

WA/2020/1861–Change of use from agricultural land to glamping site; Change of use and alterations to barn to provide ancillary kitchen and toilet/shower facilities (as amplified by Transport Statement received 17/12/2020).at Slades Farm, Thorncombe Street, Bramley

Committee: Eastern
Meeting Date: 8th September 2021

Ward: Bramley
Case Officer: Kate Edwards
Expiry Date/ Extended Date: TBC

Neighbour Notification Expiry Date: 08/01/2021

RECOMMENDATION That, permission be GRANTED subject to conditions and informative.

1. Summary

The application has been brought before the Area Committee at the request of the Local Member, Councillor Seaborne. The reasons for referral relate to Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 Policy RE3 (development shall not lead to harm to landscape character) and the following retained Policies of the Local Plan (2002) – D1c (loss of general amenity, including through loss of light, privacy or disturbance caused by light, noise or vibration; RD7c and d (reuse and adaptation of buildings in rural areas will be permitted where it will not introduce an activity which will adversely affect the character or be detrimental to the amenity of adjoining occupiers); and RD10d (agricultural development should not give rise to noise and disturbance of neighbours).

The proposed campsite and operations would be limited to 5 tents and is unlikely to give rise to a level of noise and disturbance which would be detrimental to the amenity of adjoining occupiers. With mitigation, the proposal would not lead to harm the special landscape character of the AONB. The proposal would result in an economic benefit, supporting the rural economy. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the development plan and is recommended for approval.

2. Location Plan

P.T.O.



3. Site Description

The application site is located to the eastern side of Thorncombe Street, within a highly rural area to the outskirts of the village of Bramley. It comprises a field which is currently occupied by a glamping business which is the subject of this application. Prior to the establishment of this use on a temporary basis without the benefit of planning permission, it was used as equestrian grazing land in association with nearby stabling. Slades Farm is a wider agricultural and equestrian holding which occupies surrounding fields and land to the north.

4. Proposal

Full planning permission is sought for: Change of use of land and alterations to barn to provide ancillary kitchen and toilet/shower facilities.

5 pitches only are proposed, with access via the existing vehicular entrance from Thorncombe Street. Two existing green yurts would remain in place throughout the year, whilst 3 additional circular tents would be erected for each camping season. Though the tents currently in place are white, it is proposed that a condition is used to ensure that the tents used in the next season in 2022 are green.

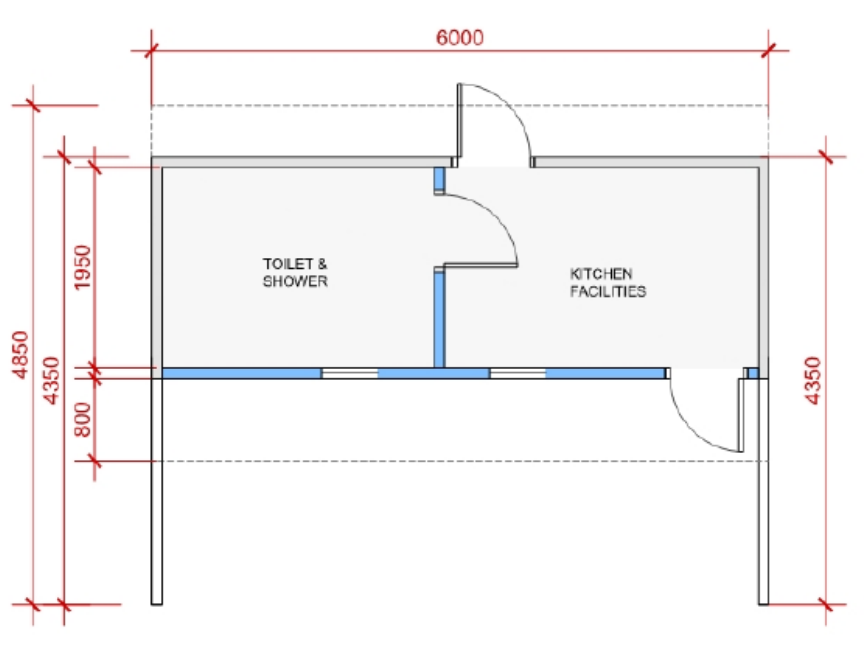
A new bound aggregate hardstanding would be provided to accommodate 6 parking spaces.

It is proposed that an existing kennel building within the field is converted to provide toilet, shower and kitchen facilities. This would remove the need for the portable toilets which are currently in place on site.

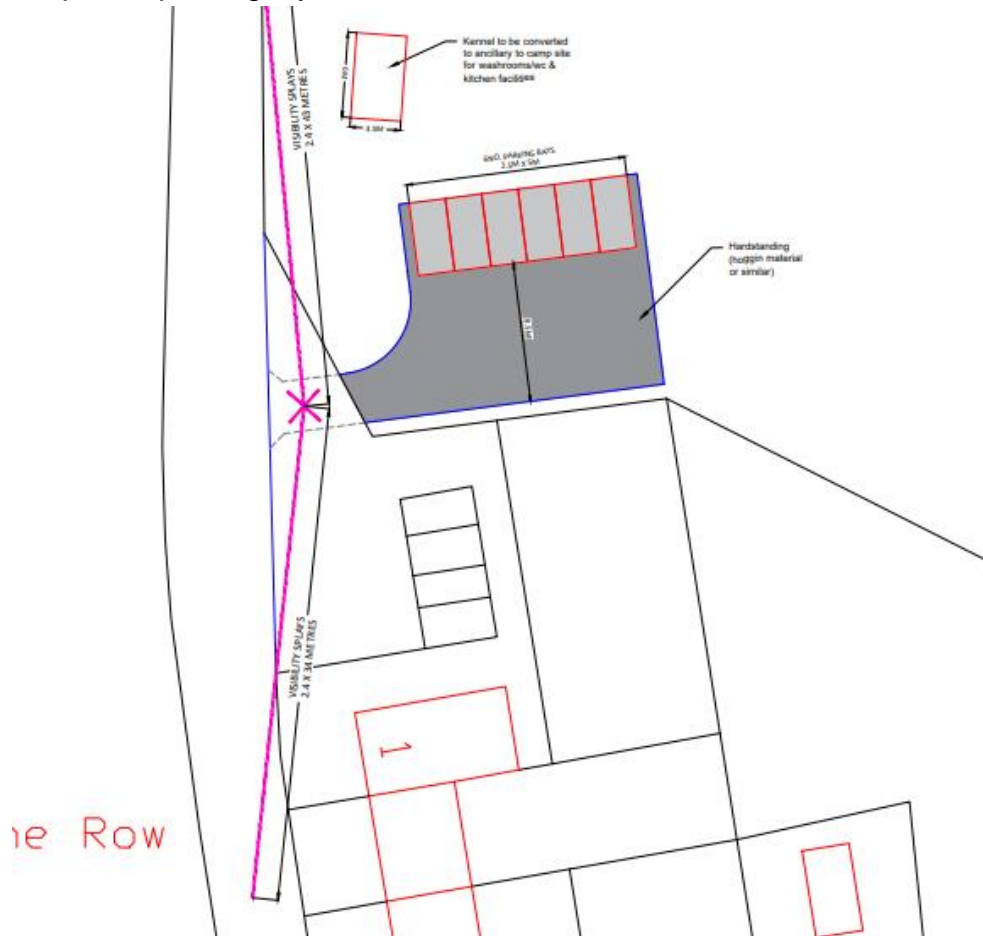
Proposed site plan



Floor plans – existing kennel to be converted to provide facilities



Proposed parking layout detail



Relevant Planning History

5. Planning Policy Constraints

Green Belt
AONB and AGLV
Within 500m ancient woodland buffer
Area at high risk of flooding

6. Development Plan Policies and Guidance

The relevant development plan policies comprise:

- Waverley Borough Local Plan, Part 1, Strategic policies and sites (adopted February 2018): TD1, NE1, RE2, RE3, ST1, LRC1.
- Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002 (retained policies February 2018): D1, D4, RD7, RD8.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) due weight has been given to the relevant policies in the above plans.

Other guidance:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (2014)
- Statement of Community Involvement (2019 Revision)
- Vehicular and Cycle Parking Guidance (Surrey County Council 2018)
- Surrey Hills Management Plan (2014-2019)

7. Consultations and Town/Parish Council Comments

Surrey County Council Highway Officers	No objection subject to conditions
Bramley Parish Council	No objection
Hascombe Parish Council	The biodiversity checklist has been completed incorrectly.
Waverley Environmental Health	<p>No noise complaints have been received and it would not be expected that 5 pitches would result in a significant level of noise generation; It is not considered that the anticipated level of car journeys would result in a noise nuisance.</p> <p>A further consultation response was received requesting that the LPA require the applicant to provide clean potable water on site.</p>
Surrey Hill AONB Advisor	Initial objection due to impact on AONB. Revised comments received removing objection in light of correspondence with application and conditions recommended.
Waverley Private Sector Housing team	No objection. It is noted that there may be a licencing requirement under the Public Health Act.

8. Representations

In accordance with the statutory requirements and the “Reaching Out to the Community – Local Development Framework – Statement of Community Involvement – August 2019” the application was advertised by neighbour notification letters.

46 letters have been received raising objection and 5 letters have been received in support .

Objections are outlined for the following reasons:

- Will bring more cars to the area
- Noise pollution, including with a statement that this occurred on at least one occasion in summer 2020.
- Night time light pollution
- Litter
- Detrimental to AONB landscape
- Urbanisation of the countryside
- Buildings have been erected without permission
- Wastes from the site are running into streams and damaging aquatic life, threatening fishing ponds downstream in Bramley
- Detrimental to biodiversity
- Will attract stag and hen parties
- Restrictions to prevent all night parties are unenforceable.
- There are errors on the biodiversity checklist
- The site is not well screened
- Users will need to drive to Hascombe for provisions
- Access unsuitable and narrow
- Prior approval recently refused for commercial use of barn on Slades farm due to Highway concerns
- Road safety concerns for visitors as there are no pavements on Thorncombe Street
- The number of pitches is not confirmed
- Concern regarding impact on trees
- Concern regarding impact on Great Crested Newts
- There are no very special circumstances which indicate that permission should be granted.
- The site has no value to the local economy as is not sited near to pubs.
- Objection from west Surrey Badger Group stating that they are aware of several setts in close proximity to the site and object until assessment information is submitted.
- Objection submitted via the website from CPRE, listing comments which are included within those above.

Letters in support outlined the following reasons:

- Has not caused noise disturbance, increased traffic or an eyesore

- Visitors are welcomed to enjoy the area
- The number of tents is limited
- Local children enjoy meeting the users of the campsite.
- The occupiers of Slades Farm Stables Flat and Nos 2 and 3 Cheyne Road has not been disturbed by noise or any other nuisance
- Educational value through users experiencing the countryside
- Letter from operators confirming they will be managing the site in order to avoid disturbance to surrounding properties

Planning Considerations

9. Principle of development

Retained Policy RD8 of the Local Plan (2002) states that new uses on agricultural, forestry or horticultural holdings will be permitted provided that various criteria are met, including that the main business of the holding is unharmed. The site is an existing field used for grazing horses from adjacent stables. In this respect, the land is considered equestrian. The use of this site which is a small portion of the overall holding for this purposes would support rather than undermine the vitality of the farm over. There is no in principle objection to its loss for this purposes, subject to other Policies of the development plan being met.

The site is within the Green Belt. Paragraph 147 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 states that inappropriate development in the Green Belt is by definition harmful and should not be allowed unless very special circumstances exist. Paragraph 149 states that the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate unless certain exceptions are met. Paragraph 150 list other exceptional forms of development which may be acceptable in the Green Belt where they preserve openness and do not harm the reason for the designation, including in relation to material changes to the use of land, such as for outdoor recreation.

The 5 proposed yurts and tents are not considered as newly constructed buildings given that they are fully de-mountable, pitched without hardstanding or other adaptations and are not intended to be permanently sited in one location. The applicant has confirmed that the 3 tents proposed would be removed in winter months. The change of use, itself, however, would represent a material change of use, which would be considered inappropriate development if harmful to openness. The proposed hardstanding would be at grade and have no material impact on openness. Whilst the tents and yurts as proposed would have a volume, given their low level, impermanent siting and generous spacing, it is considered that they would continue to preserve the openness.

Given the above considerations, it is considered that the proposal is not an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 150 of the NPPF (2021) and is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with the detailed matters considered below.

Impact on visual amenity, AONB/AGLV and intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside

Policy RE1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 states that development proposals in the countryside should preserve the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Policy RE3 states that within areas with special landscape designations, such as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty within which the site lies, special regard should be had to preserving the landscape features of value.

Comments were received from the AONB Planning Advisor stating that there is a need to balance the aims of the Surrey Hill Management Plan of encouraging opportunities to visit, access and enjoy with AONB with the desire to preserve landscape character. The site is identified as one with visibility from a number of distance views and potential landscape impact. Initial concerns were also expressed with regards to the impact on dark skies which are important to the AONB and the tranquillity of the landscape. The initial representation concluded that the landscape harm would outweigh the benefits of increased accessibility and enjoyment of the space. In addition to the AONB officer comments, and as raised in representations, it is evident that the screening between the road and the site is not wholly effective, particularly in winter.

Following receipt of information in support from the applicant, however, further comments from the AONB Planning Advisor were received stating that the initial concerns could be addressed if conditions were imposed to ensure –

- all the tents are green,
- the planning permission is personal given the assurances given over the management of the site, and
- the proposal is part of a farm diversification scheme and therefore remains the ownership within the wider farm and is not sold separately.

The AONB officer also afforded weight to a recent ministerial statement encouraging the use of the countryside for such purposes.

It is considered that, in order to address concerns with regards to potential impact on dark skies during night time hours, a condition could be applied to ensure that no artificial lighting is used on site unless first approved by the Local Planning Authority.

It is not considered likely that the proposal, for only 5 pitches, would generate a significant level of litter, such that would have a detrimental visual impact. It is,

however, recommended that a condition is applied to ensure that a suitable quantity of waste facilities are provided and that these are sufficiently screened to prevent landscape harm.

It is therefore considered that, whilst there may otherwise be some harm to the AONB/AGLV, suitable mitigation could be applied to address this impact. The proposal would therefore preserve the landscape of the AONB/AGLV and the visual amenity. It is therefore considered in accordance with the Policies stated above.

Impact on residential amenity

Policy TD1 of the Local Plan 2018 (Part1) seeks to ensure that new development is designed to create safe and attractive environments that meet the needs of users and incorporate the principles of sustainable development. Retained policies D1 and D4 of the Local Plan 2002 are given substantial and full weight respectively due to their consistency with the NPPF 2019.

It is not considered that the proposal would impact upon on the light, outlook or privacy of adjoining residential properties given that the nearest part of the site to these properties would be occupied by the parking area and present to the flank of the existing terrace. With regards to noise, the proposal has been assessed by the Council's Environmental Health Officers who have confirmed that it is not anticipated that the small scale of the proposed camp site would be likely to result in significant noise generation, including through use of the car parking area.

The proposal would therefore preserve suitable amenity for neighbouring properties and is in accordance with Policy TD1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) in this regard.

Transportation considerations

Policy ST1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 states that development proposals should encourage the use of sustainable transport. The Surrey Parking Guidance for Development, 2018, outlines parking standards.

6 parking spaces and associated manoeuvring space would be provided to serve the development. The submitted Transport Statement indicates that the trip generation would be minimal. Surrey Highway officers have confirmed that the proposal is acceptable with regards to highway safety, capacity and policy grounds, subject to conditions. These conditions are recommended within the schedule below.

Given the considerations outlined above, the proposal is acceptable with regards to transportation considerations.

Biodiversity

Policy NE1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 states that the Council will seek to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Development will be permitted provided it retains, protects and enhances biodiversity and ensures any negative impacts are avoided or, if unavoidable, mitigated.

The current application is not accompanied by an Ecological Survey, and the completed biodiversity checklist indicates that it is considered that the proposal has low potential to result in harm to protected species. The accuracy of the biodiversity checklist has been questioned within representations and it is noted that the West Surrey Badger Group have stated that there are known setts in close proximity to the site.

Other than in relation to the provision of a new hardstanding, the application is retrospective. Prior to this the land was grazed by horses. Were it the case that there were protected species on site which were likely to be harmed by a glamping site, it is likely that they would have been disturbed by the extant operation. No tree felling, building demolition, vegetation clearance, changes to boundaries or digging are proposed in association with the application. On this basis, it is not considered likely that the grant of permission would result in any harm to biodiversity or protected species.

The economic benefits of the proposal

Retained Policy LT4 of the Local Plan (2002) states that the provision of visitor accommodation in the countryside will be supported provided that various criteria are met to prevent adverse neighbour, highway and visual/character impacts. Representations have stated that the camping site would make no economic contribution. It is, however, considered that it will inevitably make a certain level of economic contribution, to the vitality of the holding, the immediately local environment and the wider area due to new visitors. This weighs in favour of the development.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan, given that no green belt, landscape, highway or amenity harm is identified, and the proposal would result in a small economic benefit. As such, it is recommended that planning permission is granted.

RECOMMENDATION

That permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Condition

The development shall be provided entirely in accordance with the following approved plans: PL-200; 100; 011; 010. 20067.01.

Reason

To provide an acceptable standard of development in accordance with the Policies of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018.

2. Condition

In accordance with the submitted Planning Statement, the camping site hereby permitted shall be used for no more than five pitches at any one time.

Reason

To limit the scale of the development in order to preserve the special landscape character of the AONB and AGLV, the openness of the Green Belt and to prevent adverse highway and neighbour amenity impact in accordance with Policies RE2, RE3, ST1 and TD1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018.

3. Condition

No amplified or recorded music shall be played on the site.

Reason

To prevent noise pollution and to preserve the tranquillity of the AONB/AGLV in accordance with Policies RE3 and TD1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 and Retained Policies LT4, D1 and RD7 of the Local Plan (2002).

4. Condition

Prior to April 2022, the following matters shall be provided on site in accordance with details which have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority

- 1) Refuse and recycling storage
- 2) Facilities and infrastructure for the provision of clean potable water.

Once provided, that matters shall be retained in the approved form for the lifetime of the development.

Reason

To provide suitable facilities and service infrastructure to support the development in accordance with Policies TD1 and ICS1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018.

5. Condition

The three tents (i.e. not the two existing yurts) shall be taken down and removed from site by 1st October each year and shall not be put up again until 1st April the following year. When tents are first erected in 2022, and each year thereafter, the tents used shall be green in colour.

Reason

To preserve the special character and landscape of the AONB/AGLV in accordance with Policy RE3 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018.

6. Condition

This is a personal permission and the use consented shall not be operated unless by the applicant (Mr Edward Hutley) or his first degree relatives, staff or household members. The site shall remain part of the existing holding at Slades Farm and not be separately transferred or sold.

Reason

To ensure that the established management of the site to mitigate harm to the AONB/AGLV and neighbour amenity continues in accordance with Policies RE3 and TD1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 and Retained Policies LT4, D1 and RD7 of the Local Plan (2002).

7. Condition

No fixed external artificial lighting shall be provided to provided to serve the development other than in accordance with details which have been previously submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason

To prevent an adverse impact on the dark skies which contribute to the special character of the AONB and AGLV in accordance with Policy RE3 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018.

8. Condition

The proposed vehicular access to Thorncombe Street hereby approved shall be provided with visibility zones in accordance with the approved plans, Drawing No. 20067-01, and thereafter the visibility zones shall be kept permanently clear of any obstruction over 1m high.

Reason

To ensure highway safety in accordance with Policy ST1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018.

9. Condition

The development hereby approved shall not operate for the 2022 season or thereafter unless and until space has been laid out within the site in accordance with the approved plans, Drawing No. 20067-01, for vehicles to be parked and for vehicles to turn so that they may enter and leave the site in forward gear. Thereafter the parking and turning areas shall be retained and maintained for their designated purposes.

Reason

To ensure sufficient parking provision and prevent landscape impact through unregulated soft surface parking in accordance with Policies ST1 and RE3 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018.

10. Condition

The development hereby approved shall not be operated for the 2022 season and thereafter unless and until at least two of the proposed parking spaces are provided with a fast-charge Electric Vehicle charging point (current minimum requirements - 7 kw Mode 3 with Type 2 connector - 230v AC 32 Amp single phase dedicated supply) in accordance with a scheme to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter retained and maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason

To ensure the use of sustainable transport is encouraged in accordance with Policy ST1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018.

INFORMATIVES:

1. The Council confirms that in assessing this planning application it has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the requirements of Paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.
2. It is recommended that the applicant ensure that any necessary licences under the Public Health act 1936 are obtained prior to the re-commencement of glamping operations in 2022.
3. The permission hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out any works on the highway. The applicant is advised that prior approval must be obtained from the Highway Authority before any works are carried out on any footway, footpath, carriageway, or verge to form a vehicle crossover or to install dropped kerbs. Please see www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/road-permits-and-licences/vehicle-crossovers-or-dropped-kerbs.
4. It is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that the electricity supply is sufficient to meet future demands and that any power balancing technology is in place if required. Please refer to: <http://www.beama.org.uk/resourceLibrary/beama-guide-to-electric-vehicle-infrastructure.html> for guidance and further information on charging modes and connector types.