

Application Ref: 10/451

Application Type Full
Grid Ref: SN15420702
Applicant Mr C Pendleton, Celtic Holiday Parks
Agent Mr G Blain, Curtis Blain Ltd
Proposal Alterations and Extensions to Existing Clubhouse and Road Improvements
Site Location Meadow House Holiday Park, Summerhill, Amroth

Summary

The current application seeks consent for alterations and extension to the clubhouse to provide increased facilities for both residents on the site and for non residents.

The application has generated a number of objections and the main issues to be considered relate to whether the facilities proposed are reasonably related to the site and its surrounds, whether the scale and design is acceptable and consideration of amenity issues.

There is no objection in principle to the provision of additional facilities at this caravan site to serve both residents on the site and those in the surrounding area. However, there is much concern with the scale and design of the proposal and its impact on both its host building and the character of the area. Furthermore, the proposals will result in adverse harm to the amenities of nearby residents.

The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

Consultee Response

The National Trust (S): Objecting
Amroth Community Council: No objection
Environment Agency Wales: No objection
Transportation & Environment: Conditional Consent

Public Response

7 letters of objections have been received. The main issues raised are:

- There are misleading references on the plans (in particular reference to Meadow House apartments)
- The scale of the development is excessive
- There will be a loss of view
- There will be an impact on local businesses

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- There will be increased noise (complaints have already been made on the noise emanating from the existing premises)
- Light pollution will increase

Policies considered

LDP Policy 01 - National Park purposes and duty
LDP Policy 07 - Countryside
LDP Policy 08 - Special Qualities
LDP Policy 15 - Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
LDP Policy 29 - Sustainable Design
LDP Policy 30 - Amenity
LDP Policy 32 - Surface Water Drainage
LDP Policy 40 - Site Facilities on Tent, Chalet and Caravan Sites
LDP Policy 52 - Sustainable Transport
PPW4 Chapter 04 - Planning for Sustainability
PPW4 Chapter 05 - Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast
PPW4 Chapter 08 - Transport
PPW4 Chapter 11 - Tourism, Sport and Recreation
PPW4 Chapter 12 - Infrastructure and Services
SPG03 - Sustainable Design
SPG08 - Validation of Planning Applications
TAN 12 - Design
TAN 13 - Tourism
TAN 15 - Development and Flood Risk
TAN 18 - Transport
TAN 22 - Planning for Sustainable Buildings

Officer's Appraisal

Background

Meadow House Caravan Park is a well established caravan park situated outside the settlement of Amroth adjacent to the public highway leading from Wiseman's Bridge to Summerhill.

Planning permission was granted in 2000 for alterations and extensions to the clubhouse on this site and for alterations to the clubhouse reception (NP/99/536 and 00/557).

Current Application

The current application seeks consent for alterations and extension to the clubhouse to provide increased facilities for both residents on the site and for non residents. The extensions would result in a three storey building further

utilising the existing basement which currently provides a games room, and extending into the roof space. The application states that the existing ridge height will not be exceeded. The development will provide facilities including a swimming pool, games room, treatment rooms, bar, restaurant and board room. An outside terrace on two levels would also be included in the proposals. The existing building comprises two main pitched roof elements extending in a northeast – southwest direction with a connecting roof at the eastern end of the building. The proposal would provide a glazed link between the two main elements and increase the floor area to project over the existing outside patio level. A further terrace level would be provided at the western end of the building. The existing and proposed plans are attached to this report.

The proposals also include the relocation of a children's play area to the south west of the building and the provision of a new roundabout within the site.

Officers Appraisal

This application is on the agenda at the request of a member of this Authority due to the public interest in the proposals.

The main issues arising from this proposal are whether the facilities proposed are reasonably related to the site and its surrounds, whether the scale and design is acceptable and consideration of amenity issues.

Extent of Facilities

Policy 40 of the LDP allows for the development of facilities on caravan sites, provided that the facility is not already available in the vicinity and is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. The vitality and viability of retailing and services in nearby centres should not be adversely affected.

The site is located within easy walking distance to the village of Summerhill. This is listed in the LDP as a rural centre partly within the National Park. The applicant has indicated that the new clubhouse facilities will be available to non-residents, thus providing additional facilities for Summerhill and Amroth. In view of the scale of the facilities proposed it is not considered that they would detrimentally affect the vitality of these centres, and that they would complement the limited facilities available in Summerhill.

In addition to the above, criterion e of policy 7 of the LDP allows for tourist attractions or recreational activity in the countryside where the need to locate there is essential. This cross references criterion d of policy 35 which requires that visitor attractions and recreational and leisure activities outside Local and Tourism centres will need to demonstrate why such a location is essential. In this instance, the facilities are clearly to serve the residents of the caravan park, in the main, and therefore the need for them to be located within the park is evident.

As such it is considered that the facilities proposed are reasonably related to the site and the surrounding area and are acceptable in principle.

Scale and Design

As set out above the proposal seeks to extend the building through, in the main, an extension to the south west side of the existing structure. This will involve both an extension in the projection of the two existing gabled wings, the infilling of the area between the two extended wings and the conversion of the existing roof space to provide additional areas for the restaurant and board room. Further expansion of the basement area will also take place. Externally it is proposed to provide a terrace on the two upper levels.

The existing building is situated on falling ground from the north east to the south west. However, there is limited information submitted with the application to identify both existing and proposed ground levels, and whilst cross sections have been provided these do not fully illustrate the proposals. Notwithstanding this, however there is much concern with the scale and design of the proposed extensions.

Whilst the principle of extending the clubhouse facility is acceptable, the design and scale would in your officer's view cause significant visual intrusion. The applicant has stated that the building would not exceed the existing ridge height, however, the massing of the building to connect the two wings, coupled with the extent of glazing, elevated nature of the extended building and the differing styles would be at odds with the relatively modest scale of the existing building. The glazed link and the additional extensive glazing on the south west elevation, taken together with the three storey nature of the proposal, would be unduly dominating and result in a development that was out of scale and character with the surrounding area.

The applicant's agent has attempted to address these concerns through a recent amendment to the scheme. However, whilst this has reduced the projecting element to some extent and removed an area of external balcony, the scale and glazing remain and it is not considered that these amendments overcome the concerns raised above.

As such it is not considered that this proposal can be supported on design grounds.

Amenity

The subject building is situated some distance from neighbouring properties within the confines of the caravan site. The south west boundary is screened by a row of mature conifer trees which are intended to be retained. However, due to the scale of the proposals at such an elevated position, together with the extent of outside terrace area, there is concern at the increased noise and activity that would arise from this proposal. Furthermore, the extensive glazed areas will significantly increase light spillage from this building which at such an elevated level will be highly visible from the surrounding area.

The applicant's agent has indicated that the row of conifer trees will be retained; however these are mature trees of a non-indigenous species and which are not conducive to retention in the longer term. It is therefore considered that the quiet enjoyment of this predominantly rural/residential area would be adversely affected by the intensification of the use of this building and its external seating areas which would be further exacerbated by the removal of this row of trees over time.

In addition, it is intended to relocate the children's play area to the land to the south west of the clubhouse building. No information has been provided with regard to the type of equipment to be provided but the use of this area, close to the rear garden of the adjacent property is likely to add to the additional noise and disturbance not currently experienced by this property. As such it is considered that this proposal will cause adverse harm to the amenities of nearby properties.

Other Matters

The application includes the provision of a new roundabout within the site and the Highways Officer has no objection to this proposal subject to conditions regarding visibility at the junction of the site entrance with the public highway. The roundabout will improve traffic flow within the site and will not cause any significant visual impact.

In relation to sustainable travel, the applicant has submitted details of accessibility of the site. Summerhill has a regular bus service, with links to Saundersfoot and Tenby. Whilst the facilities will benefit the local community the principal trade is likely to be from the caravan park residents. The applicant advises that a car share scheme may be implemented for employees to get to work, and those living close to the park will be encouraged to travel to work by cycle or on foot. With the choice of means of transport available and the very local catchment for this facility this meets the requirements of Policy 52 of the Plan.

It is also noted that there is concern that there is some discrepancy within the plans, in particular in relation to a reference to "Meadow House Apartments". For the avoidance of doubt the applicant's agent has been requested to remove this reference to apartments from the plans.

Previous Permission

The applicant's agent has stated that the permission granted in 2000 is a material consideration in this case. The approved plans for this development are attached to this report. Whilst the approval included an extension of the two gables on the south west side of the building, these were designed at a lower level to the main building and were a subservient element to the main structure. They did not involve any conversion of the roof space nor increase of the basement area. As such, it is not considered that the original approval alters the view of the current proposal which is of a significantly different scale

and mass and for the reasons set out above is considered to be unacceptable.

Conclusions

In conclusion there is no objection in principle to the provision of additional facilities at this caravan site to serve both residents on the site and those in the surrounding area. However, there is much concern with the scale and design of the proposal and its impact on both its host building and the character of the area. Furthermore, the proposals will result in adverse harm to the amenities of nearby residents.

Recommendation

The application is therefore recommended for refusal for the following reasons:

1. Policy 40 of the Local Development Plan requires site facilities on tent, chalet and caravan sites to be, amongst other things, of a scale and design in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. Policies 15 and 29 requires development to not be permitted where it would adversely affect the qualities and special character of the National Park by causing significant visual intrusion and to also have regard to place and local distinctiveness. The proposed alterations and extension to the clubhouse, by virtue of their scale, mass, detailed design and elevated nature would be out of character with the host building and the surrounding area to the detriment of the special qualities of the National Park.
2. Policy 30 of the LDP resists development where it would have an unacceptable impact on amenity particularly where it is of an incompatible scale with its surroundings, the development leads to an increase in traffic, noise or odour or light which has a significant adverse impact and/or the development is visually intrusive. The proposed alterations and extension to the clubhouse, by virtue of their scale, mass, extent of glazing, external terrace areas and elevated nature, together with the outside play area would have a detrimental impact on the amenity and enjoyment of nearby residential properties and on the visual amenities of the area.