Development Management - Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/2022/20 Recommendation – Temp PP

Site: **Land at Sompting Brooks, Part of Sompting Estate South of Test Road, Sompting**

Proposal: **The installation of three shipping containers and a disabled access toilet used as a temporary base for volunteer activities by Sustainable Sussex and the Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust's 'EPIC Project' on land to the south of Test Road and provision of 6no. car parking spaces and 6no. cycle spaces**

Date of site visit: Visited previously

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The site sits to the south of Test Road in Sompting and is accessed via existing metal gates and a laid trackway. The proposed site has been utilised for a number of years as a yard and storage facility, and has cleared of debris over the last 18 months. It sits on the boundary of the proposed Sompting Community Farm (proposed as part of the application for residential development under reference AWDM/0323/19) and provides access on foot to the EPIC project area to the south-west, including the Local Wildlife Site.

The supporting statement describes the proposal as follows:

The proposal itself is to locate 1 x 20ft x 10ft, 1 x 15ft x 10ft and 1 x 10ft x 10ft, shipping containers within the footprint of the development site. These will be timber clad to reduce visual impact and blend into the existing landscape. In addition, an accessible compost toilet (with ramped access) will be installed along with a small hardstand parking area (to reduce congestion on Test Road and the surrounding area).

The 20ft unit would be a welfare container with kitchen facilities and the 15ft container would be a storage area for tools and equipment. These would be spaced 30ft apart and a wooden roof constructed between them to provide a covered outdoor area. The 10ft container would house solar panels on the roof and be used to store batteries and two tramper, off road buggies, to support disabled access to the EPIC project, purchased through the EPIC project.

The site would then be screened by planting of hedgerow which complements and links those existing on site.

The Sompting Estate Trust wishes to provide these temporary facilities for use by volunteers undertaking conservation land management and related activities on the landholding known as Sompting Brooks. These facilities will provide temporary space, until permanent buildings can be constructed, for the proposed Sompting Community Farm Estate.

The site lies within the countryside and Local Green Gap.

Relevant Planning History

AWDM/0323/19 - Hybrid planning application. (1) Outline planning permission (all matters reserved with the exception of access) for the erection of up to and including 520 dwellings, community orchard/growing space, non-vehicular links between the site and Worthing, traffic calming measures, associated landscaping, open space / recreation areas, provision of formal playing pitches, ecological enhancements including improvements and extension to Cokeham Brooks Local Wildlife Site, and all other associated development works. (2) Full planning permission for 96 dwellings (part of the overall 520 dwellings comprising 2 no 1-bed, 37no. 2-bed, 38 no. 3-bed and 19 no 4-bed homes, including 30 affordable housing units) and all other associated development works (Phase1). (3) Change of use of land south of Hamble Recreation Ground to community/education and agricultural/horticultural uses associated with a new Community Farm. (Development site includes Land West of Dankton Lane Leading from the East of Upper Brighton Road Sompting) - pending consideration

AWDM/1375/17 - Restoration of upper section of the Broadwater Brook tributary of the Teville Stream involving the excavation of a new channel, construction of three silt traps, part infill of existing channel and restoration of surrounding land (EPIC project) – approved and under construction

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: The **Highways Authority** has no objection. The applicant proposes to utilise the existing vehicular access to the South of Test Road. There are no apparent visibility issues at the existing point of access onto the maintained highway. The LHA does not anticipate that this proposal would give rise to a significant material intensification of movements to or from the site. An inspection of collision data provided to WSCC by Sussex Police from a period of the last five years reveals no recorded injury accidents within the vicinity of the site. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest the existing access is operating unsafely or that the proposal would exacerbate an existing safety concern.

The applicant proposes six car parking spaces. From inspection of the plans, the parking bays are suitably sized and there is plentiful space for on-site turning to be achievable. The provision of six secure and covered cycle parking spaces will help promote the use of sustainable transport methods. Condition car and cycle parking provision.

Adur and Worthing Councils: The **Engineer** advises**:**

Flood risk- The application is within flood zone 1, the site is also not shown as being at risk from surface water flooding. The applicant should note there is a public foul sewer running through the site.

Surface water drainage- the application includes the introduction of a parking area, and it is stated this will be formed from Type 1. Type 1 is not permeable, and therefore flood risk will be increased elsewhere. A fully permeable parking system should be introduced this will also treat water, alternatively positive drainage would have to be provided. We would like to place a holding objection at this time until it is evidenced that the proposals will be adequately drained**.**

Further comments following receipt of additional information: We are happy to remove our holding objection. Construction should occur in accordance with the details supplied.

Planning Policy: As you are aware, this site lies outside of the Built Up Area Boundary, and within the Local Green Gap - policies 13 and 14 of the Adur Local Plan 2017 apply.

The temporary facilities are proposed to be located along the eastern side of the indicated area, with the effect of protruding into the Gap. However I understand this positioning is deliberate to allow for the development of permanent facilities along the northern boundary of the site (the LGG boundary) allowing for a less intrusive arrangement long-term, in order to maintain the sense of openness. As such I would support this proposal on the condition this is a temporary permission. The proposed timber cladding and hedgerow screening to reduce visual impact is welcomed.

The materials used for the parking area should be consistent with the countryside location.

Natural England: No objection. Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites.

Sompting Parish Council: No objection

Representations

None received

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policy 13, 14, 15, 30, 31, 32, 33, 36
National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

Planning Assessment

Principle

The site is within the Local Green Gap between Sompting and Worthing. The preamble to Policies 13 and 14 of the Local Plan advises:

"*Given the limited amount of countryside in Adur, it is important that the few uses allowed in the countryside and gaps genuinely require a countryside location and cannot be located elsewhere. The countryside is generally unsuitable for active recreation or leisure uses requiring permanent built facilities*"

The development will assist with the ongoing EPIC project, which is enhancing the Teville stream and providing a wildlife area to the south of the site. The buildings will also be used by Sustainable Sussex in connection with the setting up of a community farm on the site, which is proposed as part of the West Sompting development. As such, the development is considered to be acceptable in principle. However, given the nature of the development (i.e. shipping containers), and its location, it is recommended that any permission be temporary only.

Visual amenity

The buildings are shipping containers and are to be timber clad to improve their appearance. The site has recently been tidied up following previous unauthorised use of the land and the three containers will be clustered together at the southern end of the site.

The buildings would have been better sited on the northern boundary of the site, adjacent to the built up area boundary where buildings have been sited before. The applicant has advised that:

"*we have sited them as shown as the existing buildings are expected to form part of the Community Farm which we would hope, subject to gaining the relevant permissions, to start construction prior to the end of our 5 year temporary facilities. In an ideal world we would like to think that the community farm will be completed prior to the end of the 5 year period we are requesting and those facilities will supersede and replace what we are seeking permission for. As such we have considered the health and safety aspects of having temporary facilities located within what we hope will become a "construction site" in its own right within the five year period and the separation of our proposal and any future proposal means our units can be excluded from becoming welfare units for any community farm development which is taken forward. Of course, if the Community Farm is completed before the end of the 5 year period then we would seek to remove our units in advance of the end of the permission, if the Community Farm project is not successful we would remove them at the end of 5 years as per any permission granted*."

The Planning Policy Manager has no objection to the siting of these temporary facilities within the Gap subject to their removal after 5 years and that any permanent buildings associated with the community farm are sited on the northern boundary.

The cladding of the buildings will help to improve their appearance from simply being shipping containers and, in view of the environmental and

community benefits of the EPIC project, it is considered that a temporary permission can be granted without causing serious harm to the wider countryside or undermining the Gap policy.

Residential amenity

The buildings and activity is considered to be sufficiently distant from the nearest dwellings to not cause a loss of amenity (100m to the east, 75m to the north). Activity associated with the buildings is not expected to be particularly intrusive or noisy in any event.

Drainage

The Council's Engineer is satisfied with the surface water drainage aspects of the proposal following receipt of construction details for the car park.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. Temp PP 5 years
3. Parking to be constructed in accordance with construction and drainage details
4. Cycle parking
5. Use restriction

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.

This permission is for a temporary period only and does not in any way suggest that the location would be suitable for more permanent buildings in the long term.

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 28 January 2021

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 28 January 2021