

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 May 2017

by J Ayres BA Hons, Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 19th May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/W/17/3168013

Mobile Home at Coombewick House, London Road, Ashington, West Sussex RH20 3AU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Thea Paraskevaides against the decision of Horsham District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/16/0932, dated 21 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as the temporary stationing of a mobile home and access decking in connection with building work and a two type track finish haul road/access track comprising of compressed soil, grass and road planings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the temporary stationing of a mobile home and access decking in connection with building work and a two type track finish haul road/access track comprising of compressed soil, grass and road planings at Mobile Home at Coombewick House, London Road, Ashington, West Sussex RH20 3AU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/16/0932 , dated 21 April 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - (1) The use of the land for the siting of a caravan shall be for a limited period being the period of 3 years from the date of this decision. Within 3 months of that date the use hereby permitted shall cease, the caravan, and works undertaken to it in connection with the use shall be removed, and the land restored to its condition before the development took place.
 - (2) The vehicular access track linking North Lane to the appeal site and the widening of North Lane hereby permitted shall be for a limited period being the period of 3 years from the date of this decision. Within 3 months of that date the works permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition in accordance with a scheme of work that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
 - (3) The vehicular access track linking the appeal site to North Lane and the widening of North Lane shall be constructed in accordance with the following approved plans; 1203-001, 1203-002, 1203-003, 1204-004, Site Location Plan, Site Plan, Block Plan.
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- (4) No development of the vehicular access track or alterations to North Lane shall take place until samples of all materials have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The relevant works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved sample details.
- (5) No site clearance, preparatory work or development in respect of the access track shall take place until an arboricultural method statement detailing measures to protect and retain trees on the site shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed arboricultural method statement.

Main Issue

- 2. The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

- 3. The site is accessed across the driveway of Coombewick Farm, from a private road called North Lane. This is a single track road that allows access to the site from the A24. North Lane appears to serve a small number of residential properties and farms, these either sit on solitary plots, or appear as small clusters of dwellings. This is indicative of how the area has developed over time from an agricultural area to one encompassing limited residential development in addition to the agricultural presence.
- 4. The area is generally quiet and tranquil, open views across the fields can be seen through the gaps in the hedgerow, and the area has a distinct rural character and appearance.
- 5. The development is partly implemented, as the caravan is already on site and in residential use by the occupant and her family. I understand that the appellant's father is disabled and therefore the decking also provides a ramped access to the caravan. The caravan is not visible from North Lane, it sits behind the barn and stables.
- 6. The site benefits from permitted development rights for the conversion of the vacant barn on the land (ref: DC/15/1272) and it is the appellant's intention to remain in the caravan whilst work is carried out to complete the permitted barn conversion.
- 7. I accept that the stationing of the caravan physically extends the built form further into the open landscape. The barn and stables are located in close proximity, near to the entrance with Coombewick Farm, which is indicative of how the farm would have functioned. The caravan is an additional structure that is separated from the barn and stables by a small area of land used for parking. This does result in the built form encroaching into the surrounding open countryside. However, the caravan has been clad in a dark wood, similar to the stable block, and as a result the caravan sits quite comfortably on the site, appearing as one of a cluster of relatively modest buildings. The addition of a number of potted plants and trees, on the decking which projects to the front and side of the caravan, also assists in breaking up the overall mass of the caravan. It does not therefore appear out of context, draw the eye, or lead

the viewer to question how it came to be. Indeed the caravan cannot be seen from North Road due to its situation behind the barn and stables, and the fact that the land gently slopes away from North Road.

8. Turning to the access track, I accept that it would introduce a significant degree of development to an area that is currently open, and occupied predominantly by low level vegetation. The access track would materially change what is currently on the site, and would impact the green, open space that can be seen at present. However the use of sympathetic materials would assist in keeping the track to a composition and style that would not be out of keeping with a rural area. Accordingly, it would not result in significant harm to the overall character and appearance of this countryside location. Moreover any limited harm would be temporary given the temporary nature of the proposal.
9. The development would also involve widening parts of North Lane. Those works would be relatively minor. North Lane is already in situ, and I do not consider that any harm would arise from these modest proposals as they would not alter the character of the lane. For these reasons I do not consider the development would be at odds with Policy 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 (HDPF) in so far as it seeks to protect the character and appearance of the countryside.
10. I have also considered the concerns of the Council that there has been insufficient justification for the development and that it would be inappropriate development in the countryside. However, there is no dispute that the appellant is able to convert the existing barn on the land into a dwelling. The land therefore has use for one residential unit. That use would have an impact on the land in any event.
11. The development seeks to secure the siting of a mobile home, the formation of a separate access track to the appeal site, and the widening of parts of North Lane for a period of 3 years. Following the expiration of this date the caravan and access way would be removed and the land restored to its former condition, including the alterations to North Lane.
12. In that event there would be no net increase in the number of residential units currently permitted on the site and no increase in activity above and beyond that currently permitted. In that light matters of sustainability do not fall to be considered. It would not therefore be at odds with Policy 1 of the HDPF which seeks sustainable development. Furthermore the caravan would enable the conversion of the vacant barn in line with the fourth criteria of Policy 26 of the HDPF.

Other matters

13. I acknowledge the issues relating to the provision of a permanent access for the appeal site, however the development before me is of a temporary nature, and I have determined the appeal accordingly. I am satisfied that a 3 year permission is acceptable to allow the work to be carried out by the appellant.
14. Finally on the evidence before me I am not aware that the proposal would have any significant impact on trees, or highway issues.

Conditions

15. In accordance with the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance, conditions are necessary to give effect to the granting of a temporary condition, to ensure the caravan is removed, and the site returned to its former condition at the end of the three-year term. A condition specifying the approved plans is necessary as this provides certainty in relation to the access track and widening of North Lane. It is necessary to require the use of matching materials to safeguard the character and appearance of the area.
16. A condition requiring an arboricultural method statement to be submitted and complied with is necessary to ensure that trees are identified and retained to protect the character and appearance of the countryside.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

Johanna Ayres

INSPECTOR