

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL				
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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

EXTENSION TO EXISTING CARAVAN SITE AND PROVISION OF 14 NO. TOURING CARAVAN PITCHES

LAND TO THE SOUTH OF FINDON CRICKET GROUND, LONG FURLONG, FINDON

1. ASSESSMENT OF CONTEXT

- 1.01 The site the subject of this application lies on the southern side of the A280 Long Furlong, to the west of Findon village. The site is set back from the road behind the cricket ground accessed from the main road by a vehicular access track. This track passes between the cricket ground to the west and two existing cottages to the north which are in the ownership of the applicant.
- 1.02 The access track terminates at the entrance to the application site. The site itself is currently demarcated by a post and wire fence and is laid to grass. To the west of the site lies public footpath 2103 which runs in a southerly direction and then turns eastwards where it joins with footpath 2091 which runs along the southern boundary of the application site.
- 1.03 The site is generally level but beyond the southern and eastern boundaries the land rises towards a ridge which runs north-south along the western side of Findon Valley. In the vicinity of the application site this slope is well treed and provides a good visual backdrop to the application site.
- 1.04 The site lies within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and within the proposed boundary for the South Downs National Park.

2. PLANNING CONTEXT

- 2.01 PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, sets out the Government's objectives for rural areas. Nationally designated areas are dealt with in paragraph 21 and highlights the need to conserve the natural beauty of the landscape whilst supporting suitably located and designed development necessary to facilitate the economic and social wellbeing of these designated areas and their communities.
- 2.02 Tourism and leisure is dealt with in paragraph 34 and, in statutorily designated areas, encourages Local Planning Authorities to recognise the scope for tourist and leisure related developments subject to appropriate control over their number, form and

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location. In paragraph 39, it states that in considering proposals for touring caravan parks, planning authorities should balance the need to provide adequate facilities and sites with the need to protect the rural landscape.

- 2.03 Specific advice on tourism is contained within the "Good practise guide on planning for tourism" which was published in May 2006. This guidance recognises the importance of tourism and, in particular, recognises that in rural areas the health of the environment and of the community depends on the viability of the local economy. Areas which attract visitors for the scenic beauty and which enjoy income from tourism will be better able to afford to sustain the local environment. In paragraph 3.24 it is stated that the provision of essential facilities for visitors is vital for the development of tourism in rural areas and RSS and LDF policies should engender a positive approach. In statutorily designated areas they should seek to conserve and enhance the qualities and features that justify the designation.
- 2.04 The guidance note seeks to encourage development that is sustainable in terms of its location however it acknowledges that there will be some occasions where development for tourism is sought at a location where it is difficult to meet the objective of access by sustainable modes of transport. For small scale schemes, it recognises that traffic generation is likely to be fairly limited and additional traffic movements are therefore unlikely to be a reason for refusal for otherwise suitable tourism developments. It will also be necessary to consider the contribution that the proposal will make to the local economy and to the areas tourism function. New development should also be well designed and protect and enhance the visual quality of the site and its surroundings.
- 2.05 Annexe A deals with specific forms of tourist accommodation and with regard to touring caravan parks, refers to the advice in PPS7 and the need to weigh the objective of providing adequate facilities and sites with the need to protect landscapes and environmentally sensitive sites.
- 2.06 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South East of England (known as the South East Plan) sets out the long term spatial planning framework for the region over the period 2006 to 2026. Policy C3 deals with Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The policy reflects the advice in PPS7 by allowing for small scale proposals within the AONB's which are suitably located and designed. It also aims to encourage proposals which support the economies and social wellbeing of the AONB's and their communities provided they do not conflict with its overall aims.
- 2.07 Policy TSR5 deals with tourist accommodation and states that Local Planning Authorities should facilitate the upgrading and enhancement of existing unserviced accommodation, including extensions where this will not harm landscape quality. The explanatory text details how unserviced accommodation is a popular and vital component of the leisure

accommodation offer in the region and provides a particularly valuable role in supporting longer stay/higher value rural tourism.

- 2.08 The most relevant saved policy of the Arun District Local Plan is DEV39 which relates to new touring caravan and camping sites outside the built up area. This policy recognises that the district is a highly popular area for camping and caravan holidays and the Council wishes to allow for provision of this type facility to meet those needs. The criterion in the policy seeks to ensure that development makes use of existing sites and is close to a main road where development is acceptable environmentally.
- 2.09 Having regard to the above policy context, it is submitted that this application accords with the Government's aim for the promotion of tourism in rural areas where it can be accommodated without harm to the rural character of the area. Furthermore, it accords with policy DEV39 in that it is making effective use of an existing caravan site served off a classified road. It is not unduly remote being well related to the existing cricket ground, existing residential development and kennels on the road frontage. Furthermore it is located within a kilometre of the village of Findon where there are local facilities. The site, although within AONB, is not visually prominent in the wider landscape, with the land rising to the rear forming a visual backdrop. It is therefore considered that the proposal meets the objectives of the development plan by providing a suitably located enhancement to an existing facility which enhances the offer of tourist accommodation within this rural area.

3. AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

- 3.01 The application site comprises the existing site which has the benefit of a 5 Caravan Certificate which is approximately 0.4 hectares. In addition, it is proposed to include an area of land to the south of this, between the existing wire fence and the public footpath which comprise an additional 0.1 hectares. The site would accommodate 14 touring caravan pitches as indicated on the submitted block plan, with a parking space adjacent to each one.
- 3.02 It is proposed to erect two new buildings to accommodate the campsite facilities. The proposed toilet block would measure 6.9 metres by 5.1 metres with a height to the ridge of approximately 4.5 metres. The proposed refuse site and wash-up building would be 5.2 metres by 2.8 metres with an overall height of 3.7 metres. The existing vehicular access would be extending into the site by approximately 85 metres to provide a hardened surface for emergency access. A turning head would be provided at the southern most end.

4. LAYOUT

- 4.01 The layout of the site has been designed to accord with the touring caravan site licence conditions in terms of distances from emergency access, distances between caravans, and the provision of separate ladies, gents and disabled wc and shower facilities. The toilet block will drain into a new Klargestar bio disc treatment plant which will also have an emptying point for the site. The refuse and wash-up building will provide refuse and recycling bins and 3 mains water stand pipes are proposed within the site.

5. SCALE

- 5.01 The two proposed buildings are small in scale with respective heights of only 4.5 and 3.7 metres in height. They have been designed as traditional rural buildings with stained softwood shiplap boarding with plain clay tile roofs. It is considered that these buildings would sit comfortably in the landscape and would not appear unduly prominent given the existing residential properties and buildings associated with the use of the adjoining cricket ground.

6. LANDSCAPING

- 6.01 The site is well screened by existing hedging and mature trees to the west of the public footpath and the rising landscape to the south and west. The boundaries to the caravan site are marked with wire fencing which is not prominent and helps the site assimilate with the surrounding open downland. It is not proposed to provide any formal landscaping to these boundaries.

7. APPEARANCE

- 7.01 The site is proposed as a small scale low density touring caravan site. The operational development is limited to the two proposed buildings and the access track which are located at the northern end close to existing development in the vicinity. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not be out of character in the context of its surroundings.

8. ACCESS

- 8.01 The proposal makes use of the existing access onto the A280. This access serves the existing kennels, cottages and the cricket ground and the use of the existing site for 5 caravans. It is not considered that the proposal would represent a significant intensification of the use of this access over and above the existing level of use.
- 8.02 The site itself is generally flat and the new buildings have been designed to have regard to the Disability Discrimination Act.