

OFFICER: Louisa Brown (01935) 462391 [Item 1]
APPL.NO: 08/00478/FUL APPLICATION TYPE: Full Application
PARISH: Kingstone WARD: WINDWHISTLE
DESCRIPTION: The erection of single storey barn adjacent and linking to existing barn for mixed use of storage and carnival float construction (GR 338521/114126)
LOCATION: Land at Junction of Park Lane Longforward Lane Kingstone Ilminster Somerset
APPLICANT: S Madge
AGENT: S G Rance 40 Eastwick Road Taunton Somerset TA2 7HX
DATE ACCEPTED: 29 January 2008

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:

This application has come before the Area West Committee at the request of the local ward member, Cllr Robin Munday, due to the community interest in the scheme. The Chair, Cllr Kim Turner, agrees with the reason for it being referred to committee and therefore has accepted the application onto the agenda.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL:



This is an application seeking full planning consent for the erection of a single storey barn adjacent and linking to an existing barn for mixed use of storage and carnival float construction. The site is located within the open countryside on a corner plot, at the junction of Park Lane and Longforward Lane, the village of Kingstone is located to the southwest of the site and the village of Allowenshay is located to the southeast.

The District Council's mapping system shows the access to be located off Longforward Lane, however, the access is located directly at the junction of Longforward Lane and Park Lane. There is a small existing barn on the site and the structure that is proposed, though this is not finished.

HISTORY:

07/04203/FUL: Erection of Agricultural building - withdrawn 30/01/08
36537: Erection of a prefabricated store shed - approved 14/12/70

POLICY:

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant development plan documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Relevant Development Plan Documents:

Regional Spatial Strategy:

Policy VIS 1 - Expressing the Vision

Policy VIS 2 - Principles for Future Development

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review 1991-2011:

Policy STR1 - Sustainable Development

Policy STR6 - Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages

Policy 5 - Landscape Character

Policy 49 - Transport Requirements of New Development

South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006):

Policy ST3 - Development Areas

Policy ST5 - General Principles of Development

Policy ST6 - The Quality of Development

Policy EC3 - Landscape Character

PPS 7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

CONSULTATIONS:

Kingstone Parish Council:

No comments received at time of writing report, to be updated orally.

Whitelackington Parish Council:

No comments received at time of writing report, to be updated orally.

Highways:

Object.

Area Engineer:

No comment.

Landscape Officer:

Objects to the proposal.

Agricultural Development Officer:

"The proposal contains no agricultural justification. I therefore cannot offer my support for this application."

Environmental Protection Unit:

No observations.

REPRESENTATIONS:

A site notice was put up at the entrance to the site. No comments received.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The existing shed, which was approved in 1970, is relatively small, with a floor area of 72.42 sq metres. The roof is a mono pitch, the lowest part is 2.9 metres high and at the highest part it is 5.1 metres high. The proposed new building has a floor area of 322.65 sq metres. It has a pitched roof, which measures 8 metres high to the ridge and 6.5 metres to the eaves.

The building will be covered in plastisol coated cladding in green. There will be three roof lights in the east and west elevation of the roof.

The issues to be assessed in this application are Justification, Development Area and Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside, Landscape Character, Highway impacts, and affect on residential amenity.

Justification

The applicants have stated that the existing use will be retained and continued, "The application is for joint use to engage both agricultural storage and the facility for the construction of a carnival float for Gemini Carnival club."

They have provided evidence that other alternative sites have been investigated, which were unsuccessful;

"Option 1 - Land at Donyatt Bowling Club was suggested and considered, however, due to the club being sold this option could not be pursued any further.

Option 2 - Land adjacent to the Powrmatic site at Southfields roundabout, would have been ideal, complete with existing entrance from the site onto the main road. However, the Highways Agency rejected this due to the proximity of the access to the main A303 and the roundabout.

Option 3 - Land at Gemini C.C.'s existing build location was available complete with planning permission for the erection of an agricultural building. However, permission to utilise this land was refused by the landlord.

Option 4 - Land and an existing barn were offered for use by Gemini C.C., however, due to the location of this (south of Axminster), this was deemed not suitable owing to both the distance having to be travelled by members and the fact that the centre was moving away from Ilminster the home town of Gemini C.C.

Option 5 - Other alternative locations were viewed, however, in all instances the owners/landlords were looking at cost recovery to an extent that was uneconomical for the club."

Development Area and Conversion of Buildings in the Open Countryside

The site is outside the development area. Whilst Policy EH6 allows for the change of use of buildings outside the defined development areas to industrial, commercial, tourism, sport or recreational uses, this can only be the case with the existing smaller agricultural storage barn, and does not apply to the proposed new building.

The proposed building will be used for both the Gemini Carnival Club and Agricultural storage. If it were solely for agricultural storage then it would be a use, which benefits economic activity, however the carnival use will foster the growth in the need to travel and does not benefit economic activity. On

balance it is considered that the mixed use would be unacceptable outside the defined development area.

Landscape Character

The Landscape Officer has stated;

"I also note that there is a history of a building presence in this location since 1970. I believe the main landscape considerations to be;

- 1) The principle of development (LP policy ST5) which requires the proposals to respect the form, character and setting of the locality, and;
- 2) The impact of development upon landscape character (LP policies EC3 and PPS 7).

As with the previous application (07/04203) I view this to be a large building in an isolated location, divorced from both local settlement and farmsteads and thus within an area not otherwise characterised by built form, nor related to the physical presence of a farmstead. In such instances, I would ordinarily suggest that development is contrary to character (policies ST5 and EC3) and thus urge resistance.

It appears that rather than agricultural storage, this will be a workshop use. I would question the location of such use given the distance from the farm.

I would view the general area associated with the application site as enjoying a substantial measure of tranquillity, in its remoteness from settlement, and distance from the main road network, which contribute to the general quiet of the area, and a 'dark sky' backdrop at night. These 'tranquil' factors also contribute to the landscape character of the area. I note reference in the application to roof lights, and the inference that there will be nightlighting. I have concerns over nightlighting, for a lighting presence in this location will impact on visual tranquillity, and thus is also at variance with local character.

Unless you believe that the previous history of an agricultural building on site confers a presumption in favour of this development, I would advise landscape grounds for refusal of the principle of (re)development.

Should you favour the application, then I would advise a landscape scheme is conditioned with a requirement for further planting within the site, by the entrance, east boundary, and in the west and north corners, to supplement screening, but note that this does not overcome the landscape character objection."

Archived landscape photos show that there was a previous building on the site, which was attached to the existing smaller agricultural building, it had the same length as the existing building, of 14.2 metres, compared to the proposed length of the new building, which is 27 metres.

It is considered unacceptable to have a presumption in favour of this development, due to the previous existence of an agricultural barn, each application must be assessed on its individual merits at the time and based on what is currently on the site.

On balance it is considered that the Landscape Officer has a negative opinion of the proposal in regard to its impact on the landscape character and its distance from the farm and local settlements. PPS7 states;

"All development in rural areas should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness."

Highway Impact

The agent has confirmed that the existing access on the junction between Park Lane and Longforward Lane will be retained in order to use for the arrival and departure of the carnival float, which would be a minimal use that will be overseen by banksmen/marshals to warn any approaching traffic.

The access onto Longforward Lane, which is currently not in use, will be reinstated and used for all other traffic, to provide off road parking at the site.

The Highway authority has stated;

"The site is located outside the confines of any major settlement in an area that has very limited public transport services. The development, if approved, will increase the reliance on the private motorcar. Such fostering of growth in the need to travel would be contrary to government advice given in PPG13 and RPG10, and to the provisions of policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review (Adopted: April 2000).

In detail, there are concerns relating to the means of access to the site. The approach roads are substandard by reason of their restricted width and poor alignment. There are also limited opportunities for vehicles to pass. Given that the proposal is for the creation of a facility for the storage and construction of carnival floats, there are concerns that the proposal will increase the level of large slow moving vehicles making use of these lanes. The visibility from the junction of Longforward Lane with the adjoining road is also seriously restricted, especially to the west due to the presence of an existing raised boundary verge. The junction also emerges within close proximity of a sharp blind bend.

The existing access to the site is located on the junction of Longforward Lane and Park Lane. As a consequence, vehicles emerging at this point are a highway safety concern. The proposal to create a new access as shown on the submitted plan will be a sufficient distance from this junction and will provide adequate visibility in both directions with the implementation of a suitable condition relating to the height of the existing vegetation.

However, as previously mentioned, the site is located remote from any urban area in a location where individuals associated with the proposal are likely to access the site by private vehicles, and the approach roads are deemed unsuitable to serve the type of traffic associated with the development.

Therefore, I would recommend that the application be refused on highway grounds for the following reasons:

1. The site is located outside the confines of any major settlement in an area that has very limited public transport services. The development, if approved, will increase the reliance on the private motorcar and compromises unsustainable development, which is contrary to advice, contained within PPG13, RPG10 and the provisions of Policy STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review, April 2000.
2. The proposal is contrary to Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review since the approach roads, Park Lane and Longforward Lane, by reason of their restricted width, poor alignment are considered unsuitable to serve as a means of access for the type of traffic likely to be generated by the proposed development.
3. The proposal is contrary to Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review since the increase in the use made of the sub-standard junction of Longforward Lane with the adjoining road such as would be generated by the proposal would be prejudicial to highway safety."

It is considered that the proposal is unsustainable in the proposed location and the roads are considered unsuitable to carry the type of traffic proposed.

Affect on Residential Amenity

The site is remote from any residential properties; it is considered that there will be no adverse affect to any residential amenity.

CONCLUSION:

It is noted that the application is for a charity based company, which has explored other sites in relation to finding an appropriate and affordable site to construct and store their carnival float, the site will also be used for agricultural storage (though it is some distance from the farm). However whilst it is acknowledged that this is a long-standing charity, which is based in the local area, the proposal is still considered to be unacceptable, due to its unsustainable location, proposed traffic use and impact on the landscape character.

RECOMMENDATION:

Application Refused

1. The proposal, by reason of size, scale and location (distance from local settlements and farm) will cause unacceptable harm to the distinctive character and quality of the local landscape and is therefore contrary to the aims and objectives of policies ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006), Policy 5 of Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan (adopted 2000) and PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas).
 2. The site is located outside the confines of any major settlement in an area that has very limited public transport services. The development, if approved, will increase the reliance on the private motorcar and compromises unsustainable development, as it fosters the growth in the need to travel, which is contrary to advice, contained within PPG13, RPG10 and the provisions of Policy STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review, April 2000 and policy ST3 South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006).
 3. The proposal is contrary to Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review since the approach roads, Park Lane and Longforward Lane, by reason of their restricted width, poor alignment are considered unsuitable to serve as a means of access for the type of traffic likely to be generated by the proposed development.
 4. The proposal is contrary to Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review since the increase in the use made of the sub-standard junction of Longforward Lane with the adjoining road such as would be generated by the proposal would be prejudicial to highway safety.
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