Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0525/23 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.

Date of Site Visit: 24 May 2023

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 is sought 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. Retrospective permission is sought for the retention of the access road.

Planning History:

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

Consultations:

West Sussex County Council: The Highways Authority has no objection. The applicant proposes to utilise an existing vehicular access from West Street, and no

alterations are proposed to this arrangement. From inspection of WSCC mapping, there are no apparent visibility concerns with the existing point of access on to West Street. In addition, the proposed development is not anticipated to give rise to a significant material intensification of use of the existing access.
A new internal access road is proposed providing access within the site. It is noted that the proposed 3m width of this driveway may be too narrow for two cars to pass one another. The applicant may wish to widen the driveway to 4.2m, or include passing places along the internal access route. However, given the small scale of the proposed development, the LHA anticipates that the chances of vehicular conflict will be low.
Regarding car parking, the applicant proposes three car parking spaces to serve this development. Considering that three tents are proposed, this is considered sufficient. From inspection of the plans, the proposed parking bays are suitably sized and on-site turning appears achievable.
No details of cycle parking have been provided. Cycling is a viable option in the area and the LHA request that secure cycle parking provision be provided for the glamping tent visitors' use.

Adur and Worthing Councils: Public Health: No comments
Private Sector Housing: No objections in principle. The development would require licensing as a campsite

Sompting Parish Council: No serious objection to this application; provided there is adequacy of proposed services – proper drainage, hygiene facilities etc and we await Southern Water report regarding these issues before commenting further. Please note our comments regarding the application are not prejudicial to any further applications from the developer on this matter but there are ongoing concerns regarding how much the project may expand in future.
To clarify: the Council welcomes this addition to local commercial activity within the Parish but is likely to oppose any further development of this nature. Three tents is perfectly acceptable and leaves room for expansion but we would seek to avoid 'mission creep' i.e. a large increase in tented accommodation which could have a negative impact within the fragile Sompting Conservation area.

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

Letter received from Sompting Estate: Support the application. Have agreed with the applicant about fires and boundary fencing. This site will be complementary to our own forthcoming glamping site in the Downs, having capability to operate for more of the year; because we understand there to be a shortage of affordable visitor accommodation in the area; and because of the applicant's evident intention to manage the site responsibly and sustainably.

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policies 10, 13, 14, 17, 26, 28, 32, 33, 34
National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)
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 bell tents only and a small shower/toilet block. The site itself is well enclosed behind a tall flint wall and the tents would have limited impact on the wider area or compromise the aims of the countryside or Local Gap policies. The tents are 3m high and only the peak of the tents will be visible above the wall. Being temporary structures there would be no permanent change to the character of the area. The service block is small containing two Wcs, 1 shower and washing up facilities. It measures 7m2 and 2.5m high and will have limited visual impact.

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 tents by condition and the red line of the application site has been amended to be more tightly drawn around the walled

garden and access road only, excluding the field to the north 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.

An access road is also shown running south, parallel to the existing access road to the livery. This has been excluded from the red line of the application site and the applicant has been advised that it is unlikely to receive planning permission. It may be submitted as a separate application in the future.

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.

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 bell tents only within the area shown on approved plans.
4. No music to be played on the site after 10pm
5. No external lighting to be installed without prior approval
6. Details of parking area surface to be provided
7. Details of foul sewage disposal to be agreed

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation N

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating, with the Applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 20 July 2023

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 7 August 2023