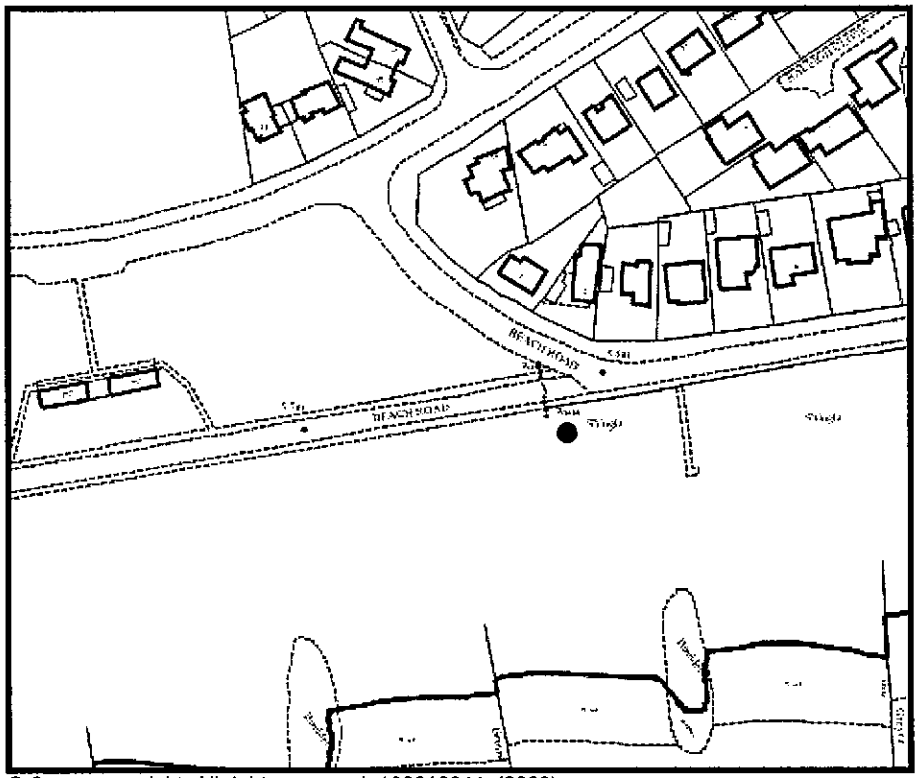
Application Number: ADC/0269/09 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: **East of beach huts, Beach Road, Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 5LJ**

Proposal: **Retention of beach hut-style cabin for storage of safety boards for rescuing surfers and equipment (renewal of SU/24/03)**



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The Application

This application is to renew the temporary permission granted by Committee on 3 June 2003. The site is owned by the Council and subject to a licence which can be determined at one month's notice by either party.

The cabin (6m long including canopy, 3m wide and 2.5m high) is sited at the east end of the row of beach huts (opposite the house at No.2 Beach Road). The original application was supported by a letter stating the cabin was needed following a risk assessment which identified that a safety retriever boat should be provided for kite-surfing lessons – it needed to be positioned in an easily accessible location so that it is ready and waiting should it be required for rescue or as a teaching aid.

The applicant now states that the original safety boat in practice proved too heavy and cumbersome to use. Consequently, they now use 3.7m long paddle boards which are far quicker to launch and have less impact. Even though they no longer have use of the nearby public shelter building, it does not take away the need for the safety cabin as storage is needed for the safety boards in order to rescue surfers and their equipment over a long stretch of beach. The service is provided voluntarily and reduces the work of the

RNLI. Even though there has been a request for a dedicated kitesurfing zone on the beach, there appears to be none and kitesurfers launch over a wide area often closest to where they live and, in any event, kitesurfing takes place on a wide area of the sea at both Shoreham and Lancing beaches. If considered necessary visually, the cabin could be shortened to 4m long, but there is no detriment to beach flora and the complaint about parking is unfair and can only relate to other beach users.

Consultations and Representations

Third Parties: 7 letters/emails have been received, 2 of which are in support and 5 make adverse observations or object.

5 are from residents (incl No's 2 & 6 Beach Rd) and the Shoreham Beach Residents Association, 3 stating that planning permission should not be renewed and the cabin should be removed. They state that there is no longer any over-riding reason for needing the cabin on this site because:-

(a) kite surfing is no longer allowed on this part of the beach – the area near Shingle Road is used which is a long way to the east;
(b) the cabin is not used for keeping a safety boat as originally intended; and
(c) the nearby shelter building is no longer used as a kitesurfers' facility.

They state that the cabin is detrimental to the appearance of the area, being larger than the beach huts, detrimental to the beach flora, and its users park on double yellow lines.

The other 2 emails (one from the resident of No.14 Beach Road) are in support of the application. They both state that they have been rescued as a result of this facility. They state that the cabin has proved very useful to all the watersports enthusiasts on Shoreham Beach (kitesurfing, winsurfing,surfing and kayaking). Conditions on the water can change very quickly and the service provided as a result of having the cabin provides peace of mind. One comments that the British coast is woefully short in its support of leisure and sport activities and is a disgrace compared to many other countries.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AR1, AR11
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPG17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' (DTLR 2002)
PPS25 'Development and Flood Risk' (ODPM 2006)

Planning Assessment

Policies

In the Adur District Local Plan, the beach (including the site) is outside the built-up area boundary. Under policy AG1, development is not normally permitted outside the built-up area boundary unless there are exceptional circumstances.
The beach is subject to policies AR1 and AR11. AR1 (public open space) states that "development will only normally be permitted if it is for recreational purposes and subject to the amenity of nearby residents not being adversely affected." AR11 (coastal recreation) states that public recreational facilities will normally be permitted subject to being small in scale and appropriate character, no detrimental effect on sea defences or nature conservation, and consideration of the effects on residential amenity, parking and access.

Visual Amenity and Character

Undeveloped beach frontage is a scarce asset and it is desirable that it is retained. The view is enjoyed by not only those who live opposite and adjacent to the site but also by beach users and passers by. The cabin in question, however, has the appearance of a beach hut, albeit larger, and is situated at the end of the row of huts. It is not considered to cause significant visual harm or to warrant just a temporary permission.

Effect on nature conservation

Shoreham Beach is a designated Local Nature Reserve (LNR) as well as SNCI and the site is within it. The effect on vegetated shingle was a concern at the time of the original application in 2003, the Nature Coast Project Officer (of the West Sussex Vegetated Shingle Project) having objected on grounds of adverse effect on beach vegetation caused not just by siting the building but because of increased human presence and movement.

However, it was concluded by officers and the Committee that, because this area of beach huts already had the greatest concentration of activity and there was extremely little vegetation directly affected, the need for the proposal outweighed the very limited harm that would be caused to vegetation. This was subject to limiting its use to storage of the safety boat only.

The applicant states that that the original safety boat, in practice, proved too heavy and time-consuming to launch. Consequently, they now use 3.7m long paddle boards which are far lighter and quicker to launch and have less environmental impact.

The need for the cabin on safety grounds, therefore, appears to be just as strong as when permission was originally sought in 2003. The cabin is still needed in order to rescue surfers and their equipment over a long stretch of sea and the site where it is located is considered the least harmful both visually and in terms of conserving beach vegetation.

Recommendation

APPROVE for reason that:-

Although the building is outside the built-up area, there are exceptional circumstances justifying its location in the interests of the safety of kitesurfers using the beach. It does not detract significantly from the local environment or cause unacceptable detriment to the residential amenities of nearby properties. It consequently does not conflict materially with the relevant policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AR1, AR11)

Subject to:-

1. The building hereby permitted shall be used solely as a store for a rescue boards and rescue equipment and shall be used for no other purposes whatsoever (including any fuel storage).
2. The building shall be retained with white-painted walls and doors.

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