

**14. FULL APPLICATION: THE SITING OF STATIC CARAVAN FOR USE AS HOLIDAY LET IN CONJUNCTION WITH USE BY FAMILY VISITORS ON OCCASIONS PLUS AN ADDITIONAL PITCH FOR A TOURING CARAVAN AT THE QUIET WOMAN INN, EARL STERNDALE (NP/DDD/1214/1266, P.6171, 409004/366992 31/3/2015/CF)**

**APPLICANT:** Mr K Mellor

**Site and Surroundings**

The Quiet Woman Inn is a public house that lies in the centre of Earl Sterndale overlooking the village green. The public house lies on the southern edge of the village and the landscape opens out into the open countryside of the Limestone Hills and Slopes at the rear of the pub. There is also a static caravan and timber shed at the rear of the pub, which are sited on land in the applicant's ownership but outside of the curtilage of the pub. These were granted temporary planning permission in 2015.

The static caravan is occupied by a member of the applicant's family, who was said to be working in the pub at the time the application was submitted last year. The temporary permission for the static caravan was granted partly to help maintain the viability of the pub, but also to allow some time to put together comprehensive scheme for re-development of land in the applicant's control that includes the retention of the Quiet Woman as a pub and may include affordable housing and a more permanent place of residence for the occupant of the static caravan and their family.

These proposals have not come forward yet but were discussed partly in the context of the untidy state of some of the land at the rear of the pub where there is a range of buildings in various states of repair. Earl Sterndale is also a designated settlement in policy DS1 so there would be no policy issue with the provision of affordable housing on land within the applicant's control and it is readily accepted that there is a compelling need for more affordable housing to meet local need within the local area where land available for affordable housing is difficult to find. There is also policy support for safeguarding and promoting and encouraging the viability of community facilities.

**Proposals**

The current application proposes (1) the siting of static caravan for use as holiday let in conjunction with use by family visitors on occasions and (2) an additional pitch for a touring caravan within the curtilage at the rear of the pub. The submitted plans show the caravans would be sited next to a boundary wall and between the rear garden at the back of the pub and the existing static caravan and timber shed at the Quiet Woman. Information submitted with the application says that the caravans would help to provide a supplementary income for the pub.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. When the caravans hereby permitted are no longer required for visitor accommodation at the Quiet Woman, or on or before 14 November 2017, whichever is the sooner, the caravans shall be permanently removed from the land and the land shall be restored to its original condition.**

- 2. This permission relates solely for the use of the caravans hereby permitted for holiday residential use; the caravans shall remain within the same planning unit as the Quiet Woman; neither caravan property shall be occupied as a permanent dwelling and neither caravan shall be occupied by any persons for a continuous period exceeding 28 days in any calendar year.**

**The owner shall maintain a register of occupants for each calendar year which shall be made available for inspection by the National Park Authority on request.**

### **Key Issues**

- Whether the benefits of granting temporary planning permission for the current application would outweigh conflict with policy RT3(B) of the Core Strategy and/or offset the potential impacts of the proposed development on the local area.

### **History**

- 2004 Planning permission granted for replacement outbuilding to form village shop and alterations, extensions to existing buildings and change of use of existing building to camping barn (NP/DDD/0304/0348).
- 1997 Planning permission granted for alterations and extension to form utility room and kitchen (NP/DDD/0597/232)
- 1996 Planning permission granted for extension to form utility, kitchen and conservatory (NP/DDD/0696/242).
- 1991 Planning permission granted for erection of agricultural building, extension to public house car park, and construction of beer garden (NP/WED/1191/522).
- 1990 Advertisement consent granted for signs (NP/WED/0590/270).

### **Consultations**

County Council (Highway Authority) - No response to date

District Council – No response to date

Parish Council – Support the application but comment that the site should be tidied up.

### **Representations**

The Authority has received eight letters of objection to this application, of which three have been submitted anonymously and five are from local residents. The letters set out in some detail the respective authors' concerns about the current proposals, which can be summarised as follows:

- the proposals for a permanent static caravan on this site are contrary to the Authority's planning policies;
- there is no evidence that the presence of a static caravan would enhance the financial viability of the Quiet Woman;
- a number of public footpaths converge at The Quiet Woman; the addition of another caravan/caravans would further increase the adverse impact of the untidy appearance of the yard area at the rear of the pub;

- the proposals would offer limited facilities for staying guests, noting the untidy appearance of the rear of the pub, and would be more likely to become additional ancillary residential accommodation for the applicant's relatives;
- the presence of the static caravan would damage the landscape and it would be seen from a range of public vantage points within the surrounding landscape.

### **Main Policies**

Relevant Core Strategy policies: DS1, GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, L1 & RT3

Relevant Local Plan policies: LC4 & LR3

Core Strategy policy HC4 sets out a general presumption that community facilities should be safeguarded and seeks to prevent the loss of these types of facilities including a village pub like the Quiet Woman. This stance is consistent with policies in the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') which says at paragraph 28: in rural areas, local planning authorities should promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

National planning policies in the Framework also offer support for tourism development that would result in economic, social and environmental benefits for rural areas whilst recognising the importance of protecting the scenic beauty of the National Park for its own sake. Development Plan policies are similarly supportive of the provision of development for tourism and leisure where the proposals are well-designed and are consistent with a sustainable pattern of development and the environmentally sound management of the National Park (policies DS1, GSP1, GSP2, GSP3 and L1 of the Core Strategy, and policy LC4 of the Local Plan).

Therefore, the prevailing policy framework generally supports the principle of developing tourist facilities at the Quiet Woman but in order to achieve a proper balance between the conservation of the National Park and recreation interests: policy RT3 of the Core Strategy says caravan and camping sites must conform to the following principles:

- A. Small touring camping and caravan sites and backpack camping sites will be permitted, particularly in areas where there are few existing sites, provided that they are well screened, have appropriate access to the road network, and do not adversely affect living conditions.
- B. Static caravans, chalets or lodges will not be permitted.
- C. Provision of improved facilities on existing caravan and camping sites, including shops and recreation opportunities, must be of a scale appropriate to the site itself.
- D. Development that would improve the quality of existing sites, including improvements to upgrade facilities, access, landscaping, or the appearance of existing static caravans, will be encouraged.

Local Plan policy LR3 adds further criteria for determining the acceptability of camping and caravanning sites and sets out a number of factors to consider in determining the acceptability of the current application including the location of the proposals, their scale, their potential impact on their landscape setting and neighbouring uses, and the suitability of access arrangements.

## **Assessment**

In this case, officers have similar concerns about the current proposals as those raised in representations on the current application. There has been very limited information submitted with the application that demonstrates the provision of two caravans at the rear of the Quiet Woman would maintain the viability of the pub also taking into account the untidy state of the yard that means neither caravan would be a particularly attractive place to stay. There is also a clear policy objection to the provision of static caravans in the National Park set out in Core Policy RT3(B), which officers consider would equally apply to the permanent provision of a touring caravan as proposed in this application.

The siting of a static caravan and the permanent siting of a touring caravan at the rear of the Quiet Woman would also exacerbate the harmful visual impact of the static caravan and timber shed at the rear of the pub. However, it is also considered the temporary permission granted for the existing static and timber shed is a relevant consideration that weighs in the determination of the current application. In the first instance, the two caravans proposed in this application would be sited between the rear of the pub and the existing static caravan, which is considered to be a logical approach seeking to minimise the visual impact of the overall development.

Secondly, it was concluded that a temporary consent for the siting of a static caravan for a person employed at the Quiet Woman and their dependents could be justified at Quiet Woman because the benefits to the pub, whilst succession planning and proposals for redevelopment of the site are still pending, would offset the harm to the National Park from the retention of the development. In reaching this conclusion, substantial weight was placed on the desirability of promoting the viability and longer term retention of the pub, which also appears to be an important community facility, taking into account that the Parish Council supports the current proposals.

However, officers acknowledge that, at this stage, a clear master plan for redevelopment of the land associated with the pub has not come forward, and it is not clear that the pub business is currently financially sound and has a clear prospect of remaining so. There also remains some uncertainty that the plans for redevelopment of some of the land associated with the pub can be achieved within a reasonable timescale, despite the stated intentions of the applicant, especially in the absence of reliable profit and loss accounts, financial development appraisal or formal business plan, or even draft plans for the longer term proposals for the site.

Nonetheless, Planning Practice Guidance says circumstances where a temporary permission may be appropriate include where a trial run is needed in order to assess the effect of the development on the area or where it is expected that the planning circumstances will change in a particular way at the end of that period. A temporary planning permission may also be appropriate on vacant land/buildings to enable use for a temporary period prior to any longer term regeneration plans coming forward or more generally to encourage empty property to be brought back into use. This can benefit an area by increasing activity.

In these respects, it is considered a temporary consent (consistent with the expiry date for the temporary permission for the existing static and shed) offers a reasonable way forward. This is because officers consider that a temporary permission would allow some 'breathing space' for the applicant to bring forward his plans for redevelopment of the site whilst supporting the viability of the pub business through any supplementary income generated by the caravans. In this analysis, the specific policy objection to the current proposals in RT3(B) is offset by the wider policy presumption in the Development Plan and the Framework that local planning authorities should seek to safeguard existing community facilities. It is also relevant that the initial plans for redevelopment of the site include a desire to retain the Quiet Woman as a public house and the provision of affordable housing.

The specific policy objection to the current proposals in RT3(B) is also offset by the limited harm

that would arise from granting a temporary planning permission for the current application. The proposals are of a very limited scale, limiting their potential impact on their landscape setting and the amenities of the nearest neighbouring properties, and the caravans would be sited in the least damaging practicable location at the rear of the pub. There is also some degree of existing screening limiting the visual impact of the proposals on the wider landscape. Access arrangements are generally acceptable and on-site parking spaces would be provided. There are no ecological issues and the proposals would not impact on the significance of any heritage asset.

### **Conclusion**

It is therefore concluded that the proposals would not conflict with the wider range of design and conservation policies in the Development Plan and the Framework if the two caravans were to be on site for a limited period of time whilst the overall benefits of granting temporary permission for the current application outweighs and offsets the identified conflict with policy RT3(B) of the Core Strategy. However, as set out above, the proposals are only permissible on an exceptional basis and the retention of either caravan on a permanent basis would not be appropriate in policy or landscape conservation terms.

Therefore, it is considered reasonable and necessary to limit any permission to a temporary consent that would be consistent with the temporary permission for the existing static and timber shed on the presumption this will help to maintain the viability of a community facility and allow the applicants longer term regeneration plans for the pub and associated land to come forward. It would also be reasonable and necessary to impose a holiday occupancy restriction on both caravans to ensure as far as possible that the caravans would generate an income for the public house rather than become ancillary residential accommodation, for example.

These conditions are also considered to be reasonable taking into account there is already consented staff accommodation on site used by a member of the applicant's family and a fall back position exists whereby a caravan could be sited within the curtilage of the pub for staff accommodation without planning permission.

Accordingly, the current application is recommended for conditional approval.

### **Human Rights**

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

### **List of Background Papers (not previously published)**

Nil