

Parish:	Methwold	
Proposal:	Retention of caravan for temporary residential use	
Location:	Cherry Tree Farm Thornham Road Methwold Norfolk	
Applicant:	Tracy Peckham	
Case No:	18/01730/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Mrs C Dorgan	Date for Determination: 22 November 2018

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Called in by Councillor Lawrence

Neighbourhood Plan: No

Case Summary

This is a retrospective application to gain temporary planning consent for the siting of a caravan for residential use on agricultural land.

The site is located outside the development boundary for the village of Methwold, which is categorised as a joint Key Rural Service Centre (with Northwold) in the adopted Local Plan (specifically the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADMP).

This application sits alongside application 18/001729/CU for the Change of Use of land from agricultural to leisure (D2), and application 18/01791/F for Retention of access track.

Key Issues

- * Principle of development
- * Form and Character
- * Highways/ Access
- * Other material considerations.

Recommendation

REFUSE

THE APPLICATION

This is a retrospective application to gain temporary planning consent for the siting of a caravan for residential use, on agricultural land.

The site is located outside the development boundary for the village of Methwold, approximately 1 mile to the north west of the built extent of the village. Methwold is categorised as a joint Key Rural Service Centre (with Northwold) in the adopted Local Plan (specifically the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADMP)).

This application sits alongside application 18/001729/CU for the Change of Use of land from agricultural to leisure (D2), and application 18/01791/F for Retention of access track.

SUPPORTING CASE

Cherry Tree Farm is currently agricultural land, used for animal grazing. There is an existing caravan sited on the land, which is used for animal feed storage and as a shelter and toilet when working at the farm. This caravan has been in existence on the site for over twelve years.

The applicant wishes to expand the rare breed animal husbandry, currently comprising goats and sheep, to include rescue chickens, alpacas and rescue ponies. These animals will eventually form a petting farm, as part of the proposed tourism use of the site, which is being applied for at the same time as this application.

In order to care for the animals, supervise the establishment of the tourism site and to provide site security during that time, it is proposed to use the existing caravan siting for temporary residential use. It is hoped that a period of three years will be sufficient to see the site in operation, should the application be successful. It is necessary to reside on the site during this period because of its remote nature. In the past few years the site has been subject of five reported cases of burglary and three unreported. This has resulted in considerable financial loss to the applicant because it has been impossible to insure against theft with no residence on the site, no address and secure gateway. The address has now been formalised and a secure gateway is in the course of construction.

The existing caravan is now in a poor state of repair and a new caravan has been moved to the site, ready to replace the old one, which will be scrapped and removed from the site.

PLANNING HISTORY

18/01791/F: Retention of access track - Cherry Tree Farm, Thornham Road, Methwold

18/01729/CU: Change of Use of land from agricultural to leisure (D2) - Cherry Tree Farm

18/01730/F: Retention of caravan for temporary residential use - Cherry Tree Farm

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: SUPPORT

Highways Authority: OBJECT

I observe from the application form that this caravan is to be used on a temporary basis during the hoped establishment of the site for Tourism. In this respect I would suggest that its consideration is directly linked to the consideration and findings of planning application 18/01729/CU. I therefore refer you to my comments and recommendation made for that application which will also apply to this.

As a stand alone unit I would additionally suggest that the site is remote from schooling; town centre shopping; health provision and has restricted employment opportunities with

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limited scope for improving access by foot and public transport. The distance from service centre provision precludes any realistic opportunity of encouraging a modal shift away from the private car towards public transport. It is my view that the proposed development is likely to conflict with the aims of sustainable development and you may wish to also consider this point within your overall assessment of the site.

Cadent Gas: NO OBJECTION to the proposal in principle.

- There is a high pressure pipeline local to the proposal, the pipeline has a 19.7m 'Building Proximity Distance' (BPD) applicable, Cadent Gas will object to any building that is sited within this distance of the pipeline.
- The high pressure pipeline is classed as a 'Major Accident Hazard Pipeline - High Pressure' and is sited within the HSE consultation zones.

The application has been put through the HSE Land Use Planning (LUP) process, and consequently the HSE does not advise, on safety grounds, against the granting of planning permission in this case.

REPRESENTATIONS No comments received.

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS06 - Development in Rural Areas

CS08 - Sustainable Development

CS11 - Transport

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016

DM2 – Development Boundaries

DM6 - Housing Needs of Rural Workers

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Planning Policy Framework – sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

National Planning Practice Guidance - Provides National Planning Practice Guidance, in support of and in addition to the NPPF

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development

The applicant is seeking to justify the application as an exception to the general approach of restraint in the open countryside by referring to planned agricultural/ tourism activity on the wider site.

Policy DM6 (Housing needs of rural workers) of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan sets out criteria for the siting of an occupational dwelling. The policy states that if a new dwelling is essential to support a new rural based activity, it should normally, for the first three years, be provided by a caravan or other temporary accommodation.

The criteria to be met include a clearly established existing need, requiring occupants to be adjacent to their enterprises day and night; and that this need could not be met by existing dwellings within the locality. The application should be supported by clear evidence of intention and ability to develop the business; and supported by clear evidence that the enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis.

The agent states in the supporting case that the applicant wishes to develop a petting farm, as part of the leisure/ tourism use of the site, and that the care of the animals would require someone to live on the site. This would also provide security for the site, given its isolated location. The three years temporary consent would enable the site to become established as a tourism/ leisure use. The applicant has not however provided any financial evidence or business planning to support the application. Nor is there any evidence that the applicant has considered alternative existing accommodation located near to the site.

The agent does state that a caravan has been sited on the land for in excess of 12 years, however there is no evidence provided of this. The caravan has recently been replaced due to its poor state of repair. In addition entrance gates and an access track have been constructed from the highway to the residential caravan, which is the subject of a separate application (ref 18/01791/F).

In conclusion, the applicant has failed to meet the criteria set out in policy DM6. While it is accepted that there may be a need for the applicant to be on the site day and night, and there is little likelihood of the housing need being met by existing dwellings within the locality, this is based on the establishment of a rural business. The applicant has not provided sufficient evidence of their intention and ability to develop the business to warrant the need for the residential caravan.

Form and Character

The form and character of the locality is rural in nature, with fishing lakes and log cabins forming a tourism use located on the adjacent site. This proposal, for a temporary residential caravan, would not be out of keeping with the locality, although the siting of the caravan could be more discreet. There are on site currently some fenced animal pens and an animal shelter, all of which are small scale and permitted development.

Highways/ Access

The Local Highway Authority has objected to this proposal on the grounds that it is directly linked to application 18/01729/CU for the Change of Use of agricultural land to Leisure (D2). They have objected to that scheme on the grounds of inadequate access to the site, and

state that an approval of the application would result in conditions to the detriment of highway safety.

Furthermore they state that the remote nature of the site means that it is an unsustainable location for residential development.

Other material considerations

The site is within Flood Zone 1 and therefore a FRA is not required. The application site is also within the vicinity of a high pressure gas pipeline, although Cadent Gas and HSE have no objections to the scheme. There are no further objections raised from consultees.

CONCLUSION

The proposed scheme would result in the retention of a new, temporary, dwelling located within the countryside. The temporary siting and use of the caravan is to provide the applicant with an opportunity to build a business and live on site for a period of up to 3 years. Based on the evidence provided as part of this application, the applicant has failed to make a case that there is a clear established need, with clear evidence of a firm intention, and ability to develop the business which has been planned on a sound financial basis.

Furthermore the Local Highway Authority has objected to the scheme on the grounds that the proposal is associated with application 18/01729/CU which they also object to. They also question the suitability of the location as it conflicts with the aims of sustainable development.

Consequently the proposal is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS06, CS10 and CS11 of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Adopted Core Strategy 2011 and Policies DM2, DM11, and DM15 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan 2016.

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE for the following reason(s):

- 1 The site lies within land designated as countryside and is remote from services and facilities. Residential development in such locations is contrary to both national and local planning policy and guidance unless it is essential for a rural enterprise. Insufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that there is a need for a residence to support a rural business and that if there was a need that the need could not be met by an existing dwelling. As such the development is contrary to the NPPF and Local Plan Policies CS01, CS02, CS06, CS10 and DM6.