

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee: East Area
Date: 22 February 2007
Ward: Strensall
Parish: Strensall And Towthorpe Parish Council

Reference: 06/01054/FUL
Application at: Hoxne Farm Sheriff Hutton Road Strensall York YO32 5TL
For: Alterations to existing caravan park including the removal of the existing touring caravan and caravan storage areas and the development of new area to accommodate 30 holiday cabins.
By: Mr J Ord
Application Type: Full Application
Target Date: 7 July 2006

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 This application was deferred at the December meeting in order for the applicant to make amendments to the layout of the site following on from the discovery of a badger sett close to the north east corner of the site and to gain additional information on surface and foul water drainage arrangements proposed. Members also agreed to a site visit following a request from the local Parish Council. The layout has been amended and additional drainage details submitted. These details have been copied into the drainage section of the report at para. 4. The additional details have been sent to the relevant drainage bodies and their comments are awaited. These will be updated verbally at the committee meeting. Regarding the issue of the badger sett the layout of the site has been marginally changed in order to bring the caravans further away from the area identified as being home to possible badger setts. This results in the nearest caravan being close to the 30 metres limit beyond which a license is not required for any work. At the time of writing this report officers are checking exact distances in order to decide whether any mitigation measures are required. These can then be conditioned if required. An update will be provided at the meeting.

The report largely follows as before except for extra information in the drainage section 4.10 to 4.13.

1.2 The application is to change the type of accommodation from touring caravans to more permanent cabin style holiday accommodation and as a consequence, reorganise the layout of the site. The site is off Sheriff Hutton Road to the north of Strensall village. It is an existing caravan park which offers accommodation for a maximum of 30 touring caravans and a large area for year round caravan storage. The site also offers other facilities such as fishing in a large pond towards the front of the site and a cattery next to the applicant's on site house.

1.2 The site is right on the northern boundary of the City of York Council area. It is in a small area of land that is not within the green belt.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

City Boundary York City Boundary 0001

2.2 Policies:

CYV5

Caravan and camping sites

CYT5

Traffic and pedestrian safety

CYNE1

Trees, woodlands, hedgerows

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

3.1 INTERNAL.

3.2 Highway network management.

No objections. Would result in a reduction in traffic and the elimination of vehicles towing caravans entering the site.

3.3 Landscape Architect.

No objections.

3.4 EXTERNAL.

3.5 Strensall and Towthope Parish Council.

Object.

Consider it to be too large a development of holiday accommodation on a restricted site to impose on the village. The access is on a very busy road junction and 30 habitations with the increased traffic in the number of cars we believe would constitute a traffic hazard.

Consideration must also be given to the provision of utilities on this site as each of the 30 dwellings planned will require sewage, drainage etc.

3.6 Foss IDB.

The site lies within the Board's District within the catchment of the River Foss, which lies a little distance to the east and south of the site.

There appears to be a slight confusion as to the method of surface water disposal. In the application it states that the method is "to Soakaway" yet the drawing O03/03/02 states that it is to continue to be disposed of "to ground via a field drainage system".

Provided this is the same method (i.e. the field drainage system is the herring bones etc that disperse the water into the ground) then the Board has no objection to the proposals.

3.7 Third Parties.

2 letters of objection received making the following comments.

- i) 30 static caravans is too dense a number for such a restricted site - a mini village.
- ii) The whole site is subject to waterlogging, the water table being so high in the area.
- iii) No provision of security fencing around the site to prevent trespass onto, or from, the site to neighbouring properties.
- iv) Screening of the site is inadequate through the autumn, winter, early spring period.
- v) No provision made for recreational areas within the site.
- vi) Plans state foul drainage to the existing system. Does not consider that these will cope with the increased number of units nor their type.
- vii) The volume of traffic that such a scheme would generate would be a severe hazard. There have been several severe accidents at this point in the road over the last 3/4 years. Possible all year round occupation of the site with normal day to day journeys to school, work etc likely. No public transport to the site.
- viii) Would be extra light pollution.
- viii) There is an active badger sett in the NE corner of the site.
- ix) There is already adequate provision for this type of use in the locality.
- x) Better quality accommodation means that there is the potential for increased occupancy in the winter months. If granted then effectively agreeing a housing estate of 30 properties in the green belt.
- xi) Will increase the demand for the provision of healthcare, schooling, policing and general services in the area.

4.0 APPRAISAL

4.1 KEY ISSUES.

- control of use.
- visual impact.
- drainage.

4.2 The site has the benefit of planning permission as a touring caravan site. Ryedale District Council gave consent in November 1991 for 10 touring caravans on the site with a condition preventing the use of the site for this purpose between 31st October and the 1st March. Permission was then subsequently approved (again by Ryedale) in 1996 for 30 caravans with no time restrictive condition imposed. That was the last relevant planning permission and so technically the site can operate all year round without restriction or control from the planning department.

4.3 This application is to replace the existing consent with a permission which would allow more permanent structures, in the form of timber, holiday cabin style accommodation to occupy the site. Some of these will be for letting purposes but

some will be privately owned. These would still meet the definition of a caravan as described in the 'The Caravans Sites Act 1968' although obviously they will offer larger, more permanent and better quality timber clad style units. Significant levels of caravan storage is also permitted on the site. This would also be removed.

4.4 The purpose of the application is twofold. Firstly to offer a better standard of holiday accommodation and secondly to improve the environment for fishermen who fish the main pond nearest to the front entrance of the site. At the moment the touring caravans are located in an area close to the northern boundary of the lake and these impact on the enjoyment of the lake and the facilities offered to the fisherman. This application shows the removal of all the pitches around the fishing lake and the transferring of them to an area around a secondary lake towards the back of the site, an area currently with planning permission for the storage of touring caravans. The new owners of the site are also concerned at the disruption to the site caused by the extensive storage area and do not wish to continue with this. They wish to also improve the fishing side of the enterprise to create a better quality visitor facility.

4.5 Policy V5 of the draft local plan is the most relevant policy for this case. Part i) of that policy states that the number of caravans should be restricted to 20. However, given that the permitted use of the site allows for 30 touring caravans, then no objections can be raised to this despite the change in design and style. The status of the site will not change significantly.

4.6 Point 2 of V5 states that no static caravans should be permitted. The cabins proposed do not have the appearance of standard static caravans but given the level of permanence associated with them, they are essentially static in nature. The reason for this blanket policy is mainly visual given that static caravans are often larger and more visually intrusive and therefore they are often unsuitable for all year round occupation. Normally such an application would be resisted. In this case however, given the existing unrestricted planning lawful use of the site which technically allows for caravans to stay on site all year round (albeit tourers), the site situation is slightly different. The main issues therefore are whether the revised details for the site are more visually intrusive than existing and whether the occupation of the site can still be properly controlled to prevent all year round occupation. The issue of visual amenity is dealt with at para. 4.9 below.

4.7 The cabins will offer better quality accommodation which could encourage occupation during the winter months. It is considered important to control this and this can be done by condition. It is noted that the last Ryedale permission effectively gave the site an unrestricted all year round use and with some modern touring vans it may now be possible to do this. However, given the change in emphasis to the better quality accommodation and the up to date relevant tourism policies in the local plan, officers are content that occupation times and levels can and must be controlled this time. The applicant has agreed to this. The aim of any such condition would be to prevent year round residential occupation and ensure that the units are used solely as holiday accommodation.

4.8 Overall, the site will have significantly fewer caravans within its boundaries. The removal of the permitted storage use significantly reduces the number of caravans

on the site and consequently should result in a significant reduction in vehicle movements to and from the site. Visually, the removal of the stored caravans also represents an improvement. There is no reason to conclude that the traffic generation from the cabins should be any greater than that in connection with the 30 touring caravans currently permitted to use the site. The layout around the secondary lake is also much improved and would result in a better and more defined layout of the site.

Visual amenity.

4.9 The area of land in question is on the eastern side of the site and behind all the other site facilities. It is currently an open paddock and lake within the site's boundary confines and it has planning permission for extra caravan storage. Being currently unused it has little obvious use in connection with the existing use of the site. The area of land is well confined within the existing site boundaries and is framed by the existing storage facility to the south (although this will be incorporated into this scheme) and extensive and mature tree/shrub planting, including planted tree bunds, to the north and west. Only a very small part of the area in question will be visible from Sheriff Hutton Road (glimpses at the site entrance) and barely at all from either the north or the south (officers drove a mile either side). To the east is farmland with no public views into the site. Although the area in question would see the introduction of holiday cabin style developments, the visual impact of the development would be no worse (and arguably better) than if the applicant implemented the approved storage use fully. The approved storage area could feasibly result in 100 caravans being stored in close proximity to each 365 days a year whereas the 30 cabins, whilst spaced over a much wider area than the existing touring area, would offer spaces between the units and generally a greater level of openness. Any visual impact is considered minimal when set against existing and is not considered materially harmful to the area when considered against existing levels of visual harm. The levels of natural screening are excellent, however it is recommended that these be retained as a condition of approval. Additional areas of planting to supplement this further is also shown on the submitted plans. The site is not in the green belt (just open countryside) and therefore the issue of appropriateness is not relevant in this case.

Drainage.

4.10 Concerns have been raised by adjacent landowners about runoff from the site given the local high water table and waterlogged ground. The applicant has confirmed that surface water drainage will continue to be to the ground and from there into the existing field drainage system with no positive/direct drainage being proposed into the adjoining watercourse and drain. The cabins will stand on a surface of crushed stone with stone/ scalplings on the top so that rainwater can percolate to the ground avoiding any issue of surface water run-off. A more stable surface may be required to the entrance of the cabins but this would also drain to the permeable surface. The Foss Internal Drainage Board have raised no objections to this arrangement although a condition controlling any future change to this arrangement is currently recommended, including the stipulation that there should be no increase in surface water run-off over the present arrangement. The extra information provided by the applicant has been included below in para. 4.12 and this

has been sent onto the Foss Internal Drainage Board for comment although they seem broadly in favour of the drainage arrangements for surface water.

4.11 As for foul water arising from the development, this is shown to be disposed of into the existing on-site private treatment system in the form of existing cesspools. There is no increase in the number of accommodation units on the site and therefore one would assume that this should result in the existing situation being maintained. However, in the event of these levels of discharge increasing, a condition is recommended to control this.

4.12 The following extra information has been supplied by the applicant re drainage: 'As previously outlined, surface water on the site currently discharges to the existing land drainage system which is intended to be retained when undertaking the proposed development. It is anticipated that the use of porous materials for roads and caravan bases will reduce any potential for sheet run-off to the adjoining drainage ditches by effectively increasing the porosity and "holding capacity" of the site. Full details of the existing drainage arrangements in the field are not known but it is not anticipated that the proposed development will have any adverse impact on this or adjoining watercourses.

Whilst the existing foul drainage collection system is based on sealed cesspools which are emptied and disposed of by authorised contractors, the applicant has indicated that he would be willing to introduce a private treatment plant system on the site if this was considered preferable to continuing with the existing cesspool arrangements. However, it is appreciated that such a new system would require consent from the Environment Agency.

If, at the end of the day, an Environment Agency consent was not forthcoming, it is considered that any increase in foul water flows into the existing cesspool system would not cause any problem or disruption - any modest increase in the regularity of emptying the cesspools would probably only result in one or two additional vehicular movements to and from the site each year'.

4.13 The correspondence goes on to ask that if this matter remained one of concern could it be dealt with by way of a condition requiring that the proposed development be served by a private treatment plant of a design to be agreed by the Local Planning Authority which would then leave the cesspool option as a fall-back position dependent on the views of the Environment Agency in respect of any application to discharge needed for the private treatment plant. Officers cannot comment on this until the comments of the Environment Agency have been received and these are currently still awaited.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Officers consider the proposal to be acceptable in terms of visual amenity and the alterations to the type of holiday accommodation on offer, subject to suitable conditions. The comments of the Environment Agency and the Foss Internal Drainage Board are awaited regarding the drainage proposals and if any significant issues are raised as a result of these then this will be referred to members at the meeting. However, officers consider that it is likely that some foul drainage system is

likely to be acceptable even if that entails the applicant installing a full package treatment plant to replace the existing cesspool arrangement. It would then be up to the applicant to decide whether this was acceptable or not.

COMMITTEE TO VISIT

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approve

1 TIME2

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out only in accordance with the following plans:-

Drawing no's

- 003/03/02
- 003/03/03
- 003/03/04
- 003/03/05

or any plans or details subsequently agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority as amendment to the approved plans.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

3 VISQ8

4 The areas of new tree planting as shown on plan drawing no. 003/03/02 shall be carried out in accordance with the details in Point 5 of the same plan. This scheme shall be implemented within a period of six months of the completion of the development. Any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless alternatives are agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: So that the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied with the variety, suitability and disposition of species within the site.

5 The accommodation hereby approved shall only be used for holiday accommodation purposes and they shall not be occupied as a persons sole or main residential home. No caravan on the site shall be occupied between the 7th January and March 1st in any one calendar year.

Reason. In order to prevent the full time residential occupation of the site. The site is not considered appropriate for full time residential use due to its position in open countryside away from local services.

- 6 Any change in the surface water drainage arrangement as described in the correspondence received from Edwardson Associates dated 28th November 2006 shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority in conjunction with the Foss Internal Drainage Board prior to their implementation.

Reason. In the interests of satisfactory drainage within, and adjacent to, the application site.

- 7 In the event that a new foul water treatment system is to be installed, full details of the equipment and associated drainage arrangements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in conjunction with the Environment Agency and Foss Internal Drainage Board prior to the installation of any such foul water treatment system.

Reason. In the interests of satisfactory foul water drainage and in order to prevent pollution of the groundwater.

7.0 INFORMATIVES:

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