

E/0037/27/12

CARAVAN SITED IN FIELD NEAR HILLFARRENCE

OCCUPIER:

OWNER: MR & MRS G W ALLEN
THE GARDEN HOUSE, LEWESTON, SHERBORNE
DORSET
DT9 6EW

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider whether it is expedient to serve an Enforcement Notice requiring the removal of a caravan sited in an agricultural field.

RECOMMENDATION

The Solicitor to the Council be authorised to serve an Enforcement Notice and take Prosecution action subject to sufficient evidence being obtained that the Notice is not complied with.

The Enforcement Notice shall require:-

- the removal of the mobile home.

Time for compliance: 6 months from the date the notice comes into effect.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is a field accessed off the road between Allerford and Hillfarrance and south of Whisperfields. Hedgerows surround the field and significantly reduce the visual impact of the caravan.

BACKGROUND

The complaint was brought to the Council's attention at the end of February 2012. A site visit was made and photographs were taken of the caravan in the field. A land registry search was carried out and contact has been made with the owner of the land. The owner is in the process of moving to the area from Sherborne and is using this land to store his caravan until he moves into his new property he has bought in Taunton. He has confirmed that it is his intention to remove the caravan by the end of October. The caravan has already been relocated to an even more discreet location within the field.

DESCRIPTION OF BREACH OF DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

The use of an agricultural field for the storage of a caravan is a breach of Planning control and requires a change of use application.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There are no Planning applications for this site.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICES

National Planning Policy Framework

Taunton Deane Local Plan

Policies S1, S2, S7, EN12 and EN28

Emerging Taunton Deane Core Strategy

Policies CP4, SP1, DM1 and DM2.

DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The land concerned is located to the south of Whisperfields at Hillfarrance. The field is kept to grass keep and is bound by mature hedgerows and sections of trees. The land is level but rises to the North and East; there are watercourses around its boundaries and the site is located within flood zone 3.

The caravan is coloured off green and is currently stationed along the southern boundary of the site. Although not visible from the south glimpses are available from adjoining fields. Upon visiting the site there was evidence within the caravan of recent use, possibly for overnight accommodation.

No evidence is available to support the need for a caravan to be sited on the land and based upon the owner's statement it appears to be stored here for convenience purposes more than any other reason. However, the site is remote from services and is within open countryside where the establishment of new residential units is strongly resisted.

There is some limited evidence of the caravan being used and its presence within the field is considered to detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape. Although the caravan is not visible within the wider landscape at the moment, with trees and hedgerows being with foliage, it would be more prominent during autumn and winter when there is a reduction in screening. The site is also located within flood zone 3, which further strengthens the case for seeking the caravans removal.

The caravan is considered to represent an unjustified and harmful feature within the landscape, detrimental to visual amenity and landscape character. Whilst the siting and use would not itself increase the risk of flooding it would represent a risk to any occupants at times of flood as well as the public down stream, were the caravan to be caught up in flood waters. The site is within an unsustainable location where planning policy does not support the creation of unjustified residential uses.

For these reasons it is considered to be expedient to undertake Enforcement Action in order to ensure the caravan is removed from the from the land.

In preparing this report the Enforcement Officer has considered fully the Implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998

PLANNING OFFICER: Mr R Williams
PLANNING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER: Mrs A Dunford

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