
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 June 2020

by James Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/B9506/W/20/3246157

Land to the rear of Uncle Toms Cabin, Romsey Road, Cadnam SO40 2NN

- 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 Mr M Cooper against the decision of New Forest National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref 19/00719, dated 19 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 25 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of scaffolding structure.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The proposal has been submitted retrospectively. As such, I have amended the description of development because Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 describes 'development' as 'the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations', not their 'retention'.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including the landscape and scenic beauty of the New Forest National Park.

Reasons

4. The scaffolding structure is located within a mixed character area. It is seen in the context of the built form on the edge of a village which includes ongoing storage, residential dwellings and open fields. The wider site is currently used for storage and partially screened by existing boundary landscaping. This provides a degree of visual screening from public vantage points. Additional planting, which could be secured by condition, may provide further screening. However, landscaping cannot be considered a permanent feature and views are liable to change.
5. Due to the existing landscaping, public vantage points are principally from the right of way that runs from the A31 up to the appeal site and continues to the north-west. When the double access gates to the site are open the proposal is clearly visible. Due to the height, scale and poor-quality materials, the structure appears incongruous, even in the context of the other storage activity within the wider site. In particular, I note that the other storage does not have

the same height. Furthermore, the metallic materials appear incongruous against the verdant backdrop of the adjacent planting.

6. The appellant highlights their use of 'lightweight' materials. However, the proposal has been designed to facilitate high-level storage of scaffolding. If utilised, this creates a solid metallic mass above the existing storage. This eliminates any potential benefit from the use of slender poles or concentrating the scaffolding in one place. Furthermore, the appellant highlights that the proposal allows for easier access to the scaffolding poles and protection from inclement weather. However, I have no evidence that the same convenience and protection could not be provided similarly but with less visual impact.
7. Nonetheless, the structure is located to the far end of the wider site from the right of way and this reduces the visual impact from the access track. Furthermore, for the sake of security the access gates would not always be open. When closed the gates would largely obscure the proposal from public view. However, due to its height and the solid roofing materials, some limited views of the proposal remain even with the site gates closed. As such, the gates mitigate the effect of the proposal, but not completely and not at all times. In any event, even if completely invisible from public vantage points the proposal, especially given its height, would still be out of place in this semi-rural location.
8. Finally, I consider that the proposal would provide a modest economic benefit. However, I have little evidence as to the benefit to the well-being of the local community, or whether this could not be achieved similarly without harm. As such, I afford this limited weight.
9. Overall, whilst there are factors that mitigate the visual impact of the proposal, including the wider site context, it remains an incongruous development within this edge of village context and does not reflect high quality design. Significantly, the proposal is within a highly sensitive location being within the New Forest National Park where the landscape is subject to statutory protection. Paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires me to attribute great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks.
10. Therefore, in conclusion the proposal has a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, including the landscape and scenic beauty of the New Forest National Park. I do not find any material considerations to individually or cumulatively outweigh the harm that I have afforded great weight to. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies DP2, SP7, SP17, DP18, SP42 and DP45 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-2036, Adopted August 2019. These seek, amongst other aims to achieve high-quality design and construction which enhances local distinctiveness, conserves the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park, and supports small-scale employment development that helps the well-being of the local communities.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

James Taylor

INSPECTOR