

29/2008/008

MISS A CAMPBELL

**ERECTION OF HOLIDAY CHALET IN FIELD EAST OF LITTLEFIELDS,
BISHOPSWOOD**

325533/112666

FULL

PROPOSAL

The proposal is to site a holiday chalet on land to east of existing complex of buildings as a further means of diversification. The building would be timber framed, 'L'-shaped, single storey, timber clad and with a slate roof designed to appear as an agricultural building. The chalet can sleep up to 12 and the use is intended for learning holidays as the applicant is a qualified art teacher. A business plan was submitted with the proposal. A barn to the west of the site has an art studio/gallery use.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

LANDSCAPE OFFICER - My concerns are the possible visibility splay requirements and visual impact on AONB landscape. The first issue could be addressed if the Highway Authority are content to accept existing hedgerow alignment and the existing access blocked up with new hedge bank and planting. The visual impact may be mitigated during summer months by careful landscaping but I am concerned it may not be possible to achieve this during the winter without more substantial planting.

NATURE CONSERVATION OFFICER - The wildlife survey found no evidence of great crested newts using the site. Smooth newts and frogs were found and I recommend the report recommendations to protect amphibians is implemented. In applying PPS9 to maintain and enhance sites for wildlife I recommend this is conditioned. From an earlier report low level of badger foraging and evidence of bird nesting was found. I suggest a condition to prevent works between March 1ST and July 31st to protect birds and note re badgers. I would expect a landscape plan to be submitted that would identify the retention of the hedges and pond on site. A management plan to secure the retention of these features would be advisable.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER - It is my opinion that the application does not demonstrate sufficient benefit to the broader economy to justify the Economic Development Unit supporting the application in contravention of the policies contained in the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

BLACKDOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY - Support on behalf of the LEADER+ Funding Programme which supports rural economic activity carried out by the applicant in the Blackdown Hills. We think that projects of this type are very valuable to the AONB as the area needs to be a living and working landscape. We are happy the holiday use activity described would be in accordance with our policies and we support the application in principle. To conserve and enhance the environment through the social and economic well being of the people who live and

work in the AONB is a key delivery mechanism and clearly the educational and tourism aspect fits the criteria.

NATURAL ENGLAND- No objection but recommendations of the ecological survey report and the Nature Conservation Officer, in terms of wildlife/protected species mitigation, be considered in determining the application and attaching conditions.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY - The proposal falls outside the scope of matters as a statutory consultee and we have no comment to make.

HIGHWAY AUTHORITY - I would refer you to my colleague's letter dated 25 July 2007 in connection with planning application no. 29/2007/012, a copy of which is attached for your information, and would advise you that these comments and recommended conditions apply equally to the present application. The site is in an unsustainable location, however it is for tourism and tourism outside of built-up areas is a different matter to permanent residential accommodation. It must be a planning matter if this is a suitable location for such a use. From a technical point of view the road leading to the site is narrow and not a location where I would wish to see significant development take place which would generate significant traffic movements. This development for one chalet is unlikely to generate more than 5/6 vehicle movements a day and I do not consider that to be such as to create a significant additional highway safety hazard. I would recommend a condition to secure the details of access and parking shown on the drawing submitted.

PARISH COUNCIL - The Council raise concerns re waste disposal and noxious waste reaching the nearby watercourse or pond, the steeply sloping nature of the site, the size of the chalet – 12 people would lead to an unacceptable number of extra vehicles using the narrow access road. Car parking not seriously addressed and could mean 6 cars on site. The proximity to other houses and the possible noise nuisance.

18 LETTERS OF SUPPORT - on grounds of diversifying business, support local employment and rural economy and will enable 'learning holidays' in ideal location that will tie in with the Barn Gallery.

8 letters of objection on grounds of lane unsuitable for additional traffic, will increase traffic at a dangerous blind bend, no footpaths and close to a play area, parking insufficient for scale of building, will increase vehicular journeys, creation of precedent, impact on AONB, develop a Greenfield site, inappropriate design, it will erode the character of the village, lack of amenities, impact on wildlife, contrary to policies EC23 and EC24, concern over potential noise and amenity impact, water pollution and flood risk, no need for holiday use as vacancies exist in current accommodation and minor benefit to tourism and the rural economy not out-weighted by damage to AONB, wildlife and amenity and not suitable location.

POLICY CONTEXT

PPS7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Department for Communities and Local Government - Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism.

Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review

STR1 – Sustainable Development

STR6 – Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages

Policy 1 – Nature Conservation
Policy 3 – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy 23 – Tourism Development in the Countryside

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies

S1 – General Requirements

S2 – Design

S7 – Development Outside Settlements

EC7 – Rural Employment Proposals

EC23 – Tourism Accommodation

EN6 – Protection of Trees, Orchards and Hedgerows

EN10 – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

ASSESSMENT

This application is the resubmission of a previous scheme in 2007 which was refused due to lack of information in the wildlife survey in respect of newts on the site. A note was added re the acceptability of a resubmission if the wildlife issue was addressed. Since the refusal policy for holiday chalets in the countryside EC24 has been deleted from the Local Plan.

The current submission addresses the omission of the previous application in terms of ecology with additional survey work to address the refusal. Both the Nature Conservation Officer and Natural England are happy with the submitted scheme and have recommended conditions. A local resident has raised issues with the accuracy of the wildlife reports submitted and considers the adjacent land in separate ownership has not been surveyed and could be affected by the scheme. The Nature Conservation Officer considers the survey work to be acceptable and it is considered unreasonable to require surveys beyond the application site. Conditioning of mitigation as per the survey report recommendations is considered necessary as is a management plan.

The application site lies just outside the settlement limit of the village of Bishopswood, which benefits from a village hall and public house, although this has recently shut. The site is therefore a Greenfield site and policy EC24 of the Local Plan has not been saved. The proposal therefore falls to be considered in light of existing plan policies and Government guidance. The latter exists in the form of the Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism which seeks to direct tourist accommodation to within or adjacent to settlements. The site lies beyond the settlement boundary but within around 50m from the settlement limit and is considered adjacent to it. It has previously been recognised that there is an oversupply of self-catering accommodation. The proposal is one that is being promoted to provide tourist accommodation largely for groups who will be able to have a 'learning holiday' in relation to the nearby art gallery. The Economic Development Manager does not consider the benefit to the local economy to outweigh the policy issues, however this is a balanced view and there is clear economic support from the Blackdowns Partnership. The proposal identifies 1 full time employee and 3 part-time jobs. Policy S7 is relevant to the proposal and the scheme is considered to comply with policy EC7 of the Local Plan and to support the

vitality of the rural economy. The structure is considered to be sited and designed to minimise landscape impact.

The proposed chalet building is single storey structure 5.7m high with timber frame and cladding and a slate roof. It is considered a temporary structure and if approved a condition to secure its removal if the holiday business were to fail is considered appropriate. Policy EC23 is considered to apply to permanent built holiday accommodation. It is to be sited in the corner of an existing field and is considered to be in a well screened location that will not be significantly visible in landscape terms and is not considered to have an adverse impact on the character of the AONB given the design and materials. The provision of a new access will involve hedgerow removal, however the existing access will be closed up and the impact on the character of the area is considered to be an acceptable one. The provision of additional planting to address the view of the Landscape Officer can be conditioned. The proposal is considered to maintain the character of the area, to comply with policy EC7 of the Local Plan and it supports the local economy.

The Highway Authority is satisfied with the proposed access, parking and visibility and suggests conditions. The proposal is for holiday accommodation and the location on the edge of the village is considered to be an acceptable one in terms of its siting given government guidance. The promotion of the site will advise on the parking provision. The level proposed is considered an acceptable one in visual terms and further parking is not considered necessary or appropriate.

The site is not identified as being in a flood risk area and the Environment Agency has raised no comment on the proposal. The intention is to provide a soakaway in respect of the roof area and this should not generate more run off than the existing situation. Concern has been raised over foul drainage. It is intended that the foul drainage will be dealt with by means of a treatment plant and separate consent to discharge will be required from the Environment Agency and will be conditioned to ensure adequate provision.

The proposed structure lies within 30-40m of the nearest residential property. With its use for holiday purposes it will not be occupied on a permanent basis and it is not considered appropriate to impose a noise condition on the building. The level of noise generated by occupants is partly down to the management of the site and this potential issue is not one that is considered to warrant an objection to the scheme.

The proposal is the re-submission of a scheme for a holiday chalet. The wildlife issue has been addressed and conditions are recommended by the consultees. There has been no highway objection to the proposal and the site is considered one that is well screened and not one that would cause any significant adverse landscape issues within the AONB. The landscape impact on the AONB has to be carefully considered as does the benefits to the rural economy. The Economic Development Manager considers there is insufficient benefit to the economy, however the Blackdowns Partnership support the scheme. In light of this local support and the impact on the AONB landscape being acceptable it is considered that the scheme on balance can be supported.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, materials, holiday use only, removal if not let for 24months, landscaping, management plan, parking, mitigation measures, no works between March – July, drainage detail and note re badgers.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- The proposed scheme is considered in line with PPS7 and the government guidance on holiday accommodation, is not considered detrimental to highway safety and is not considered to harm the character of the AONB or the amenities of the area and neighbouring properties and is considered to comply with Taunton Deane Local Plan policies S1, S2, EC7, EN6 and EN10 and material considerations do not indicate otherwise.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

CONTACT OFFICER: 01823 356398 MR G CLIFFORD

NOTES: