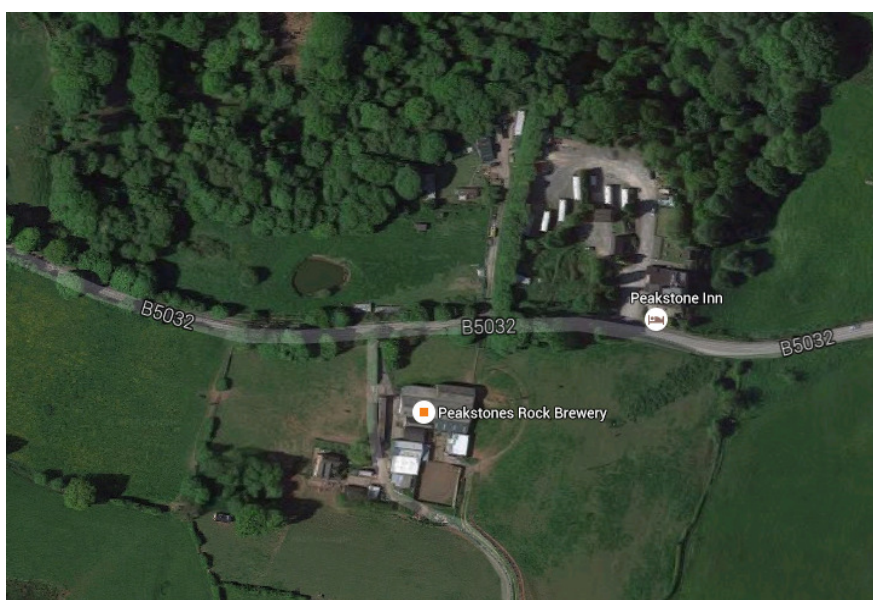


PLANNING / DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT



PROPOSAL : Change of use of land to provide for 16 Touring Caravans pitches with separate camping; open space; facilities building & reception and associated works (Partially Retrospective)

ADDRESS : Land off Cheadle Road, Alton, Staffordshire

APPLICANT : Mr P Finney

DATE : March 2016

JOB No. : 2013-1910

CONTENTS:

1.0	INTRODUCTION
2.0	USE
3.0	AMOUNT
4.0	LAYOUT
5.0	SCALE
6.0	LANDSCAPING
7.0	APPEARANCE
8.0	ACCESS
9.0	ENVIRONMENT
10.0	PLANNING POLICY
11.0	CONCLUSION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sammons Architectural Ltd have been appointed by Mr P Finney to prepare and submit a planning application to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for a partially retrospective planning permission for change of use of land to provide 16 Touring Caravans pitches with separate camping; open space; facilities building & reception and associated works. The application responds to a request from the Council following a complaint that unauthorised works has been carried out on the site. The applicant has carried out minor alterations to facilitate the proposal, such as some re-grading works, deposition of hard core etc.

2.0 USE

The previous use of the site would have to be classified as agricultural and the site itself is located outside any defined settlement boundary and therefore considered to be located in the open countryside. The application proposes what is considered to be a commercial tourist use in the Churnet Valley.

3.0 AMOUNT

The site measures approximately 5.2ha in area, with no permanent structures present on site.

4.0 LAYOUT

The site will still be relatively open in appearance. There will be internal accesses and hardstanding for the tourers as well as an additional 7no car parking spaces. The only buildings will be the facilities building and the reception that will also have an adjacent compound for gas bottles and rubbish bins.

5.0 SCALE

The scale of the proposal will be relatively low as the only permanent structures will be facilities building and reception / compound.

6.0 LANDSCAPING

The application site is reasonably well screened with mature trees and vegetation, therefore minimising the wider visual impacts of the development. Some re-grading works have been undertaken on the site, but this has mainly come from moving earth from the southern and western sections of the site to the northern boundary. The pond that is shown on the aerial photograph did not support any wildlife and its level fluctuated due to rainfall. In the summer months it was not uncommon for the body of water to disappear. In any event, it was confirmed in a letter dated 2nd July 2013 from the Senior Planning Enforcement Officer at SMDC that the infilling of this area of land was acceptable providing that there was no increase in levels or creation of a mound. If it is deemed necessary additional planting could be incorporated into the scheme and could be controlled by means of condition.

7.0 APPEARANCE

The site is a small parcel of land that had an agricultural use, albeit it had not been used for agricultural purposes for some time. The proposed use will still have a relatively low impact on the visual amenities in the locality, due to the form of tourist accommodation proposed. The only notable introduction to the site will be the two ancillary buildings proposed.

8.0 ACCESS

The proposal will use an access onto Cheadle Road. It should be noted that the site already benefitted from an existing access onto Cheadle Road. However, the access has been slightly altered in the proposed plans in order to improve highway safety.

9.0 PLANNING POLICY

As you will be aware Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that when determining a planning application, the decision maker must make their determination in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Given this obligation, this chapter therefore considers national guidance relevant to the application as well as the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (March 2014) and The Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document. The following is considered relevant:

Core Strategy,

SS1 – Development Principles

SS1a – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

SS6c - Other Rural Areas Area Strategy

SS7 – Churnet Valley Area Strategy

E3 – Tourism and Cultural Development

DC1 – Design Considerations

DC3 – Landscape and Settlement Setting

R1 – Rural Diversification

SO7 – To support and enhance the tourism, cultural, recreation and leisure opportunities for the District's residents and visitors.

Supplementary Planning Document

The Churnet Valley Masterplan

National Planning Policy Framework

There is considerable planning policy and guidance relevant to the planning application proposal at both local and national levels. The NPPF is significant as it sets out the Government's commitment for a positive response to planning proposals that would deliver sustainable development in order to assist growth to the economy. It has been made clear that the planning system has a key role in facilitating growth and development should be supported with a presumption in favour of granting planning permission. This change of emphasis provides an important background to the application proposal.

National Planning Policy Framework places a strong emphasis on promoting economic growth and sets out policies for the control of development. The Development Plan represents the starting point for the determination of this application, which in this instance is the Core Strategy. The guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework is also relevant, in particular the following Chapters:

1. Building a strong, competitive economy
3. Supporting a prosperous rural economy

Within the NPPF it is also worth noting the following relevant paragraphs:

- Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material

considerations indicate otherwise (para 2).

- Plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas, (para 10)
- Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, (para 11).
- At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. LPA's should approve proposals which accord with the development plan without delay (para 14).
- The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future (para 18)
- The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system (para 19)
- Support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting (para 21)
- Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses. Support rural tourism that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors that respect the character of the countryside (para 28)

10.0 CONCLUSION

The Government has a strong commitment to growth and provides a strong presumption in favour of development and is committed to increasing levels of growth. Paragraph 186 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It goes on to state in paragraph 187 that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

It is put forward that this proposal represents a form of sustainable tourism that will benefit the local rural economy. The site is ideally located for tourist attractions such as Alton Towers. In addition, the proposal will support the adjacent public house and complement its own caravan park. The site is located within the Churnet Valley and Core Strategy Policy SS7 identifies the Churnet Valley as a sustainable tourism area and in this area support will be given to:

- *short stay and long stay visitor accommodation;*
- *the expansion of existing tourist attractions and facilities and the provision of compatible new tourist attractions and facilities;*

Furthermore, the masterplan for the Churnet Valley seeks the provision of high quality all year round tourism opportunities as a key requirement of any proposal for new or extended tourist facilities and services to improve the tourist opportunities on offer to the local area.

The proposed layout is of a high standard of design that will provide an attractive place to stay, which in turn will not have an adverse impact on the landscape or the visual amenities in the area due to the site being well screened. Biodiversity is not an issue as the land was maintained and then had some re-grading works undertaken. The site already benefits from an existing access and whilst these may require altering for the proposed use it is envisaged that the proposal will not raise any adverse highway issues.

Paragraph 18 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that the Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity in the UK. It goes on to state in paragraph 28 that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. In addition, it states that support should be given to the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas.

The application is considered to accord with the Development Plan Policies and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to endorse this retrospective application for this tourist facility and therefore grant planning permission accordingly.