

Woodbury 07/1714/COU
(Woodbury and Lymptone) (Full)

Target Date: 13.08.2007

Applicant: GB House and Sons Limited

Location: Venmore Farm
Woodbury

Proposal: Temporary change of use of land to form access

CONSULTATIONS

County Highway Authority

The Highways Authority considers the principle of the application to be acceptable subject to conditions relating to surfacing and drainage at the access point and has recommended conditions to this effect. The Highways Authority has also suggested a condition could be imposed requiring all access to the site to use this access track as opposed to the existing access serving the farm yard to the north.

PARISH COUNCIL

Recommends Approval, subject to the reinstatement on completion of the pipeline and removal of all hardcore and other construction materials

WARD MEMBER(S)

No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

1 letter of support received

Summary of reasons for support:

- The use proposed is linked to the gas pipe work to the north of the site which is in the national interest.
- Any temporary local inconvenience is outweighed by the longer term benefits to the region of the gas pipe works.
- Does not support any proposal to require the caravans to be re-positioned within the site due to their limited visual impact and the temporary nature of this.

PLANNING POLICIES

Government Guidance

- PPS 1 - Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS 7 – Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPG 13 – Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport

Devon County Structure Plan (2001-2016)

- CO6 – Quality of New Development
- TR10 – Strategic Road Network

East Devon Local Plan (1995-2011)

- D1 – Design and Local Distinctiveness
- S5 – Countryside Protection
- TA7 – Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The application site relates to a linear strip of agricultural land sited on elevated land to the rear of Venmore Cottages. A temporary hardcore access track has been created which runs from an access onto the local road further to the east (The access itself having been granted approval under application 06/0445/FUL). The site is to the south west of Woodbury in an area of sporadic residential development outside of the built-up-area boundary. The land is not subject to any specific landscape designations and is relatively level. To the north of the site are a number of residential properties that front onto the classified road that runs east –west to the north of them.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal seeks planning permission for the temporary change of use of the land to form the access to the associated temporary caravan site (subject of application 07/1105/COU) which is discussed in a separate report to Committee (see previous item).

CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

Comments

It is understood that permission is sought for a temporary period only, up until the end of December 2007. The application explains that the proposed track is required to serve as access to the caravans stationed on the western side of the field for and used by workers in conjunction with the laying of a new gas line in the area (part of which is on land to the north of the site, on the opposite side of the road serving the site). This work is being carried out by Laing O'Rourke on behalf of National Grid. The main issues in the determination of the application relate to the principle of the proposed use, the landscape and visual impact of this use, the effect on highway safety and the impact on neighbouring residential amenity. The granting of any permission would represent a departure from policy as the site lies in open countryside and where the proposal does not comply with any specific policies that permit such uses.

The principle of the proposed use

This proposal is inextricably linked to the proposal for the stationing of temporary residential caravans on the adjoining site, in that access is required to enable the removal and stationing of caravans on the site and to allow access by occupiers of those caravans. It was suggested to the applicant that they include the access in the application for the caravan use but a separate application has been received. The caravan use is clearly contrary to policy in that it relates to the provision of residential accommodation outside of a recognized settlement where it is remote from services and therefore unsustainable. However, it could be argued that there is a need for this type of accommodation in conjunction with the gas line works in the area and that in terms of sustainability, housing the workers in an area in close proximity to the site of their work has less impact in terms of vehicle journeys than if they were to reside in lodgings or accommodation elsewhere.

Visual/landscape impact

The access track runs to the rear of Venmore cottages and by its very nature has a low profile, it is not therefore visible from the main road to the north. It is however visible from the access onto

the local road to the east and from here can be clearly seen running toward the caravan site. In this regard it could be considered that the application has a detrimental affect on the character and appearance of the countryside by virtue of formalising the means of access across the open field. In consideration of the temporary nature of the proposal and the reasons for the application the impact of the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

Impact on residential amenity

The track serving as it does as a means of access to the caravans would result in additional traffic running to the rear of properties at Venmore Cottages. The track though is well screened by hedgerow along the northern boundary of the field and is set approximately 30 metres from the nearest dwellinghouse. Whilst there may be some impact on residential amenity relating to traffic using this track this is unlikely to be significant, particularly when the impact of the main road to the north (which is considerably closer to the residential properties and more heavily trafficked) is taken into account.

Highway safety/access arrangements

The hardcore track has been laid on a temporary basis to allow the stationing of the caravans and to service these. As the only access that leads directly to these caravans, the majority of traffic visiting the site would use this, although there is a permanent access serving the yard to the north from which pedestrian access is available to the caravans. This alternative access onto the road to the north of the site has very substandard visibility in an easterly direction, due to the positioning of a barn fronting directly on to the highway to the immediate east. The highways authority has recommended refusal of the application for the stationing of the caravans on the basis of the highway safety danger resulting from the increased use of this alternative access and has suggested that highway safety could be improved by traffic exiting the site using the temporary hardcore track. The Highways Authority has indicated that the current proposal, if used for all traffic related to the site, would be preferable to the use of the existing northern access and has therefore not raised objection to the temporary use proposed. It has been suggested that this could be a conditional requirement, however, this is not considered necessary as the temporary track is clearly the preferred route and the only one providing direct vehicular access and any condition attempting to ensure such use would be very difficult to enforce and monitor. They have also suggested conditions requiring the first 6 metres of the access track to be suitably hard surfaced and drained to prevent run-off to the highway. The reasons for these suggestions are noted in that at present the use of the access track may be relatively high. However, once the track is removed and the access is returned to serving as a field access only, it is not considered that these would be necessary due to the likely infrequent use of the access from that point onwards.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed access track is required on a temporary basis until December 2007 and is required for use in association with the temporary caravan site (subject of application 07/1105/COU) which in itself is linked to gas pipe work being carried out in the District on land to the north of the site. The proposed track and the site are clearly contrary to policy and permanent proposals would be unacceptable. However, it is considered that a conditional approval up until the end of December 2007 is justified in this case due to the exceptional circumstances relating to the requirements for accommodation to serve the workers on the gas pipeline and which do minimise traffic journeys to and from the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. The use of the temporary access track, in association with the use of adjoining land for the temporary stationing of residential caravans, shall cease and all materials related to the use as such shall be removed and the land restored to its condition prior to the commencement of said use on or before the 31st December 2007.
(Reason - The use is only required for a temporary period in association with the siting of the residential caravan and where a more permanent use would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area.)

Any other conditions as appropriate to be delegated to the Head of Planning and Countryside Services

Reasons for Approval

The temporary access track is required in association with the use of adjoining land for the stationing of caravans which in itself is required for a temporary period only and is associated with works in the vicinity of the site involving the laying of gas pipes for the National Grid, the specific and specialist nature of the work involving a workforce that re-locates to the site for the duration of the works. The siting of the workers caravans in the vicinity of the site therefore reduces unnecessary daily journeys to and from the site.

Note to applicant

CN04 – 5943/02

List of Background Papers

The file containing all letters, consultations, and documents referred to in the report.