

Application Number: 15/11265 Full Planning Permission

Site: FIELD adjacent HILBURY WOOD, MIDGHAM FARM, MIDGHAM ROAD, FORDINGBRIDGE SP6 3BY

Development: 1 safari tent for 6 months of the year, for use of camping

Applicant: Mr Witt

Target Date: 25/11/2015

1 REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Contrary to Town Council View

2 DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND OTHER CONSTRAINTS

Countryside
Minerals Consultation Area

3 DEVELOPMENT PLAN, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Core Strategy

Objectives

- 7. The countryside
- 8. Biodiversity and landscape
- 9. Leisure and recreation

Policies

- CS1: Sustainable development principles
- CS2: Design quality
- CS10: The spatial strategy
- CS19: Tourism
- CS21: Rural economy
- CS24: Transport considerations

Local Plan Part 2 Sites and Development Management Development Plan Document

- DM13: Tourism and visitor facilities
- DM22: Employment development in the countryside

4 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GOVERNMENT ADVICE

Section 38 Development Plan
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
National Planning Policy Framework

5 RELEVANT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE AND DOCUMENTS

None

6 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Use as 3 residential dwellings (prior approval application) approved 21st November 2014 on another part of the Midgham Farm holding.

7 PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

Fordingbridge Town Council:- Recommend permission as the proposal offers good diversification for a small farm holding and encourages tourism in the area.

8 COUNCILLOR COMMENTS

None

9 CONSULTEE COMMENTS

9.1 Hampshire County Council Highway Engineer:- No objection

9.2 Land Drainage Engineer:- No objection subject to condition

9.3 Ministry of Defence:- No objection

9.4 Environmental Health (commercial):- advise that a tent licence may be needed.

10 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

One letter has been received making the following comments: inappropriate in this countryside location, increased traffic, president, concern about potential for use for adventure activities, and loud music/parties, the site is in an approved minerals area and when not in use the facilities could be used by the travelling community.

11 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

No relevant considerations

12 LOCAL FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Local financial considerations are not material to the decision on this application

13 WORKING WITH THE APPLICANT/AGENT

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, New Forest District Council take a positive and proactive approach, seeking solutions to any problems arising in the handling of development proposals so as to achieve, whenever possible, a positive outcome.

This is achieved by

- Strongly encouraging those proposing development to use the very thorough pre application advice service the Council provides.
- Working together with applicants/agents to ensure planning applications are registered as expeditiously as possible.

- Advising agents/applicants early on in the processing of an application (through the release of a Parish Briefing Note) as to the key issues relevant to the application.
- Updating applicants/agents of issues that arise in the processing of their applications through the availability of comments received on the web or by direct contact when relevant.
- Working together with applicants/agents to closely manage the planning application process to allow an opportunity to negotiate and accept amendments on applications (particularly those that best support the Core Strategy Objectives) when this can be done without compromising government performance requirements.
- Advising applicants/agents as soon as possible as to concerns that cannot be dealt with during the processing of an application allowing for a timely withdrawal and re-submission or decision based on the scheme as originally submitted if this is what the applicant/agent requires.
- When necessary discussing with applicants/agents proposed conditions especially those that would restrict the use of commercial properties or land when this can be done without compromising government performance requirements.

In this case, the application proposals were not the subject of pre-application discussions. The objections to the application are significant and cannot be reasonably addressed through negotiation. As such, the application can only be recommended for refusal.

14 ASSESSMENT

- 14.1 The application site, which measures 0.88 hectares in area, forms part of a grass field that is situated about 200 metres to the west side of Midgham Road. The field is reached by a grass access route that runs to the south side of a mature hedgerow boundary. The part of the field covered by the application site is bounded by Hilbury Wood on its western side, and by a mature hedgerow boundary with many mature trees on its eastern side. There is a lower hedgerow boundary on the site's southern side. The field to which this application relates extends northwards beyond the application site boundary.
- 14.2 The submitted application seeks to site a single safari tent within the field. The tent would be 9 metres in length, and 5.09 metres in width. The tent would have a ridge height of 3.50 metres. The tent would sit on a proposed concrete base that would measure 6 metres by 11 metres, which would be sited about 40 metres from the south-eastern corner of the field. The supporting details accompanying the application indicate that the tent would remain on site for 6 months whilst it is being let out and would be taken away for the remainder of the year. A single below ground septic tank is proposed to deal with drainage.
- 14.3 In support of their application, the applicants point out that the proposal is intended to form part of an agricultural diversification project at Midgham Farm, which is a mixed farm holding extending to approximately 410 acres. Currently, cattle and sheep are kept on the holding, and the land is used for grazing, hay making and silage making. The income from the proposed campsite is intended to supplement the farm business. The applicants advise that they are targeting the premium end of the camping market (known as glamping), and have selected the site for the complete privacy it would provide.

- 14.4 The Council's Core Strategy (Policy CS19) seeks to support local tourism by supporting new tourist provision in the countryside as part of farm diversification projects, particularly also where there would be benefits to local communities and the local economy. In addition, Policy CS21 of the Core Strategy seeks to encourage farm diversification projects, where this would be consistent with maintaining and enhancing the environment and contributing to local distinctiveness. The Local Plan Part 2 has more detailed policies and sets out more clearly the circumstances where new tourist related developments will be acceptable in the countryside. Policy DM13 of the Local Plan Part 2 stipulates that outside of defined built-up areas, development to provide visitor accommodation will only be permitted where specific criteria are met. One of these criteria is as part of a farm diversification project or through the conversion of existing buildings in accordance with Policy DM22. Policy DM22 indicates that rural employment development will be permitted as part of a farm diversification project supporting a farm business, making best use of existing permanent buildings. The policy makes it clear that where new buildings are necessary, they should be contained within the existing complex of farm buildings and be limited so as to ensure the development remains of a scale appropriate to its rural setting. Both policies DM13 and DM22 make it clear that in all cases, development should be of an appropriate design, scale and appearance and should not be harmful to the rural character of the area by reason of visual impact, traffic or other impact.
- 14.5 Given the proposal would form part of a farm diversification project, it is considered that the provision of new tourist accommodation would, in principle, be acceptable and consistent with the Council's Core Strategy policies. However, there is still a need to balance the proposal's economic benefits against the scheme's environmental impact. In this case, the site where the proposed tent is shown to be sited is remote from any other development. It is an isolated site that is a significant distance away from the existing farm buildings at Midgham Farm. In this sense, the proposal does not accord with the thrust of Local Plan Policy DM22, which suggests that new development should be sited close to existing buildings. In essence, it is felt that the siting of the tent would be too isolated. Such sporadic development would be harmful to the rural character of the area. It would introduce activity into a quiet countryside location, and would formalise use of an access route that is currently no more than a grass strip. Furthermore, it is felt the siting of a fairly large tent in this field, isolated from any other development, and away from the site boundaries, would be visually a rather incongruous development that would impact negatively on the rural landscape. Although the tent would apparently be removed during the winter months, when not in use, it would still be a presence for much of the year, and the fairly large concrete base would, of course, be a permanent feature. It is felt the development would fail to respect the character of the countryside, and therefore, it would not be a sustainable form of development supported by the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 14.6 The applicant has referred to another small camping development at nearby Midgham Long Copse, which they also deem to be in an isolated location. However, that development was approved prior to the Council's Local Plan Part 2 being adopted, and indeed before the National Planning Policy Framework was adopted. In any event, that development, which is in a very different woodland setting is considered to be better integrated with the overall farm holding. It is not felt that the

development at Midgham Long Copse would justify the development that is now proposed. Furthermore, just because the application is proposing a high end camping experience, does not justify such development within an isolated rural location.

- 14.7 The site access onto Midgham Road does not enjoy particularly good visibility. However, in the light of the low traffic flows along Midgham Road, the Highway Authority are satisfied that the proposal would not cause undue dangers to users of the public highway.
- 14.8 It should be noted that on another part of the Midgham Farm holding, the Council gave its approval for a barn to be converted to 3 dwellings under the prior approval procedure in 2014.(ref: 14/11381).
- 14.9 Concerns have also been raised that other uses could occur such as adventure activities and that travellers could use the site, however, these uses are likely to require planning permission. While the site is within a Minerals Consultation Area the type of development proposed would be unlikely to compromise this resource in the long term.
- 14.10 Overall, it is accepted that the proposed development would bring benefits in terms of supporting farm diversification and the local tourist economy. However, it is felt, in this case, that the benefits of the development would be materially outweighed by the scheme's visual and environmental harm. The provision of a camping enterprise in a field that is so isolated would not be sustainable or sympathetic to the character and appearance of the countryside. It is felt that the development would be inconsistent with the Council's environmental objectives and so would not accord with policy. As such, the application is recommended for refusal.
- 14.11 In coming to this recommendation, consideration has been given to the rights set out in Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions) of the European Convention on Human Rights. Whilst it is recognised that this recommendation, if agreed, may interfere with the rights and freedoms of the applicant to develop the land in the way proposed, the objections to the planning application are serious ones and cannot be overcome by the imposition of conditions. The public interest and the rights and freedoms of neighbouring property owners can only be safeguarded by the refusal of permission.

15. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

Reason(s) for Refusal:

1. The proposed development would introduce a significant tented structure, an area of hardstanding, and associated domestic activity and paraphernalia into an isolated area of countryside, remote from other development. Such development would be visually incongruous and unsympathetic in this agricultural setting and would harmfully erode the quiet rural character and appearance of the area. The proposed development would therefore be materially at odds with the environmental objectives of sustainable development, and would be contrary to Policies CS2, CS19, and CS21 of the Core Strategy for New Forest District outside of the National Park and Policy DM13 and DM22 of the Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management.

Notes for inclusion on certificate:

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, New Forest District Council takes a positive and proactive approach, seeking solutions to any problems arising in the handling of development proposals so as to achieve, whenever possible, a positive outcome by giving clear advice to applicants.

In this case, the application proposals were not the subject of pre-application discussions. The objections to the application are significant and could not be reasonably addressed through negotiation. The application was accordingly refused.

Further Information:

Major Team
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**Planning Development
Control Committee**
December 2015

Item No: 3d

Field adj Hilbury Wood
Midgham Farm
Fordingbridge
15/11265
SU1312

Scale 1:3000

N.B. If printing this plan from
the internet, it will not be to
scale.

