
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2020

by Adrian Hunter BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/20/3253638

**Royal Berkshire Shooting School, Tomb Farm, Hook End Lane,
Ashampstead, Reading RG8 8SD**

- 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 Royal Berkshire Shooting School against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00609/FUL, dated 9 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 5 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is for the relocation of a marquee permitted to be erected up to 14 days per annum as per permission 142883.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the proposed relocation of a marquee permitted to be erected up to 14 days per annum as per permission 142883, on land at the Royal Berkshire Shooting School, Tomb Farm, Hook End Lane, Ashampstead, Reading RG8 8SD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/00609/FUL, dated 9 March 2020 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 1. The use hereby permitted shall be limited to a maximum of 14 days in the year; not more than 7 of which shall be on Saturday.
 2. The use hereby authorised is to be restricted to the hours of 8am to 6pm on Fridays and Saturdays, 8am to 8pm Mondays to Thursdays and there is to be no operation of the premises on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
 3. The Council shall be notified in writing of the dates of the Charity Shoots at least one week before the event takes place.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - The effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area, which lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); and
 - The effect of the proposal upon the setting of the adjoining Grade II listed farmhouse.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is a raised, grassed area of land, which forms part of the wider estate of the Royal Berkshire Shooting School (RBSS). The estate is located within an attractive and pleasant rural setting. It includes a number of buildings and a large car park, along with an extensive area of open land used for shooting activities. The proposal involves the temporary erection of a marquee on the site, for a maximum period of 14 days a year. Planning permission already exists for a similar development within the existing car park. This proposal would replace the existing permission.
4. Within the AONB, great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the area. West Berkshire Core Strategy (CS) Policy AADP5 deals with the AONB and requires development to conserve and enhance the local distinctiveness, sense of place and its setting. Policy CS14 seeks to deliver high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area, with Policy CS19, amongst other things, seeking to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance heritage assets and their settings.
5. The proposed marquee would introduce an element of new development into the open countryside and extend the existing built up area of the RBSS, albeit for a limited number of days within a year. Whilst the appeal site lies within the open countryside, it is very much influenced by the existing use, with the presence of a number of structures, including outdoor seating areas, shooting stations and shelters being clearly visible. There is also an existing access track, which serves the facilities.
6. Due to the presence of these features, the appeal site feels and appears as part of the existing RBSS. Furthermore, the marquee would be present on site for a maximum period of 14 days in a calendar year. Therefore, whilst the proposed development would extend into the open countryside, due to the presence of other associated structures and activities, and the limited time it would be in place, the proposed marquee would not have a significant effect upon the character and appearance of the area.
7. For the above reasons, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have no significant effect upon the character and appearance of the area, and in this respect, is in accordance with Policies ADPP5, CS14 and CS19 of the CS and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Setting of the Listed building

8. The appeal site is located close to Tomb Farmhouse, which is a detached, Grade II listed farmhouse and forms part of a cluster of buildings which make up the RBSS. Its significance as a designated heritage asset is derived from its location within, and its relationship with the surrounding open countryside.
9. Given my conclusions in relation to the impact of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the open countryside, it therefore follows that the proposal would preserve the special interest or setting of the adjoining listed building. Therefore, in this respect, the proposal accords with Policy CS19 of the CS. Furthermore, the proposal would preserve the setting of

the listed building as required by Section 66(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Other Matters

10. Reference has been made to the potential for the marquee to be used for a period beyond the 14 days. In this regard, the appeal application sought approval for a 14-day period. I have determined the appeal on this basis. Should additional days be required beyond this period, this would require a further planning permission, at which point the Council can then assess the impact of these additional days against the relevant development plan policies.
11. My attention has also been drawn to the potential for noise arising from activities within the marquee, to impact on the adjoining listed building, although no evidence has been presented to substantiate this. In any event, I do not consider that such reasons, on their own, provide sufficient justification for the withholding of planning permission.

Conditions

12. The conditions suggested by the Council have been considered in light of the advice contained within the Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance. Given the nature of the application, it is necessary to attach a condition to limit the use of the marquee to a maximum of 14 days within a year. To protect the character of the area it is also necessary to impose a condition with regards to the hours of use, and for the same reason, to ensure that the Council are notified of the appellant's intention to use the temporary structure.

Conclusion

13. I conclude, for the reasons outlined above, that the appeal should be allowed subject to the identified conditions.

Adrian Hunter

INSPECTOR