Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0300/24 Recommendation: Approve

Site: Land East and South Of 1 To 8 Stocks House, West Street, Sompting

Proposal: Change of use of land to provide 3 no. glamping bell tents and services block with associated driveway and parking. Application to vary condition 1 (approved plans) of AWDM/0525/23 to allow glamping pods instead of bell tents to be permitted

Date of Site Visit: Visited in connection with AWDM/0525/23

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional neighbour notification: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings:

The application relates to a field forming part of Stocks Garden, which is used for the keeping and breeding of horses. It is accessed via a new driveway that has been formed off a rough track leading off West Street. The driveway curves around one of the fields and leads to a walled garden which is adjacent to West Street but which is completely hidden by flint walls. The site has an open field to the east and dwellings at 1-8 Stock House to the west. The garage block to those houses lies immediately to the south of the walled garden.

The site lies outside of the built up area, within the countryside and the Local Green Gap. It is also within the Conservation Area, although the access road is not.

Permission was granted in 2023 to install 3no. bell tents and a shower, wc and washing up facility within the walled garden in order to start up a small ‘glamping’ site. A car parking area is to be provided in front of the entrance to the walled garden on the eastern boundary of the field, adjacent to the garage block and garden area of Stock House.

This application seeks to replace the bell tents with ‘glamping pods.’ The pods each contain a bed/living space, kitchenette, shower and WC. Consequently, the external service block is no longer required.

The pods measure 2.9m high and have a curved roof. They are 3.1m wide and 6.4m long. They have timber weatherboarding to the front and rear with a shingle roof.

Planning History:

AWDM/0708/22 - Proposed construction of 2no. new stables including ancillary welfare facilities - approved

AWDM/0525/23 - Change of use of land to provide 3 no. glamping bell tents and services block with associated driveway and parking - approved

Consultations:

West Sussex County Council: The Highways Authority has no objection. For the current application, the proposals only relate to a change from bell tents to glamping pods. Vehicular access and parking arrangements will remain as previously permitted, and are still considered acceptable for the proposed use. As per the LHAs previous comments, it is requested that secure cycle parking provision be provided for each of the units, to promote sustainable travel.

Adur and Worthing Councils: Public Health: No comments

Drainage: No objection

Sompting Parish Council: The Council has no objection in principle to the glamping pods, but it is very concerned that this variation to condition 1 (approved plans) is not amended yet again and is only used for the purpose of holiday lets

Southern Water: Does not support the proposals for private wastewater treatment works in the presence of public foul sewerage network in the close vicinity of the development site. The foul sewerage shall be disposed of in accordance with Part H1 of Building Regulations hierarchy.
It may be possible for the foul flows from the proposed development to be connected to a nearby public sewer, and the applicant shall investigate this option. Southern Water requires a formal application for a connection to the public foul sewer to be made by the applicant or developer

Representations

1 letter of support received from Sompting Estate:

On behalf of Sompting Estate I can support this variation to the proposed development adjacent to our farmland for the purpose of holiday letting, on grounds of business sustainability and quality of experience for people staying in the area. We ourselves similarly obtained permission for bell tent glamping in a woodland site from the National Park Authority, but on reviewing the sustainability of those plans we concluded that a better quality of holiday experience would be provided for more

of the year in more comfortable structures each with their private hygiene & welfare facilities. Although more costly as an initial investment, there will be less long term waste (as bell tents have a limited life) and less facilities maintenance cost. The SDNPA agreed with the viability and sustainability case and gave permission to alter the structure to yurts - pods are similar in longevity and comfort.

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policies 10, 13, 14, 17, 26, 28, 32, 33, 34
National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)
WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Sept 2020).

Planning Assessment

Principle

The site lies within the countryside and Local Green Gap. Policy 10 of the Local Plan states that Sompting village will not be expanded or intensified due to its linear and historic character, and countryside location. Policy 13 states that outside of the built up area only development that is essential for, among others, quiet informal recreation, will be permitted. Development should not result in a level of activity which has an adverse impact on the character of the area. Policy 14 states that development within the Local Green Gaps must not lead to the coalescence of settlements. Policy 26 supports the provision of new facilities including visitor accommodation but in locations with good public transport access and within the built up area. All proposals for visitor facilities should be sensitively designed so as to minimise impacts on the environment.

Visual amenity and impact on character of area

The proposed campsite is small, limited to three pods only and with the previously proposed shower/toilet block no longer required. The site itself is well enclosed behind a tall flint wall and the pods would have limited impact on the wider area or compromise the aims of the countryside or Local Gap policies. The pods are slightly lower than the bell tents and only the top of the pods will be visible above the wall. Being temporary structures there would be no permanent change to the character of the area.

There has been concern that this might lead to an expansion of the campsite in the future but it is proposed to limit the number of pods by condition and the red line of the application site has been tightly drawn around the walled garden and access road only, excluding the fields to the north and south of the access road. Any future applications for expansion would be dealt with on their merits.

The access road has been constructed and it cuts across the field. However, its visual impact has been reduced by the planting of a laurel hedge. While a hawthorn hedge may have been more appropriate, it does help to soften and screen the road and, being at the rear of houses to the south of West Street, it is not widely visible. It is not considered that it has a harmful impact on the wider area.

Residential amenity

The campsite is within a walled garden approximately only 5m from the edge of the nearest dwelling, 5-8 Stock House. Some noise disturbance is possible but the site is small and the number of campers at any one time is therefore limited. The wall around the site should help to provide some sound protection too. The service block is to be positioned furthest from the houses and should not cause harm to amenity. No concerns have been raised by Environmental Health Officers.

It is proposed to add conditions to control the playing of music and the installation of permanent lighting.

Drainage

Southern Water have advised that they would not support the use of a private wastewater treatment works in the presence of a public foul sewerage network in the close vicinity of the development site. It has been agreed with the applicant that the final details of foul sewerage disposal can be dealt with by condition.

There are no surface water drainage concerns.

Parking and access

A small car park is proposed and no highway objections have been received. A recommendation to include bike storage has been suggested but it is not considered necessary as campers are likely to leave their bicycles with their vehicles or beside their tents as is usual in most campsites.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. Standard 3 year time limit

3. Limited to a maximum of 3 glamping pods only within the area shown on approved plans.
4. To be used for short term holiday accommodation only (i.e. not occupied as a permanent dwelling or by any persons for a continuous period exceeding 28 days in any calendar year)
5. No music to be played on the site after 10pm
6. No external lighting to be installed without prior approval
7. Details of parking area surface to be provided
8. Details of foul sewage disposal to be agreed
9. Pods to be removed and the land restored to a condition to be agreed with the LPA on cessation of the use

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation N

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 29 May 2024

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 29 May 2024