

Reference:

BA/2019/0058/FUL

Location

Land West of Bewilderwood Car Park,
Hoveton

Application for Determination
Report by Planning Officer

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| Target Date | 12 April 2019 |
| Parish: | Hoveton Parish Council |
| Reference: | BA/2019/0058/FUL |
| Location: | Land West Of Bewilderwood Car Park Site, Hoveton |
| Proposal: | Change of use of agricultural land to ten-pitch camp site and the erection of a new washroom block to serve the site. (Scheme amended to revise washroom provision.) |
| Applicant: | Trustees of the Hoveton Estate |
| Recommendation: | Approve subject to conditions |
| Reason for referral to Committee: | Objection of significant weight |

1 Description of Site and Proposals

- 1.1 The application site is located within the Hoveton estate directly adjacent to the west of Bewilderwood visitor attraction. The site is accessed directly from the existing access drive to Bewilderwood which connects to the A1062 road to the south. The site has an area of 0.5 hectares and is bounded by hedges on all sides with a service track and arable fields to the south, Palmers Lane (restricted byway) and arable fields to the west, woodland to the north and the service area and buildings as well as car parking to Bewilderwood to the east.
- 1.2 Whilst previously in an agricultural use, the site has been managed recently as mown grassland, bound by hedges interspersed with trees of a variety of age, species and quality.
- 1.3 Planning permission is sought for the change of use from agricultural land to a camp site for up to 10 glamping pods and the permanent siting of 2 structures

in the form of a washing up 'shack' (3.5mx2.7m and 2.5m tall) and a wash block of three shower units and 3 toilet units (6.6mx1.8m and 2.5m tall) connecting to mains sewerage through the installation of an underground pump and infrastructure. The site will be managed by a company that offers camping holidays in pre-erected tents, visitors do not bring their own tents, and the tents are left in place for the entirety of the season. The form of the tents are not permanent structures and no built development is required for their erection. The agent has set out that the form of these tents would be in the form of standard bell tents, lotus bell tents or yurts within the 4mx4m pitches shown on plan BW-Glamp-01 Revision D received 23rd April 2019.

- 1.4 The nearest property to the site boundary is to the south located on Palmers Lane and is some 180m away. The closest properties located on the Horning Road are approximately 230m away to the south. Between the application site and these neighbouring properties is an agricultural field. The southern boundary of the application site is bound by an established hedge and the application proposes reinforcement planting where there are breaks and the introduction of oak trees at 10m intervals within this hedge.
- 1.5 The application does not propose car parking within the camping field, instead all associated car parking for the site would be within the existing service area and parking area of Bewilderwood. Access to the glamping pitches would be along mown grass pathways within the field and other areas of the site would be left as longer grass.
- 1.6 Incorporated within the application are details of tree protection measures, and an ecological survey which sets out a range of mitigation measures. A footpath gate is proposed onto the restricted byway, Palmers Lane for access of guests onto this restricted byway.
- 1.7 The site is located within Flood Risk Zone 1.

2 Site History

- 2.1 Whilst the adjacent Bewilderwood site has seen numerous planning applications associated with its development, the site on which the proposed camping field is located does not have any recent planning history.

3 Consultations

- 3.1 Consultations received

Horning Parish Council – No objection to the revised planning application.

NCC Highways – No objection. Recommends conditions.

Environment Agency – No objection to amended scheme, which shows sewerage will be connected to mains sewerage.

BA Landscape – On balance, no objection to revised scheme, although the previous design was more appropriate and the use of multiple small units such as these will add to the appearance of clutter on the site.

BA Ecologist – Recommends conditions and further habitat mitigation will be required.

3.2 Representations Received

Three representations have been received. One states that the occupants of 6 Palmers Lane have no objection to the proposal, 1 sets out a comprehensive list of objections from residents at Oakfield, Horning Road: and 1 sets out comments for consideration including conditions should planning permission be granted.

Objection from the residents of Oakfield Horning Road. The initial objection letter and subsequent additional comments following re-consultation are summarised as follows (and full documents are available online):

- This development would see the loss of agricultural land to a use which would result in loss of habitat and wildlife and harm the sites ecology.
- The buildings and land use would detract from the landscape quality including the loss of trees.
- The use of the land for holiday accommodation would detract from established holiday accommodation businesses.
- The proposed land use would result in noise pollution to the detriment of neighbouring residents amenity through visitor noise, pet noise and additional 24hr traffic movement.
- The development would result in light pollution
- Waste from the glamping site has not properly been taken into consideration by the applicant.
- Car parking would rely on the car park and access of Bewilderwood site being made available for the applicant.
- Over development/overly dense pitch number for the site.
- Site safety.
- Glamping is not an inclusive form of holiday accommodation.
- The introduction of light pollution, noise pollution and direct pollution from smoke relating to log burners, fire pits and BBQs will disrupt and damage a much wider area. I believe that protected species such as bats reside in this area and they will be directly adversely affected.

Comments and requested conditions from the residents of Field Cottage, Horning Road, Hoveton St John are summarised as follows: -

- Light pollution. There doesn't appear to be any external lighting proposed and I ask that this remains and is a planning condition.

- Noise. Would like to see restrictions on the playing of music and excessive noise during specified hours and that an acoustic barrier is put in place.
- Stag/hen parties - I request the prohibition of such events.
- Fire will outside cooking and lighting of fire be permitted and if so, will trained personnel be available on site at all times to deal with issues arising from the same? In addition will there be a hydrant within the area and can the site be readily accessed and without hindrance at all times be the Fire Brigade?

4 Policies

- 4.1 The adopted development plan policies for the area are set out in the Local Plan for the Broads (adopted 2019). It was adopted at the Full Authority meeting on 17th May 2019. [Local-Plan-for-the-Broads\(May2019\)](#)

This document was used in the determination of the Planning Application.

SP1 (Sustainable Development in the Broads)
 SP6 (Biodiversity)
 SP10 (A prosperous local economy)
 DM13 (Natural Environment)
 DM16 (Development and landscape)
 DM21 (Amenity)
 DM23 (Transport, Highways and access)
 DM29 (Sustainable Tourism and recreation development)
 DM30 (Holiday accommodation – new provision and retention)
 DM46 (Design)

5 Assessment

- 5.1 In determining this application the main issues to be taken into consideration include: the principle of the development; impact on the landscape; impact upon habitat (including light pollution); and residential amenity (including noise pollution). Other points raised include highways access, sewerage and waste.

Principle of Development

- 5.2 The application proposes the creation of new tourist accommodation adjacent to an existing tourist facility. The relevant planning policies specifically related to holiday accommodation are SP1 which supports tourist development of an appropriate scale and location and DM29 and DM30 of the Local Plan for the Broads which sets out criteria for development including camping or glamping.

In respect of SP1, when considering proposals, the Local Planning Authority will take a positive approach which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. The policy seeks to secure development that meets the Broads' statutory purposes and improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In respect of policy DM29 of the Local Plan for the Broads, Criteria a, - ii and part b vi - xi are relevant to this proposal. In respect of policy DM30, Criteria a-d are relevant and the change of use to a Glampsite and associated buildings are considered to meet these criteria.

- 5.3 This location is considered to be a sustainable location for tourist development as there are direct links to an established tourist attraction (Bewilderwood), and also good links to neighbouring settlements along a made cycle and foot path which runs between Hoveton and Horning. The Horning Road has bus links to the railway station at Hoveton & Wroxham, and the site links directly onto both the cycle route and the Restricted Byway to the west which offers recreational walking and cycling routes. As such the proposal is not considered to result in car centric development, and the close association with the existing tourist site ensures that this proposal is in principle policy compliant.

Impact upon the Landscape

- 5.4 The application site was formerly used as agricultural land and whilst it has taken on a more managed appearance recently through mowing, it has retained a broadly natural appearance. That it will change further as a consequence of this proposal is acknowledged and the LPA needs to consider whether or not such a change is acceptable in the context of the policies. It is also noted that the impact on the landscape is one of the key issues to have been raised as an objection.
- 5.5 As part of the objection to the development concerns were raised regarding this proposal on the character and appearance of the landscape, and that the site was sensitive due to views from numerous public viewpoints. Whilst the concerns are recognised, it is considered that the proposals for this site retain landscape features and elements important to landscape character such as the mature trees, field boundary line and hedging. The proposal is considered to work with existing landscape features to minimise any landscape and visual impacts of the development. This includes the additional planting measures set out such as the infilling of existing hedge lines with whips and individual oaks, along with some additional screen planting which will further mitigate any impacts of the proposed development.
- 5.6 The site is visible from the restricted byway (Palmers Lane), however the established boundary along Palmers Lane and the south of the site, especially when reinforced with additional planting would only allow glimpsed views of the application site. The wooded area to the north and service building to the east would screen the site totally from long range views from the north and north east. The small structures and proposed glamping pitches would be visible from residential properties 1st floor windows but this would for the most part be screened by the existing and proposed hedging and trees and would be seen in the context of the dense wooded area to the north of the site. As such this is not an adverse visual impact.

- 5.7 The scheme has been amended from one amenity block to two smaller buildings housing the WC/showers and washing up blocks separately. In landscape terms it is considered that the previous design was more subtle and in keeping with a natural setting, and one building avoided the clutter resulting from a number of buildings. However, given the modest nature of these units, their limited height and the limited visibility of the site the change is not considered harmful, and as such the amended design accords with policy DM16 – Development and Landscape of the Local Plan for the Broads.
- 5.8 The recommendation includes landscape conditions to secure mitigation planting as proposed, its establishment and management. Given the flexible and temporary nature of glamping facilities, it would be worth any approval also including a condition restricting the height of any glamping facilities, and material colours to neutral tones, to safeguard the appearance of the site.
- 5.9 Overall and on balance, the proposal is not considered to have an unacceptable impact upon the landscape.

Impact upon Habitat

- 5.10 The application site comprises an area of predominantly improved and semi-improved grassland, scattered trees, hedged boundaries and some elements of rough grassed areas. The development footprint and the site of the glamping pitches is comprised of habitats considered to be of low ecological value, namely mown grassland. However it is the case that prior to the application being made the site had more rough grassland coverage which is of a higher ecological value.
- 5.11 The valuable scattered, boundary trees, hedgerow and broadleaved woodland, which is a UK Priority Habitat, to the north are moderate to high value habitats and are proposed to be retained, which is welcomed. It is also noted that the application identifies that the site contains suitable habitat for the following protected species; “foraging and commuting bats, badger, roosting bats (trees), small mammals, reptiles and nesting birds”. The accompanying Preliminary Ecological Appraisal advises that due to the location within the Broads, any development would be expected to demonstrate a net gain for biodiversity.
- 5.12 The Authority’s Ecologist has also identified the area, particularly the rough grassland, as being habitat for owls and kestrels.
- 5.13 The ecologist has requested that the mitigation measures and enhancements as proposed in the application are secured by condition and, additionally, that lighting is restricted to protect bat habitat and foraging corridors. Additionally, a request was made to the applicant to confirm whether additional land could be provided as replacement rough grass land as mitigation for the equivalent and lost as part of this proposal, however he has confirmed that he is not able to provide this. Whilst this is regrettable, it is not considered that the loss of this rough grassland is sufficient to warrant a refusal of the planning application, or that the provision of replacement habitat could be required by

condition as this would not meet the legal tests of reasonable planning conditions. On balance it is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of policy DM 13 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Amenity of Residential Properties

- 5.14 The site is located 180m from the nearest residential property (Parmers Lane), and 230m from the nearest property on Horning Road. The proposal is for 10 glamping pitches which spread across the site results with relatively large spaces between the pitches. The minimum separation distance between pitches is 5m, the maximum 15m. On this basis it is considered that the development is a low density layout.
- 5.15 The limited scale of development, and significant distance separating the proposed 10 glamping pitches from the neighbouring residential dwellings is such that any impact would be limited. Concerns have been raised regarding the use of the site, including reference to hen and stag parties or disruptive 'all nighter' parties. The proposal does not provide any additional amenities such as an on-site bar which could be considered to promote such activities and this permission relates only to the use of the site for glamping. Whilst campsites or in this instance glamping sites do attract various groups, families and individuals, there is no evidence that this specific proposal would result in behaviour other than that which is usual for a campsite. In regards to the request to specifically restrict the use, or prohibit groups such as stag or hen groups, this is not considered to meet the tests of reasonable planning conditions. It is noted, however, that the applicant could do this through the management of the site.
- 5.16 The nearest neighbouring properties are significantly closer to the existing A1062 road, footway and cycle path than either the existing site entrance and car parking area to Bewilderwood, or the proposed camping site. As such it is not considered that noise from either the camp site or its access outside of the current hours of operation of Bewilderwood would result in an adverse impact upon the amenity of neighbours
- 5.17 Given the location of the campsite in relation to the other residential properties being at least 180m distant, the existing mature screening and proposed additional screening of the site it is the case that there would be no adverse impact on the residential amenity of dwellings to the south of the application site on Palmers Lane and Horning Road such as to justify a refusal of planning permission. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with policy DM21 of the Local Plan for the Broads.
- 5.18 Lighting is not proposed as part of the development apart from a 12v bulkhead light within the Kitchen unit. A condition will be attached to control any further lighting to ensure that light pollution, and impact upon the amenity of residents, as well as impact upon habitat is controlled.

Other Issues

- 5.19 The proposed access would utilise the existing track from the A1062 Horning Road which is used by Bewilderwood and car parking will be within the existing Bewilderwood site. Whilst the ownership and rights of the applicant to use this access have been raised in the letter of objection, it is not considered to be a material planning consideration. The access is considered acceptable on highways grounds, and subject to the recommended conditions Norfolk County Council Highways do not object to the proposed development.
- 5.20 Initially sewerage was to be dealt with by a proposed package plant. However, following a holding objection from the Environment Agency to this system, the applicants have changed to a connection to mains drainage. As such the Environment Agency have removed their objection to the development. The site is outside of the Horning Knackers Yard Catchment, and therefore the proposed drainage connection is considered to be acceptable.
- 5.21 No comment or objection has been received from North Norfolk District Council regarding the proposed development in regards to fire safety or camping site licencing. However, the applicant would be required to apply for a Camping License (England and Wales) which would ensure these issues are addressed.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 In conclusion, based on the information submitted to support this application, the change of use of the land to a ten pitch glamping site and associated sewerage infrastructure and 2.no amenity buildings is considered in accordance with policy DM29 and DM30 of the Local Plan for the Broads. Whilst it is accepted that the development would have an impact upon the landscape, habitat and amenity of neighbours, on balance it is considered that these impacts would not be adverse and therefore do not have sufficient weight to justify refusal of planning permission. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is approved subject to conditions.

7 Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions:

- i. Standard time limit
- ii. In accordance with approved plans
- iii. Prior to commencement of use connection of all onsite sewerage to mains sewerage
- iv. Prior to commencement of use creation of foot and cycle access to Palmers Lane
- v. Works in accordance with recommendation of the Eco-check Preliminary ecological appraisal.
- vi. Ecological conditions as set out by BA ecologist 10.04.2019
- vii. Works in accordance with Tree Protection Measures and Site Works Guide drawing No.TP1 received on the 23rd April 2019.

- viii. Holiday Accommodation condition limiting the period of occupation as per policy DP15 and limiting the type of glamping pods on site.
- ix. Highways conditions as per recommendation from NCC
- x. Restriction of staff and visitor parking to existing Bewilderwood service area
- xi. Landscape conditions to ensure development completed and maintained in accordance with submitted landscape scheme.

8 Reason for Recommendation

The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies DM29 and DM30 of the adopted Broads Local Plan 2019.

Background papers: BA/2019/0058/FUL

Author: Jack Ibbotson

Date of report: 10 May 2019

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Location Map

