

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Application No: 2006/623 | | Application Type: Full | |
| Proposal: | Erection of 8 Chalets in Connection with Existing Equestrian Centre | Location: | Croft Top Farm Stonefold Village Rising Bridge |
| Report of: | Development Control Team Leader | Status: | For Publication |
| Report to: | Development Control Committee | Date: | 9 th January 2007 |
| Applicant: | Mr. K Holden | Determination Expiry Date: | 1 st JAN 2007 |
| Agent: | Janet Dixon Town Planners | | |

REASON FOR REPORTING

| | |
|---|-----|
| Outside Officer Scheme of Delegation | Yes |
| Member Call-In | No |
| Name of Member: | |
| Reason for Call-In: | |
| More than 3 objections received | Yes |

Other (please state)

HUMAN RIGHTS

The relevant provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights have been taken into account in the preparation of this report, particularly the implications arising from the following rights: -

Article 8

The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

Article 1 of Protocol 1

The right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property.

APPLICATION DETAILS

1.1 The Site and the Proposal

The application site forms part of Croft Top Farm which lies to the east of Kings Highway, Stonefold Village, Rising Bridge. The site itself lies to the south of the main car park and complex at Croft Top Equestrian Centre and an earth bund. The site is immediately surrounded by fields to the west, south and east some

of which are enclosed and use for grazing horses. In the distance to the south-west and north-west stand small clusters of houses.

The site lies within the designated Countryside on the Rossendale Local Development Plan.

A previous application, 2006/337, proposed the erection of 12 chalets to be used in connection with visitors to the Equestrian Centre. However, the applicant withdrew the application to address a number of Officer concerns.

The current application is the result of pre-application discussions with the case officer and as such the application seeks to justify the need for the chalets, minimise its visual impact on the Countryside and minimise the development's footprint. The red edge site has been scaled back markedly as the applicant does not now propose to use the field to the south as a recreation area, so the red line now only encloses the site of the chalets and a narrow access road. The applicant has stated a willingness to be bound by a condition restricting the use of the chalets only to people using the Equestrian Centre.

Following requests in a letter from the case officer, the agent's letter of 1st December 2006 contained the following:

- The title of the application should now read "Proposed Chalets to be Used in Connection with Equestrian Centre"
- The chalets will be drained by a connection to the public sewer which will be underground therefore causing no visual impact
- Full topographic survey and finished floor levels of the chalets which show them to be as close to the existing ground level as possible.
- The chalets will be serviced by a firm of cleaners and the bins will be emptied regularly into the main bin storage area to the north of the chalets
- Parking will be provided in the main car park although 2 chalets will have disabled parking bays
- The applicant has committed to laying a crushed stone finish on the access road to the Centre and to tidying the site by rationalising the storage of materials.

1.2 Relevant Planning History

2006/337 – Erection of 12 Holiday Chalets - Withdrawn

1.3 Policy Context

National Planning Context

PPS7 – Sustainable Development In Rural Areas
PPG21 - Tourism

Regional Planning Policy

RPG 13 now forming the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North-West

Lancashire Joint Structure Plan

Policy 5 – Development Outside of Principal Urban Areas, Main Towns and Key Service Centres

Policy 19 – Tourism Development

Policy 21 – Lancashire’s Natural and Manmade Heritage

Rossendale Local Plan

DS 5 – Development Outside the Urban Boundary and Green Belt

C 8 – Countryside Recreation

DC 1 – Development Criteria

DC 2 – Landscaping

DC 4 – Materials

2. **INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS**

Environmental Health – no comments to make on this application.

2.1 **EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS**

Lancashire County Council

Strategic Planning and Landscape – the scheme is considered to be in general conformity with the Structure Plan although the form of tree planting should be made to look more natural and less rigid whilst the access tracks should be laid in locally appropriate stone. Further details are required in relation to the impact on ecology.

Highways – Kings Highway has been widened and there are no further comments regarding this application.

North-West Tourism Initiative – copy a letter dated 6th April 2006 stating that tourism in East Lancashire will benefit from Mr Holden’s development for holiday accommodation. It does not specifically relate to the current scheme.

Rossendale Leisure Trust – a copy of a letter dated 26th April 2006 relating to a scheme for 12 chalets. Again it does not specifically relate to the current scheme.

British Horse Society – a copy of a letter dated 12th April 2006 received offering support for a scheme for 12 chalets. Again this does not relate to the specific scheme.

Holcombe Hunt Pony Club – email dated 13th November 2006 support the proposal as it would create opportunities for their members and would boost the local economy.

Rochdale & District Riding Club – an undated letter received offering support to the further diversification away from dairy farming. A phone call was received

from a member of the governing body suggesting that the letter had been sent without their approval.

Letter received from Janet Anderson MP requesting that the support for the scheme that herself and Greg Pope MP both gave to the previous scheme, be taken into account.

3. REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 Site Notice posted 14/11/2006 and 13 letters sent notifying neighbours of the scheme. 4 letters have been received objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Objections to the previous proposal still stand which include:
 - Increased traffic on inadequate roads
 - Noise and disturbance during the evening when events are running
- New Tannoy system louder than previously
- Loss of Green Belt agricultural land
- Will set a precedent for future developments
- Increased traffic
- Highway safety
- Smells from horse manure
- Noise and disturbance from visitors
- The local economy will not benefit
- Loss of visual amenity
- The existing facility has a cumulatively negative impact on the local economy
- Proposal conflicts with local transport policies
- That granting consent would lead to the chalets being occupied on a more permanent basis.

4. REPORT

4.1 The main considerations of the application are the principle of the development in this location, its impact on the character of the surrounding area, on residential amenity, highway safety and ecology.

4.2 PPS 7 states the following:

“Tourist and visitor facilities

35. The provision of essential facilities for tourist visitors is vital for the development of the tourism industry in rural areas. Local planning authorities should:

(i) plan for and support the provision of general tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres. Where new or additional facilities are required, these should normally be provided in, or close to, service centres or villages;

(ii) allow appropriate facilities needed to enhance visitors' enjoyment, and/or improve the financial viability, of a particular countryside feature or attraction, providing they will not detract from the attractiveness or importance of the feature, or the surrounding countryside.

36. Wherever possible, tourist and visitor facilities should be housed in existing or replacement buildings, particularly where they are located outside existing settlements. Facilities requiring new buildings in the countryside may be justified where the required facilities are needed in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction; they meet the criteria in paragraph 35(ii); and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available for re-use.

Tourist accommodation

37. The Government expects most tourist accommodation requiring new buildings to be located in, or adjacent to, existing towns and villages.

38. The conversion of suitable existing rural buildings to provide hotel and other serviced accommodation should be allowed, taking into account the policies on the re-use of rural buildings in paragraphs 17 and 18. Similarly, planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to proposed extensions to existing tourist accommodation where the scale of the extension is appropriate to its location and where the extension may help to ensure the future viability of such businesses.”

It is therefore necessary to balance the needs of the Centre against the requirement to protect the visual amenity of the open Countryside.

- 4.3 The proposed chalets would be ancillary to the existing use at Croft Top Farm and the description of the application has been amended to reflect this. Structure plan policy gives general support for farm diversification and tourism uses in the Countryside and the County have confirmed that the scheme is considered to be in general conformity with the Structure Plan. A condition is intended to be imposed limiting the use of the chalets to only those people who are also attending events at the Centre. As such, the principle of the development is considered acceptable.
- 4.4 The visual impact of the development has been mitigated in a number of ways, firstly the materials are intended to be dark in colour and reflect a temporary use so as not to appear conspicuous or permanent. The levels for the chalets have been kept as close to existing ground level as possible, are shielded on the north side by a bund and to the south a belt of tree planting is proposed. The land falls away steeply to the west which owing to its drop and a manege built on a terrace in the land, means that views of the chalets would be mostly obscured. A condition should be imposed for a detailed tree planting scheme to be submitted and approved. It is therefore considered that the character of the surrounding area would not be harmed by the proposed development.
- 4.5 The proposed chalets are some distance from the nearest residential properties giving ample separation distances. The proposed use would be ancillary to the main centre and as such by its intensity and nature would not incur a material

loss of residential amenity in the area over above the existing context. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of residential amenity.

- 4.6 The proposed chalets would be ancillary to the existing Centre and are in essence intended to enable people to stay on the site and could therefore be seen to actually reduce traffic movements. The erection of the chalets would not in themselves generate a material increase in traffic above the existing levels. The County Highways has no additional comments to make on the application and it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable in terms of highway matters.
- 4.7 The character of the existing site would initially suggest that there is little wildlife value or interest in the site, given the artificial bund, track and grazing land. Nevertheless a condition requesting a habitat survey be conducted prior to the commencement of development on site, can be imposed.
- 4.8 Of the objections raised by local residents not already addressed by the preceding assessment, none are considered sufficient to outweigh a recommendation for approval.

5. **CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The application is acceptable in terms of its principle and its impact on visual and residential amenity and highway safety. Conditions should be imposed covering the occupancy of the chalets, a habitat survey and landscape scheme.

6. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 That the application be approved subject to conditions.

REASONS FOR APPROVAL

The proposed development accords with Lancashire Joint Structure Plan and Local Plan policies in principle and in terms of visual and residential amenity as well as highway and is therefore recommended for approval. There are no other considerations which outweigh this finding.

CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase 2004 Act

2. The development hereby approved shall be constructed in strict accordance with the approved plans numbers TRI-0118 Sheet 1 Rev B, Sheet 2 Rev A, Sheet 3 Rev A and Sheet 4 Rev A.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of design.

3. All materials to be used in the elevations and roof of the proposed development shall be as stated on the application form and approved drawings and shall not be varied without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to protect the character of the Countryside.

4. A landscaping scheme, to include the species, size, and location of the trees forming the screen planting to the south of the chalets, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. It shall be implemented not later than 12 months from the date the building(s) is first occupied; and any trees or shrubs removed, dying or becoming severely damaged or becoming severely diseased within two years of planting shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of a similar size or species to those originally required to be planted to the written satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To secure the satisfactory development of the site and in the interests of visual amenity.

5. Prior to the commencement of development on site, the applicant or successor in title, shall an ecology assessment to the Local Planning Authority to be approved in writing. The recommendations of the assessment shall be implemented as recommended and shall thereafter be maintained for as long as the development remains in existence.

Reason: To ensure the ecological interests on or near the site are not harmed.

6. The Chalets hereby approved shall only be used by people attending events held at the Croft Top Equestrian Centre as overnight accommodation. The buildings shall be used for no other purpose which includes use for holiday letting.

Reason: To ensure the chalets are used for their intended purpose as ancillary accommodation to the Equestrian Centre in the interests of protecting the Countryside from unnecessary development, of visual amenity and ecology.

7. Within 3 months of the Chalets hereby approved ceasing their use as ancillary overnight accommodation, they shall be removed from the site and the ground returned to fallow ground.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the Countryside from unnecessary development, visual amenity and ecology.

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Contact Officer | |
| Name | Adrian Harding |
| Position | Senior Planning Officer |
| Service / Team | West Area Team – Development Control |
| Telephone | 01706 238646 |
| Email address | adrianharding@rossendalebc.gov.uk |

