DELEGATED REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/06355
Application Type:	Planning Permission

Site Address:	Ridgefield Farm, Green Road, The Ridge, Neston, Wiltshire, SN13 9PW
Proposal:	Proposed mixed use of existing land and caravan to allow its use as a self-contained independent holiday let and for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwellinghouse
Recommendation:	Planning Permission be GRANTED

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks permission for the use of an existing caravan on the site as self-contained independent holiday-let accommodation, or for use as ancillary accommodation to the main dwellinghouse of Ridgefield Farm. The caravan is 10.7m by 3.7m and is of an unspecified (but standard) height. On the basis of the floorplan the structure would meet the legal definition of a 'caravan / mobile-home' and the submitted Planning Statement clearly asserts that the structure is a 'caravan' (for consistency, the structure is referred to as 'caravan' throughout this report). The caravan is sited to the immediate north of the main dwelling by some 15m and is largely screened from the Public Right of Way, as well as the main dwelling, by existing landscaping as well as close-boarded fence.

Although not stated on the form, the caravan is in-situ on the site and the application is thus part-retrospective in nature. Along with other planning irregularities at the site (being dealt with under separate planning processes and applications), the caravan has recently been the subject of discussions with the Local Planning Authority's Enforcement Team. These discussions, along with analysis of historic aerial photography, confirm that the caravan has been in-situ for many years, and indeed the planning history suggests this may have been prior to 2011 (see below).

SITE DESCRIPTION

Green Road is a rural road which runs due south from the junction of Monks Lane / Brockleaze for some 200m before reaching the site entrance. At this point Green Road itself becomes gated and runs on to the south-east to serve as an access to a couple of bonded warehouses some 0.5km further before reaching Goodes Hill after approximately 1km. A separate gate at this point serves as an access to both a barn, as well as running on due south for some 60m as the driveway to serve the collection of land and buildings of Ridgefield Farm.

The site is situated outside of any settlement boundary, is not within any designated area and there are no listed buildings within close proximity of the site; the site is not at risk of flooding.

Public Right of Way (PRoW) CORM27 runs north-south through the site, leaving the public highway at the site entrance to run adjacent to the driveway, past the immediate east of the collection of buildings on the wider site and through to cross the agricultural land to the south of the site. The site itself has a very open aspect and relationship with this PRoW, with no particular screening at the interface, and the buildings on the site all being clearly visible from the PRoW.

POLICIES

Corsham Neighbourhood Plan ('CNP', made Nov.2019)
Policy CNP ED1 – Ecology and Design
Policy CNP E1 – Conserve and Enhance Biodiversity
Policy CNP E2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
Policy CNP E3 – Landscape
Policy CNP HW1 – Green Infrastructure Network
Policy CNP HE1 – Design Quality

Wiltshire Core Strategy ('WCS', Jan.2015)
Core Policy 1 – Settlement Strategy
Core Policy 2 – Delivery Strategy
Core Policy 11 – Spatial Strategy for the Corsham Community Area
Core Policy 39 – Tourist Development
Core Policy 40 – Hotels, Bed and Breakfasts, Guest Houses and Conference Facilities
Core Policy 50 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Core Policy 51 – Landscape
Core Policy 57 – Ensuring high quality design and place shaping
Core Policy 60 – Sustainable Transport
Core Policy 61 – Transport and Development

National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF', Sept.2023)
Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
Section 4 – Decision making
Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy
Section 12 – Achieving well designed places
Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

ISSUES

The issues arising for consideration from this application proposal are as follows:

- the principle of the development
- landscape setting and impact
- access and infrastructure
- highways and parking

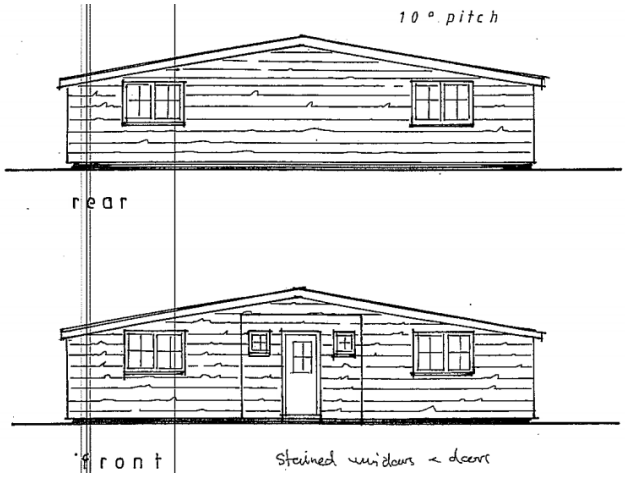
PLANNING HISTORY

The site, along with the wider site and associated land, has been subject to the following applications previously:

- 17/04190/FUL: Retrospective application for the erection of two agricultural buildings – Approved with Conditions – 21/06/2017
- 16/05796/FUL: Two storey side extension to existing dwelling – Withdrawn – 17/11/2016
- N/11/03489/FUL: Erection of One 2 Bedroom Holiday Cabin (Resubmission of 11/02343/FUL) – Refused – 26/04/2012
- N/11/02343/FUL: Erection of One 2 Bedroom Holiday Cabin – Withdrawn – 28/09/2011
- N/08/02265/S73A: Removal of Agricultural Occupancy Condition – Refused – 13/11/2008
- N/96/1850/OL: Erection of Agricultural Dwelling – Approved with Conditions – 04/11/1996
- N/93/01393/FUL: Erection of 2 No mushroom growing rooms – Approved with Conditions – 14/10/1993
- N/93/00729/FUL: Erection of 2 No mushroom growing rooms – Approved with Conditions – 07/07/1993
- N/89/02919/FUL: Proposed Erection of 3 No Polytunnels for Mushroom Farming – Approved with Conditions – 11/12/1989

Planning application N/11/03489/FUL is somewhat relevant to the consideration of this application. That application sought permission for a '2 bedroom holiday cabin' which was proposed to be sited on the same site as this current application, and would be some 10.5m by 6.0m, presenting visually as per the images below:


Illustration of holiday cabin



That application was refused at Committee for reasons of (1) remoteness from services and facilities, and (2) it would result in an incongruous feature in the rural area. The Committee Report for that application notes the intention that this cabin would: *"… be located on the site of the existing mobile home where there is a large concrete apron. The mobile home will be removed from the site."*

It appears from this planning history that, following the refusal of that permission, the mobile home referenced therein has remained on the site.

CONSULTATIONS

Corsham Town Council – No objection

Highways Officer – No objection, but comment as follows:

> *"I note that the site is located outside any settlement framework. There are no local facilities within easy walking distance of the site and little opportunity to travel by means other than the private car and the proposed development would normally attract an adverse highway recommendation on grounds of being in an unsustainable location. However, on the basis that there are overriding planning policies which permit the construction of buildings for tourist accommodation, I would not wish to raise a highway objection to the proposal."*

REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

ASSESSMENT

Under the provisions of section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and the provisions of the Framework (para. 2), applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory development plan in respect of this application consists of the Wiltshire Core Strategy ('WCS', adopted January 2015), the 'saved' policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 ('NWLP', adopted June 2006) and the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan ('CNP' made November 2019).

Principle of development

The site is situated within the open countryside where development is controlled to restrict development within unsustainable locations. CP1: Settlement Strategy of the WCS sets out where sustainable development will take place across the plan period. CP2: Delivery Strategy of the WCS states that other than in circumstances permitted by other policies within the plan, development will not be permitted outside the limits of development.

Of particular relevance is Core Policy 39: Tourist development ('CP39'). The plans, details and photographs show the structure as a mobile home and as such is considered a temporary / movable structure rather than a permanent structure, or 'building'. As such, in the context of Core Policy 39, the proposal falls to be considered as within the category of 'camping and touring caravan sites' as referenced in the final paragraph of CP39. This states that proposals for caravan sites will be supported where the proposals would not adversely impact on the character and appearance of the landscape and would meet the following criteria:

iii. The scale, design and use of the proposal is compatible with its wider landscape setting and would not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape or settlement and would not be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas.

iv. The building is served by adequate access and infrastructure.

v. The site has reasonable access to local services and a local employment base.

The planning issues and considerations raised by these criteria are considered below. Notwithstanding the consideration set out below, given the nature of the site and the planning history it is considered entirely appropriate to ensure any permission is limited to basis of a 'caravan', as formally applied for in the application description.

Landscape setting and impact

The caravan is relatively well-screened from both the Public Right of Way and the existing dwelling by a close-boarded fence and existing mature landscaping in the form of trees. Although the provision of the fence does result in a somewhat incongruous feature within the site, it does provide some privacy for the occupants and, in terms of the impact on the landscape and character and appearance, it does provide a level of screening. Further, the caravan is sited within reasonably close proximity of the main dwelling so in this sense does read in spatial terms as being related to that residential use. These considerations, coupled with the fact that the site is not within any landscape designation, means that the landscape impact arising is limited and the proposal does not give rise to any conflict with Core Policy 51 of the WCS and policy E3 of the CNP.

Amenity

The use of the caravan as ancillary accommodation is not considered to give rise to any specific amenity issue to the occupiers of either the main dwelling or the caravan itself. The siting of the caravan and its distance from other residential properties – the nearest neighbour at Pond Close Farm being located some 150m to the west of the site – means that it is not considered to result in any privacy issues. There are no adverse amenity concerns to neighbouring properties in terms of privacy, light, or noise that would warrant refusal of the application on this basis. Issues relating to construction are not relevant to this application proposal. As such, the application would accord with Core Policy 57.

Access and infrastructure

The site is served by adequate access and given the existing residential use at the main dwelling, is considered to be served by adequate infrastructure. There are no specific drainage constraints at the site and although no details of treatment of foul sewage or drainage have been provided, given the fact that the caravan has been present on the site for many years it is not considered determinative that that these issues be detailed at this stage.

Highways and parking

Despite reservations regarding the lack of facilities within easy walking distance and the consequent concerns regarding the unsustainable location of the site, the Highways Officer has raised no highway objection to the proposal. The proposal is modest in scale and there is sufficient parking space available on the site and the modest scale of the proposal means that the highways impact arising will be minimal. On this basis, highways and parking impacts would not

warrant refusal of the application, which is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Core Strategy, namely CP60 and CP61.

Other matters

Matters relating to the agricultural tie on the main dwelling are not part of the scope of this planning application. It is also to be noted that the hardsurfacing around the commercial buildings would constitute 'development' and planning permission has not at this stage been sought for these works.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above considerations, and when assessed against advice set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, the relevant legislation, the considerations of Core Policies 1, 2, 39, 51, 57, 60 and 61 of the WCS and policy E3 of the CNP, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable. On this basis this application is recommended for approval, subject to appropriate Conditions.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

1 The works for which Planning Permission is hereby granted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, amended by the Planning and compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
LPC.5462 EX 301 Location Plan
LPC.5462 EX 102 Existing Site Plan
LPC.5462 EX 302 Proposed Site Plan

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3 The stationing of a single caravan hereby permitted is only for the mixed use as holiday accommodation and for purposes ancillary to the dwellinghouse or incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse; that dwellinghouse being the existing Ridgefield Farmhouse. No person shall occupy the caravan as holiday accommodation for a continuous period of more than 30 days in any calendar year and it shall not be re-occupied by the same person/s within 28 days following the end of that period.

REASON: This site is in a position where the Local Planning Authority, having regard to the reasonable standards of residential amenity, access, and planning policies

pertaining to the area, would not permit wholly separate permanent residential accommodation.

4 The single caravan hereby approved shall remain as a structure falling within the legal definition of ‘caravan’ and shall not, at any future time, be converted into a permanent structure or building.

REASON: This site is in a position where the Local Planning Authority, having regard to the reasonable standards of residential amenity, access, and planning policies pertaining to the area, would not permit a permanent residential building.

5 INFORMATIVE TO APPLICANT:
The applicant is advised that this permission authorises a change of use and the specified development only and does not authorise any further works or development that may require planning permission.

6 INFORMATIVE TO APPLICANT:
The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Habitats Regulations (2010) it is an offence to disturb or harm any protected species, or to damage or disturb their habitat or resting place. Please note that this consent does not override the statutory protection afforded to any such species. In the event that your proposals could potentially affect a protected species you should seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and consider the need for a licence from Natural England prior to commencing works. Please see Natural England’s website for further information on protected species.