3 Field shelters and 3 sheds for equine use (with fencing and gates to create 3 paddocks) (part retrospective)**

The Application

The application relates to fields which lie to the south of the A27 and to the west of Church Lane which are used for the keeping of horses, granted permission in July 2003. This permission was subject to a condition preventing the erection of shelters, sheds, fences or other paraphernalia without the consent of the local planning authority.

This application seeks consent to erect three field shelters and three sheds with associated fencing and gates to create three further paddocks in the north west corner of the fields on the Church Lane boundary. Some of this work has already been carried out.

The shelters are open fronted and measure 4.9m wide, 3.8m deep and 2.5m high with a sloping roof. The sheds are smaller, measuring 1.8m by 1.2m by 2m with a pitched roof. They are of timber construction and are to be painted a 'woodland green' colour.

The fence is to be post and rail fencing to a height of 1.2m.

Consultations and Representations

Consultations/Comments

Adur District Council - The Environmental Health Officer has no objections

Environment Agency – No objection

Sompting Parish Council – No objection but would prefer to see the buildings arranged in an orderly fashion and the land tidied up

Third Parties

2 letters of objection received from the occupiers of Pointers Lodge, Church Lane raising the following concerns:

- Loss of privacy as a result of the field being at higher level than their house
- Noise from barking dogs brought to the field by horse owners
- Out of keeping with a residential and conservation area
- Paraphernalia associated with the use is an eyesore
- White, plastic fencing is ugly and out of keeping
- Increased horse manure and odours in warmer weather, leading to increase in number of flies and rats
- Field is unprofessionally managed

1 letter of support received from the occupier of 10 St Mary's Close – works will improve the appearance of the site and the welfare of horses being grazed

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005): LOC2, NE8, CH3-4, DEV1, DEV4-5
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993 – 2006 (ADC 1996): AC1, AC4, AC15, AB4 and Design Bulletin No.3 "Development Involving Horses in the Countryside"
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' (ODPM 2004)
PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (DoE 1994)

Planning Assessment

Policies

The fields lie in the countryside, within the Strategic Gap separating the built-up areas of Worthing and Sompting/Lancing. Structure and Local Plan policies provide for essential agricultural development and also quiet informal recreational uses in the countryside generally. In Strategic Gaps the relevant policies contain greater restrictions on development. The western extremity of the land is also in the Conservation Area where there is a duty to have regard to the need to preserve or enhance its character or appearance.

Local Plan policy AC15 relates to horse-related uses in the countryside and states that where new buildings are proposed there should be a compelling need for the development; they should be sited so as to cause minimal adverse effect on the landscape and should be well-related to existing buildings; they should be of appropriate scale and design and they should not detract from nearby residential amenity.

Design Bulletin No.3 issues advice on horse shelter developments and states that they will not normally be permitted where the holding is very small and/or comprises only a single field. They should be of the minimum size necessary

(3m by 3m for an open shelter for one horse with an additional width of 1.5m per additional horse). Shelters should generally be brown-stained with a dark roof covering.

Visual amenity and character

At the time of granting the original permission for the use of the land for equine purposes in 2003 there was concern at the adverse visual effect on the landscape of a large number of shelters and fencing that had already been erected. A restrictive condition was imposed to prevent further such development but the shelters subject of this application have been erected unlawfully and additional paddocks created.

The agent has written in support of the application and to clarify a number of queries raised by the planning officer. He has explained that the paddocks are only used for overnight accommodation. The horses are exercised and graze adjoining fields and therefore the paddocks do not need to be of the size recommended by the British Horse Society.

The paddocks are intended for use by more than one horse. The paddock which is just under 1 acre in size is used for accommodating 3 Shetland ponies, which do not require as much room as horses. They are also susceptible to Laminitis which they fall foul to when grazing on too much rich grass, therefore it is paramount that they are kept in a smaller enclosure.

With regard to the size of the field shelters, they could be reduced in the size but they will be used by 2 - 3 horses for over night accommodation and smaller shelters may jeopardise the welfare of the animals.

The colour of the shelters could change to a dark brown stain with dark felt roof which would certainly help improve the look of the holding. There is a new tenant looking after the site and they are very enthusiastic to enhance the look of the holding to a state where it is no longer an eye sore on the landscape. The white fencing that is currently prevalent on the site will be removed if planning permission was granted and good quality traditional timber post and rail fencing will be constructed for the new paddocks.

The site does contain a number of shelters and ancillary development, including temporary fencing, which adds to the cluttered appearance. However, the site is partly obscured from the surrounding roads by the flint walls and hedges which run along its boundaries and it is not considered that the three additional buildings proposed (one of which has already been built) will materially harm the character of the area.

There has been concern expressed by nearby residents about the appearance of the site but at the time of the officer's site visit, it did not look unduly unsightly. Some effort has been made to improve the site's appearance and it is considered that, subject to conditions to control the appearance of the shelters, the current application can be supported.

Residential amenity

It would appear that the comments raised by neighbouring occupiers relate more to the previous management of the site. The new tenants appear to be keen to tidy up the site and to reduce the impact of the use on neighbouring occupiers. With regard to manure, for example, this is stored at the eastern end of the site, away from dwellings and on the opposite side of the site to the objectors.

The proposed shelters would be at least 40m from the nearest dwelling and are not considered to result in any loss of amenity. The reduction in the extent of plastic fencing will further improve the appearance of the site and the outlook for neighbours.

Recommendation

APPROVE for reason that :-

The proposed development would not detract to an unacceptable degree from the local environment, would preserve the character of the Conservation Area and can take place without resulting in unacceptable detriment to the amenities of neighbouring properties. It would consequently not conflict with the policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AC1, AC4, AC15, AB4) and the West Sussex Structure Plan (LOC2, NE8, CH3-4, DEV1, DEV4-5)

Subject to

1. C1Ci
2. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall take place until details of the external materials and colour of the shelters and sheds has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
   Reason – In the interests of amenity and to comply with policies AC15 of the Adur District Local Plan and DEV1 of the West Sussex Structure Plan

Case Officer..P.Barnett..... Date..10/3/09

Planning Services Manager...[signature]... Date...10/3/09

Chair of DC Committee..Cllr. A. Mills Date..12/03/09.