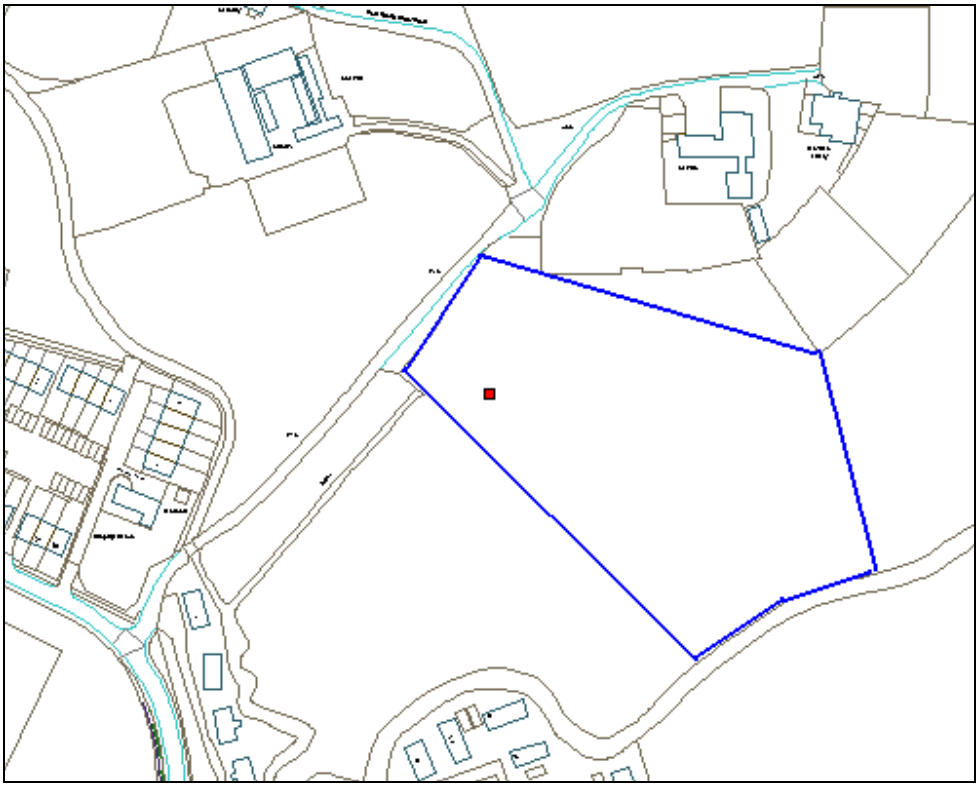
Application Number: AWDM/0722/13 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **The Barn Caravan Park, Old Salts Farm Road, Lancing, West Sussex, BN15 8JG**

Proposal: **Change of use of rear part of field to enable its inclusion within certified camping and caravan park with associated increase in the number of caravan pitches from 5 to 25**

Applicant: Mr Joby Pannell Ward: Widewater

Case Officer: Peter Barnett



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

This touring caravan and camping site is located to the east of the built-up area of Lancing, within the remaining open area of flat coastal plain. It lies on the south-east side of the narrow private lane (which has a tarmac surface in poor condition). It is situated 100m along the lane, before reaching the dwellinghouse 'Beechlands' (formerly 'The Barn') and the listed 'Minstrels Gallery' (formerly Old Salts Farmhouse) beyond. On the opposite side of the lane are paddocks and livery stables. To the south, beyond a watercourse, is a large residential mobile home site (Willowbrook Park).

The application site consists of a field, the north-west part of which has the benefit of a Certificate granted by the Camping and Caravanning Club for its use as a touring caravan and camping site by Club members for no more than 5 touring caravans at any one time. The use of the site as a touring caravan and camping site is very small scale (being exempt for planning control). Its use is limited solely to members of the Camping and Caravanning Club and the number of touring caravans on the site must not exceed 5 at any time, with no individual caravan present for more than 28 days, although there is no limitation on the number of tents present.

The remainder of the field to the south east is outside the certificated area but has been used in recent years for camping rallies, also outside planning control. Apart from the 'permitted development' provision enabling temporary uses of land (excluding caravans) for up to 28 days per calendar year (under Part 4), there is also specific provision (under Part 27) for use by Members of certain recreational organisations enabling their use for the purposes of recreation/instruction and the placing of tents on the land without the need to make a planning application. These organisations, of which there are about 220, have to hold an exemption certificate under section 269 of the Public Health Act 1936.

This application seeks to increase the number of caravan pitches from 5 to 25 over the whole field, including that part which is currently outside the certificated area. The area would also continue to be used for unlimited tents and trailer tents.

Relevant Planning History

In 2003 permission was granted for an ancillary cesspit (for disposal of waste water from the touring caravans) and temporary permission for an incidental store shed (L/83/03) which was subsequently renewed until 30 September 2015 or such time as the site ceases to be used as a certificated touring caravan and camping site approved by the above Club (ADC/0212/09).

A retrospective application (ADC/173/08) for a residential mobile home on the hardstanding area adjacent to the lane was refused and dismissed on appeal in 2009. An enforcement notice had been issued in 2007 and the residential use subsequently ceased. Previous applications for planning permission for a mobile home on the site had

been refused in 2001 (L/13/01), 2004 (L/119/04) and 2006 (ADC/0360/06), with an appeal dismissed in 2007.

In 2012 a small shower and toilet block was constructed under permission reference AWDM/1089/11. This contains 2 WCs and 2 showers each for the Ladies and Gents sections plus external washing-up sinks.

Consultations

Adur & Worthing Councils: The **Environmental Health** officer recommends the precautionary contaminated land condition.

The **Planning Policy Manager** is concerned that the additional activity associated with this application will introduce an unacceptable level of noise disturbance and visual intrusion. Policy AC1 does not permit development outside of the built up area unless it is for quiet recreation or related to the essential needs of agriculture, etc. Policy AC4 permits development in the Strategic Gap only in compelling circumstances and it will need to be demonstrated that the economic/tourism benefits to the district of these additional caravans outweigh the principle of protecting the gap.

The **Tourism Officer** supports the application. An increase in capacity for more visitors can only be good for local businesses. Signage and access route may need to be improved.

Environment Agency: In the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) they object to the grant of planning permission and recommend refusal. A revised FRA is required which should demonstrate that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible reduces flood risk overall.

Lancing Parish Council: Approve and Committee wished the applicant every success with his business

Representations

2 letters received from the occupiers of Minstrels Gallery and Old Salts Farm Nursery stating they have no objection to the proposal.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AC1, AC4, AR8
National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

Planning Assessment

Principle

The site is located in the countryside and is not identified for any particular use in the Local Plan. It lies within the 'Strategic Gap' separating the built-up areas of Lancing and Shoreham. Local Plan policies AG1 and AC1 state development will not normally be approved in the countryside unless it is related to, amongst other things, quiet recreation or the essential needs of agriculture. In 'strategic gaps', where the objective is to prevent the coalescence of settlements, the relevant policy AC4 states that "Except where provided for elsewhere in this Local Plan, within these [strategic gaps], development will not normally be permitted. This is in order to prevent coalescence and to retain the separate identities and amenities of the settlements. Only in compelling circumstances will development be permitted such as in relation to the essential needs of agriculture, horticulture, forestry or the diversification of the rural economy or to take advantage of a valuable opportunity to meet demand for quiet informal recreation. .....Opportunities will be sought to conserve and improve the landscape and amenity of these strategic gaps to enhance their value as open countryside."

Policy AR8 states that recreation facilities in the countryside will be permitted if the facility is of an appropriate type and scale and there is no conflict with landscape quality or opportunities for quiet outdoor enjoyment, but it requires "that any associated building development is located within the built-up area boundary or utilises an existing building".

The NPPF supports economic growth in rural areas and encourages rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This includes supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations.

Visual amenity

As stated above, the objective of the countryside policy is to keep the 'strategic gap' open and free from development in order to prevent the gradual coalescence of settlements.

It is acknowledged that the local landscape is not of a particularly high quality, having typical "urban fringe" characteristics associated with land fragmentation into separate ownerships, but it still possesses some rural quality and, most importantly, needs stringent control over new development to retain its openness and rural character.

The proposal would result in a 5-fold increase in the number of caravans, and more than a doubling of the site area, which has the potential for having some impact upon the landscape. However, it would be a transient, small-scale impact which is not considered to conflict with countryside policies or unduly threaten the openness and rural character of the area. The applicant has advised that no extension to the toilet and shower block is required because many caravans and motor homes have their own facilities.

An element of control would be needed to ensure that caravans do not stay for more than 28 days at a time to prevent the use of the site as a permanent caravan park. The

applicant does not wish the site to be restricted to Camping and Caravanning Club members only but this should not have an adverse impact on the use of the site. The Tourism Officer supports the proposal and considers that it will have a positive impact on local businesses. Consequently, the proposal is considered to meet the test for allowing development in the Strategic Gap and is consistent with saved policies AC1, AC4 and AR8 of the Adur District Local Plan and the policies of the NPPF.

Residential amenity

There is only sporadic development along Old Salts Farm Road with the dwellings to the north screened by mature trees. The development will bring the campsite closer to the Willowbrook Mobile Home Park to the south west but it is sufficiently distant, at 38m from the nearest mobile home, to not result in any serious harm to amenity. It should be noted that this part of the field is already used for camping rallies. The submitted site plan indicates that caravans would be sited along the north and east boundaries, furthest from the mobile home park.

Flood risk

The site lies within an area at risk of flooding (zone 3a) where the use of the site for camping (subject to having a specific warning and evacuation plan) is classed as 'more vulnerable', the same as for dwellinghouses, and not normally acceptable.

The applicant has stated that the risk of flooding is 1 in 1000 and if the weather is so inclement that there is such a chance of flooding, most campers simply would not go camping.

However, the Environment Agency has objected to the application on the ground that the submitted Flood Risk Assessment is inadequate and a revised FRA has been requested from the applicant. This was still awaited at the time of writing and it is therefore recommended that approval of the application is subject to the receipt of a satisfactory FRA and subsequent withdrawal of the Environment Agency objection.

Recommendation

Subject to the receipt of a satisfactory Flood Risk Assessment and the withdrawal of the objection from the Environment Agency**, APPROVE** for the reason:-

The site lies outside the built-up area boundary and in a 'strategic gap' of countryside as defined in the Adur District Local Plan but the proposal does not conflict with the saved policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AC1, AC4 and AR8) or the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework as it involves improved tourist accommodation which will not harm the openness and rural character of the area.

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard 3 year time limit
2. Approved Plans
3. No individual touring caravan or motor home to be at the site for more than 28 consecutive days with no return within 28 days in any 12 calendar months
4. Permission is for up to a maximum of 25 touring caravans or motor homes at any time

and any conditions required by the Environment Agency