

Officer Report On Planning Application: 10/01587/COU

Proposal:	Temporary change of use of land for the storage of 50 caravans (GR: 344639/118563)
Site Address:	The Old Rope Walk, Parrett Works, Martock
Parish:	Martock
MARTOCK Ward (SSDC Members)	Ann Campbell (Cllr) Mr Patrick Palmer (Cllr)
Recommending Case Officer:	Lee Walton Tel: (01935) 462324 Email: lee.walton@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date:	13th July 2010
Applicant:	Mr John Baker
Agent: (no agent if blank)	
Application Type :	Other Change Of Use

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application is referred to the Area North Committee as the officer’s recommendation is contrary to the advice of the Highways Authority, a statutory consultee.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



The application site is towards the rear of Parrett Works that is located in the countryside. A number of structures are Listed Buildings, as is the Old Rope Walk.

The proposal seeks a temporary change of use for the storage of caravans within open areas of the site. There are two locations: the first is set between buildings within an enclosed yard area; the second uses an existing concrete surface to the rear of the Old Rope Walk adjacent to the open fields. It is proposed to enclose this area with a chain fence. A total of 50 caravans would be stored between the two areas of the site.

PLANNING HISTORY

There is a varied planning history for the wider site. The Old Rope Walk and enclosed yard area was previously used for the keeping of cattle.

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decisions must be made in accordance with relevant development plan documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require authorities considering applications for planning permission or listed building consent for works that affect a listed building to have special regard to certain matters, including the desirability of preserving the setting of the building.

Relevant Development Plan Documents:

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan 2000

STR1 - Sustainable Development

STR6 - Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages

Policy 9 - Historic Environment

South Somerset Local Plan

ST3 - Development Areas

ST5 - Principle of Development

ST6 - Quality of Development

EC3 - Landscape Character

EH3 - Listed Buildings

EH5 - Setting of Listed Buildings

Central Government Guidance/ Advice

PPS7 - Sustainable Countryside

PPG15 - Historic Environment

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

Town/ Parish Council - Recommend refusal.

County Highway Authority - (Original response) The existing access emerges on to the adjoining classified unnumbered road in close proximity to a sharp bend in the road and adjacent bridge. It is clear that the level of visibility achieved by emerging vehicles to the west is restricted and traffic approaching from the west is concealed from view. Whilst during my site visit it was noted that vehicle speeds at this point are relatively low

due to approaching vehicles exercising caution it is clear that the splays achieved in this direction are insufficient.

The access is also restricted in width to such an extent that two vehicles (especially those towing a caravan) are unable to pass. As a consequence, in the event of two vehicles meeting it is likely that manoeuvring will take place on the highway at a point in the road where forward visibility for vehicles approaching from the west is limited.

As a result of the above concerns the Highway Authority would not wish to see a proposal that is likely to result in an increase in traffic, particularly wide slow moving vehicles such as a car towing a caravan. It is clear that the proposal to create a caravan storage facility enabling up to fifty caravans to be stored in this location is likely to result in this increase. As a result, whilst it is acknowledged that the site currently generates a level of movement in connection with existing residential and commercial elements the likely increase in traffic would be a highway safety concern. There I would recommend that the application be refused.

(Additional Comments received) The civil deeds held by the applicant appear to enable the vegetation that currently restricts visibility to the west to be removed for a distance of 75.0 metres. Whilst the Highway Authority would not require this full amount to be removed it will be necessary for a section of vegetation to be removed so that vehicles approaching from the west have significantly increased forward visibility/ awareness of vehicles emerging at this point. As a result, if a plan were submitted indicating the extent of vegetation that could be removed / lowered then the Highway Authority could access the potential improvements and may be in a position to withdraw the recommendation of refusal.

SSDC Technical Services - No comment

Conservation Officer - Verbal response that supports a temporary permission if this encourages the safeguarding of the listed building.

Landscape Architect - Whilst this is not the ideal use of a listed building complex, I am advised that the proposal before us is viewed as a short term measure. If that is the case, then I would concede that caravan storage to the north of the Ropewalk building is not obtrusive, given the built containment to all sides. However, I am not so keen on the second, southerly storage area, which whilst sited upon an area of hardstanding, lays outside the clearly defined curtilage, and is open to view from footpaths approaching the site from the south and east. Ordinarily I would advise refusal, based upon adverse impact upon a listed complex, and visual intrusion. However, if there is an over-riding case in support of this proposal, then I would suggest:

- 1) any consent is given a time limit, to ensure the temporary nature of the application is clearly established, and;
- 2) the southerly site should be planted along its southern boundary with as native hedgerow mix, inclusive of tree species.

8 Neighbour notifications were issued. A site Notice (Adjacent Listed Building) was posted. There have been 4 responses. Two object and two although they state no objection put forward concerns that might be addressed.

The objections are:

- Highway safety and access
- There is a stream nearby and the application form is not correctly filled in

- Hours of work would be disruptive for neighbours. Currently businesses are restricted to 7am to 6pm Monday-Friday, 7am to 1pm Saturday and no use Sunday and Bank Holidays. The caravan storage needs would be contrary to such constraints in business hour operations.
- The use of Cameras for surveillance
- Saturation of caravan storage in the area
- Interests of the Listed Building is not sufficient reason in support of the proposed storage use
- Conservation interests and the state of other buildings on site
- Visual amenity and screening - the caravans would be highly visible.

The two respondents who raise no objection are concerned about the hours of use, access, noise and lighting, and screening.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations relate to the principle of development, highway safety, neighbour amenity and the historic conservation interests. This is an application for temporary permission and given the initial reason for support, this seeks the safeguarding of the Old Rope Walk (listed building grade II) to secure a limited income in addition to the applicants other resources for the maintenance of the Listed Building. The situation does not encourage an extension of the temporary permission which is considered would have a detrimental effect on the safeguarding of the listed building, in so far as immediate action is required.

Principle of Development:

There is no in principle support for the proposal. Outdoors storage in the countryside affects landscape character, and given the conservation interests, the presence of storage caravans enclosed by a chain link fence, in the area south of the Rope Walk is considered would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the listed building. However, given the temporary nature as well as the conservation interest identified a short term use of the site is considered should be supported.

The Old Rope Walk is in a poorly state, with the roof propped and the structure in need of general care and attention to prevent its possible collapse. Work is on-going and the Conservation interest is in seeking to safeguard the listed building.

Character and Appearance:

A three year temporary permission is considered would leave no long term effect on the locality and is a means to support the applicant in their work to secure the long term interests of the Rope Walk. The site's former agricultural use presents a rather untidy site. There is little doubt that the loss of agriculture enables the site to be cleaned up and work progresses on site.

The presence of caravans within the site is considered acceptable in the short term and given that their removal in the longer term has no effect on the fabric and character of the listed building. The caravan storage, enclosed by fencing to the south of the Rope Walk presents other problems. However, the short term use of the site for storage and the interests of the listed building as a whole is considered finely balanced.

Reference is made by the Landscape Officer to a landscape condition to screen the site south of the listed building. However, it may be that this is unreasonable given that there is no reasonable opportunity to achieve the anticipated screening given the short length

of time involved. The screening would not mature during the period for which temporary permission is given and the planting would make no worthwhile contribution, while the attempt would add to the costs of the applicant and divert monies from the safeguarding of the listed building.

Securing safeguarding:

The preferred method of safeguarding the listed building is to support a much more robust development plan for the site, however, the applicant favours limited small scale returns that can help towards the works envisaged to safeguard the ropewalk. The problem for officers is the small scale of the proposed works and a lack of certainty that can be established. It is considered that to secure a legal obligation that secures certainty would be costly and take away investment in the Listed Building. The above is not an ideal situation, but a pragmatic one that offers an opportunity to help secure the future of the listed building.

Neighbour Amenity:

Apart from the temporary visual appearance of the site, the Parrett Works is a mixed site of residential and commercial. The hours of use within the site are restricted to Monday to Friday, with no use on Sundays and Bank Holidays. The hours of use at other sites within Parrett Works will apply to the applicant's site. The type of storage arrangement will result in the need to access the site, particularly at weekends, and while it is the intention of limiting the hours when access is available the applicant advises that their preferred partner is a storage operator just off site. This arrangement would discourage customers from direct access, while local knowledge could transfer caravans between drop off and storage site and vice versa, in part addressing the highway safety concerns.

Lighting and noise can be appropriately controlled through conditions. Screening is considered although the temporary nature of the permission means that any planting is unlikely to get to a stage where the site is sufficiently screened before the temporary permission expires. Given that the presence of the on site storage is reversible and is only temporary and given the conservation interests involved some relaxation is considered appropriate, and landscaping of the site is not sought.

Highways:

The Highways officer has been asked to reconsider their recommendation to refuse given further information submitted by the applicant to the effect that their deeds enable them to control the visibility to the west of the access. The Landscape Officer would not support the removal of the vegetation and the Tree Officer is not supportive of the loss of trees that would be involved. The applicant's use of their deeds would likewise no doubt offend the immediate neighbours.

The highway safety concerns in part are addressed by a local operator with local knowledge and the hours of use that require caravans to be dropped off and brought to, and removed from the site, by the adjacent operator. While this business relationship cannot be secured, it is encouraged by the planning conditions that control the hours of use, combined with the type and form of storage that involves holiday trippers who will also wish to access their caravan at hours other than those conditioned.

Highway safety is a concern, but the anticipated working arrangements tend to support the application notwithstanding that there is no absolute control over the way in which it is intended the site will be operated.

It is also important to recognise that there is involved a temporary permission, and the loss of valued vegetation should not be sought.

Conclusion:

It must be a matter for Members whether they wish to support this opportunity that seeks to encourage the safeguarding of the listed building. The structure is considered highly vulnerable and in need of immediate attention.

Planning officers are concerned that the proposal is not ideal, while a comprehensive redevelopment proposal is not forthcoming a temporary planning permission offers the applicants short term support. The levels of income envisaged are considered too little to justify binding the parties through a legal agreement, and there is an element of trust that the monies raised will go towards the works required to safeguard the listed building.

The applicant anticipates working with the adjacent storage operator, and this approach has the advantage of working with the constraints placed on the hours of use that are common to Parrett Works, and it is anticipated that the arrangement would also reduce the number of visitors who have direct access to the site. Local knowledge would be used to reduce the highway safety risk identified, in transferring vehicles between the drop off point and the storage area.

RECOMMENDATION**APPROVE**

01. The proposal is linked to the safeguarding of the listed building known as the Old Rope Walk and in granting a three year temporary permission this seeks to support the historic conservation interests and permits the applicant to raise monies that can be put towards the repair and renovation of the Old Rope Walk. The proposal is considered as expedient and while issues of setting and visual amenity, highway safety and neighbour amenity do not generally support the application the temporary storage solution is considered will support the historic conservation interests identified. Given the specific circumstance identified in support of a short term expedient in the interests of safeguarding the Listed Building balanced against the harm to residential amenity, to highway safety, and landscape character a temporary permission is supported in accordance with the aims and objectives of policies EH3, ST6 and EH5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

01. The use hereby permitted shall cease and the site cleared of all structures, and materials removed from the site at the expiry of the temporary permission given as 1st October 2013.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control over the site and to ensure the site is cleared on expiry of the temporary planning permission in the interests of visual amenity, landscape character and the setting of the listed building(s) in accordance with policies EC3, ST6, EH5 and EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

02. No development shall take place before full particulars of the boundary wire fencing has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details as shall be agreed in writing shall be undertaken on site as part of the temporary development hereby permitted. On the expiry of the temporary permission all boundary treatment shall be taken down and the materials removed from the site within 2 months of the expiry date of the temporary planning permission.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the setting of listed building(s) further to policies EC3, ST5 and EH5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

03. No floodlighting shall at any time be installed and/ or operated on any part of the site, except as in accordance with details showing the shielding and orientation of any light source away from neighbouring occupants and reducing light spillage away from the site which shall previously have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain adequate control over such means of illumination, in the interests of visual and neighbour amenity in accordance with policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

04. There shall be no delivery or collection of caravans to and from the storage site other than between the hours of 7am and 6pm Monday to Friday, and 7am to 1pm Saturday and no use Sunday and Bank Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of neighbour amenity further to policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan.
