

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

REF NO: AB/107/11/

LOCATION: Priory Farm Cottage
60 Priory Lane
Tortington Arundel

PROPOSAL: Removal of existing stables and stores and erection of 7No. single storey guest lodges with associated parking and site works. This is a departure from the Development Plan.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	As above. The proposal involves the removal of equestrian related buildings on the site, as well as a sand school, and replacement with an arrangement of 7 timber guest lodges, each with 2 bedrooms.
SITE AREA	Approximately 1.1 hectares.
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DEN	N/A
TOPOGRAPHY	Undulating but generally level.
TREES	The northern part of the site is wooded, although the arrangement of trees is not as dense as it is within surrounding woodland. The proposed lodges will be positioned close to existing trees. The applicant states that none of these trees will be lost as a result of the works. None of the trees concerned are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	The site is enclosed by a mixture of timber post and rail fencing as well as post and wire fencing, generally measuring approximately 1.3 metres in height. The site edges are also marked by trees and hedging that is part of the woodland on the site.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	The site is currently occupied by a semi-detached two-storey dwelling which is positioned at the southern end of the site. Immediately to the north there is a group of five single-storey timber buildings and an adjacent sand school that have previously been employed for equestrian use which has subsequently ceased. To the north of this is a wooded area which is identified as Ancient Woodland and also as part of the Binsted Wood Complex SNCI (Site of National Conservation Interest). A track, which also serves as a public footpath, passes through this wooded area.
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	The site is located outside of the built-up area on a narrow, rural road that is bordered by lines of trees, hedgerow and

open fields creating an intimate rural appearance. The trees help screen the small amount of built development nearby, most notably that on Birch Close which reaches close to the eastern side of the road. Public footpaths run to the north, east and west. The South Downs National Park borders the west of the site.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

AB/122/87	Double garage and stable block for private use	Approve Cond 02-11-1987
AB/117/94	2 adjoining timber stables	Approve Cond 17-01-1995

REPRESENTATIONS

Representations received:

Arundel Town Council

Objection: Unacceptable consolidation of residential development that would be contrary to countryside policies of the Development Plan and harmfully detract from the rural character and appearance of the area. The rural characteristics of the proposed access render it inadequate to serve the vehicular activity likely to be generated by the scheme.

12 letters of objection: Outside of the developed area. More traffic on a small country lane on the edge of the national park. Massive over-development of a semi-detached house in a beautiful quiet location. The route through the woods is used by many walkers, any increase in traffic will have a detrimental effect on this natural area and wildlife. The existing buildings could be used as a livery. A car park for 15 cars will have a massive visual impact. The lodges effectively amount to new bungalows. The development will create noise and disruption. Will set a precedent. Proposed buildings, as a whole, are several times larger than the stables. The access track is a public footpath. Appears to be the first stage for a larger 'glamping' development. Road is single track only and will lead to increased traffic and danger. Will be located in a strategic gap. Is not diversification of the rural economy as not related to any specific farming business. The plan is not in true scale, there are many existing trees that would have to come down. No guarantees that the Lodges may not become permanent rented accommodation in the future. The woodland area is to be left for wildlife only. There are already two properties nearby offering tourist accommodation. If no longer in use the stables should be removed from the site and the land reinstated to garden. The use will employ no-one in day to day activities.

Comments on Representations received:

Noted. The application is for the 7 lodge buildings. If approved, further expansion of any significance would require a new planning application to be made. Each planning application is judged on its own merits and not on the basis of 'precedents.' The access track is a public footpath and County Highways have been consulted on the application. The site is not within any designated Strategic Gap. Lodges could not be converted to permanent rented accommodation without planning permission first being granted and that would be unlikely in

this rural location. Concerns over the intensity of the development and the impact on the rural surroundings are considered to be valid.

CONSULTATIONS

Consultations responses received:

None.

Comments on Consultation responses:

None.

POLICY CONTEXT

Designation applicable to site:

Outside Built-Up Area

Ancient Woodland

Site of National Conservation Interest

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Arun District Local Plan:

[GEN3](#)

[GEN7](#)

[GEN28](#)

[AREA14](#)

[DEV34](#)

Protection of the Countryside

The Form of New Development

Trees and Woodlands

Sites of National Importance for Nature Conservation

Tourist Accommodation and Attractions

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

PPS1

PPS7

Delivering Sustainable Development

Sustainable development in rural areas

SUPPLEMENTARY POLICY GUIDANCE

XXX3

Good Planning Practice Guide on Tourism

POLICY COMMENTARY

The above policies combine to describe the criteria against which the application will be assessed particularly with regard to visual and residential amenity.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

The proposal is considered to conflict with relevant Development Plan policies in that it would be over-intensive to the point that it would have a detrimental impact upon the rural character and appearance of the surrounding area and would also be visually inconsistent with the surrounding countryside, particularly when viewed from surrounding footpaths.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is considered that there are no other material considerations to warrant a decision otherwise than in accordance with the Development Plan and/or legislative background.

CONCLUSIONS

The site has previously been in use for equestrian purposes. The proposal is to employ the space for use by tourists, with self-catering facilities provided. The site is in a rural location, adjacent to, but not within, the South Downs National Park.

Whilst it could be argued that the proposal could contribute towards a diversification of the rural economy by way of encouraging more tourists into the area, the isolated location means that there are no shops, public houses or other nearby facilities that would be likely to benefit from the use.

The previous use of the site has to be taken into account and it is considered that, whilst the former equestrian use may have generated some level of intensity, the proposed use for 7 separate two bedroom holiday lodges would be far in excess of this. It is considered that this would be to the detriment of the quiet rural nature of the surrounding area.

There is currently a group of timber buildings at the site. However, the proposal will replace these buildings with a greater number of larger buildings and it is considered that these will become a more visible feature both from passing roads and from the public footpath to the north. The cumulative visual impact of the buildings proposed, and parked cars at the site, would substantially alter the character of the site and, given its proximity to unspoilt ancient woodland, would detract from the existing sparsely populated nature of the surrounding rural area.

It is therefore recommended that the application is refused for the following reasons.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

- 1 The proposal, by way of its scale and intensity, would constitute an alien intrusion within the countryside which would be out of keeping with, and detrimental to, the rural character of the locality in conflict with policies GEN2, GEN3 and GEN7 of the Arun District Local Plan.