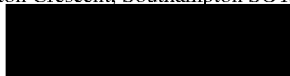

LUKEN BECK



30 Carlton Crescent, Southampton SO15 2EW



Mr Karl Roberts,
Director of Planning,
Arun District Council,
Maltravers Road,
Littlehampton,
West Sussex BN17 5LF

6th March 2017

Our Ref: GB/16092

Your Ref: PP-05875620

Dear Mr Roberts,

**Application to vary Condition 2 of Planning Permission LPA Ref: P/72/09
dated 5th January 2010 on land at Bowley Farm, South Mundham, Pagham
PO20 1NB
Portal Reference: PP-05875620**

On the 5th January 2010 planning permission was granted for the "*Formation of hardstanding and use of land for siting of agricultural workers mobile homes together with drainage & service connection provision.*" LPA Ref: P/72/09

In accordance with the drawings submitted with the application and subsequently approved, [attached to this current application for reference - 0858-DPA 02 and 0858-DPA 01] twenty caravans in total were located in two parallel lines of ten later that year but the precise date is not known. The photographs below taken in February 2017 illustrate the positioning of the caravans in accordance with the permission.

During the latter part of 2010 shortly after the caravans were occupied, it became evident that due to the changing nature of the rural economy and the combination of agricultural and horticultural practices, that workers were required to support the industry throughout the twelve month period. This experience was not short lived because during the winter months of 2011/12 through to 2016/17, the same demand remained for agricultural workers to assist with the production of produce and packing plus preparing the ground and sowing new crops for the forthcoming Spring and Summer months.

Condition 2 of the planning permission states, "***The caravans hereby approved shall only be occupied between 1st March and 31st October in any year.***"



RTPI

mediation of space - making of place

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Photographs of the 20 caravans positioned in accordance with planning permission P/72/09



The restriction imposed by Condition 2 has not been complied with since 2010 and, as far as can be ascertained, this has not resulted in any harm to interests of acknowledged importance but it has enabled the workforce to continue supporting the rural economy. It is recognised that perhaps an earlier application should have been submitted to vary the

condition but due to a busy workload and an oversight, the matter was not considered further.

The purpose of this current application is to vary the condition to allow occupation of the caravans for twelve months of the year in order that the industries of agriculture and horticulture can continue to be supported. We are aware of the reason underlying the condition which is to safeguard the countryside in accordance with saved policy GEN3 of the Arun DC Local Plan 2003. The reason for the condition states; “***The site lies in a rural area where development unrelated to the seasonal agricultural essential need would not normally be permitted and in accordance with Arun District Local Plan policy GEN3.***”

Policy GEN3 does permit certain developments for example if;

- ✧ It meets the operation needs of agriculture, forestry, the extraction of minerals or the deposit of waste; or (*our underlining*)
- ✧ For the diversification of the rural economy

The reality of the situation is that agriculture and horticulture have become inextricably linked in terms of the workforce because whilst ground workers are needed on the land for most of the year to prepare the soils for sowing followed by harvesting, during the winter months when the growing season finishes and weather is not conducive to growing, there is an ever increasing demand to work in the local pack houses to prepare the food produce for local and regional supermarkets.

Condition 3 of planning permission P/72/09 further restricts the occupation of the caravans to those agricultural workers “engaged in agricultural employment at Bowley Farm and other land in the same ownership and/or control as Bowley Farm.” This new current application does not include any variation to condition 3 as all the caravans are occupied by agricultural workers who are working in connection with activity associated with Bowley Farm.

When planning permission was granted, the officer’s report said under the sub-heading ‘Countryside Policy’ that;

“The proposal is for accommodation of seasonal agricultural workers. Bowleys Farm is part of a local co-operative which is working to maximise the growing potential and distribution of the wider area. This is a result of European Regulations which have resulted in rural and farm diversification. The farmland at Bowley is leased to the adjacent farm, Sefter Farm (Barfoots of Botley) which is a large growing and distribution centre for the area. The nature of the work is seasonal between March and October. The proposal is therefore considered necessary for agricultural purposes.”

This report remains consistent with National Policy as paragraph 28 of the NPPF states; “*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. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:*

- ✧ *promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*

The Officer's report also mentioned a 2009 appeal decision when the Inspector adopted the opinion;

"A recent enforcement appeal for Langmeads Farm for the siting of 22 caravans (2nd September 2009) granted planning permission. The Inspector concluded that the main issue was whether there was an agricultural need to accommodate workers on site and if this was sufficient to outweigh any adverse effects upon the character of the countryside. The Inspector recognised that the farming economy in this part of the South Coast involved the use of seasonal agricultural works for labour intensive production of salad and similar crops. The flexibility of shifting labour around several holdings and fields was also recognised. The Inspector concluded therefore that the development met the operational needs of agriculture as required in policy GEN3. This application is in essence the same as the Langmeads appeal."

The difference today is that the growing and distribution of food stuffs is a twelve-month operation rather limited to nine months of the year. From a planning perspective however, the salient points adopted by the Inspector on appeal continue to be relevant inasmuch as agricultural workers are involved in the rural economy and there is a continuing need to accommodate said workers. Policy GEN3 remains the relevant policy which is being complied with.

In summary, the 20 caravans approved with planning permission in 2010 have been and continue to be occupied by agricultural workers but the period of occupation has been for twelve months rather than the nine months as required by Condition 2. Given the occupation has been continuous during the last six years and as no harm is evidenced, the current application to vary Condition 2 is requested as it is compliant with Development Plan policies.

Yours sincerely

Graham Beck
Company Secretary