

REPORT TO THE NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	25 April 2012		
Application Number	N.11.03489.FUL		
Site Address	Ridgefield Farm, Green Road, The Ridge, Corsham, SN13 9PW		
Proposal	Erection of one two-bedroom holiday cabin (re-submission of 11.02343)		
Applicant	Mr Brokenshire		
Town/Parish Council	Corsham		
Electoral Division	Corsham Without & Box Hill	Unitary Member	Councillor Dick Tonge
Grid Ref	387604 167792		
Type of application	FULL		
Case Officer	Mrs E Pickard	01249 706 637	emma.pickard@wiltshire.gov.uk

This application has been submitted to the Committee at the request of Councillor Dick Tonge to consider the benefits of tourism to the rural community.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the above application and to recommend that planning permission is REFUSED.

2. Main Issues

- The principle of development in relation to structure plan tourism policies RLT9 and RLT10, and local plan policy C3 (Development Control Core Policy) with particular regard to the sustainability of the proposal; and
- Design and appearance of the holiday cabin and impact on the rural environment in relation to policies C3, RLT9, RLT10 and NE15 (The Landscape Character of the Countryside).

3. Site Description

Ridgefield Farm is located in the open countryside approximately 2miles to the south of the centre of Corsham and approximately 1mile from the edge of the town. The property is remote and is accessed via a long no-through-road which leads to a locked gate. Once through this gate (and past a small wood on the right hand side) the dwelling is approximately 160metres to the south.

The house is modern and was permitted in 1999 as an agricultural workers dwelling in connection with a mushroom farming business. The business was established through the 1990's when 5 large polytunnels were erected on the site. The polytunnels remain approximately 45 metres to the north of the dwelling.

The dwelling has an agricultural tie and a recent application (2008) to remove the tie was unsuccessful. Conditions on the original permission for the dwelling also stipulate that the dwelling is not to be extended or ancillary buildings erected in the garden without the prior grant of planning permission.

Mushroom farming ceased on the site a number of years ago. The applicant, Mr Brokenshire, entered into a partnership agreement approximately five years ago with the previous owner (Mr Mason) and the site is now owned in a 50/50 partnership by both parties. Mr Brokenshire and Mr Mason both live at Ridgefield Farm.

The application states that a farm poultry and game business was set up on the site by the partnership and had been rearing and selling pheasants, ducks and turkeys. Due to Mr Mason's ill health the turkey production was scaled down last year. (Officers noted that as at December 2011 there were no animals in connection with this business on the site.) Due to this, and the low site acreage (the entire site is 3.2 hectares/8 acres) the partnership has decided to branch out into holiday lets. In the interim, their intention is to begin raising turkeys and calves and as stated in a letter to the planning department in February, will take delivery of one batch of young calves.

Between the dwelling and polytunnels is sited a large mobile home. Permission was granted in 1994 and renewed in 1999 for a temporary agricultural workers dwelling within the site, however, this was not in the current position of the mobile home but was further to the south on the site of the dwelling. A condition required removal of this mobile building on or before the 15th January 2002. There are no permissions for the mobile home currently on site.

The applicant states that the mobile home was on site at the time the partnership was formed and was used as a rest room for workers during the turkey dressing season. However, at present, it is occupied by a friend of the applicant who lives there with her child. This is described as a temporary arrangement.

Public footpath 27 crosses the site from north to south, although due to the gates being locked was inaccessible at the time of the officer's site visit.

4. Relevant Planning History		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
11.02343.ful	Erection of a 2 bedroom holiday cabin	Wdn
08.00612.ful	Removal of agricultural occupancy condition	Wdn
08.02265.ful	Removal of agricultural occupancy condition	Ref
99.02102.REM	Agricultural workers dwelling	Ref
99.00501.ful	Agricultural workers dwelling	Per
99.00459.ful	Temporary mobile home (renewal)	Per
98.02588.REM	Reserved matter pursuant to 96.01850.out	Per
96.01850.out	Erection of agricultural dwelling	Per
96.00928.ful	2 mushroom growing rooms	Per
94.00411.ful	Temporary agricultural workers dwelling	Per
93.01393.ful	2 mushroom growing rooms	Per
93.00729	Mushroom growing rooms	Per
89.00291.ful	3 Polytunnels for mushroom farm	Per

4. Proposal

Permission is sought for the erection of a chalet style holiday cabin with a floor area of 63m² (10.5 metres x 6 metres). Internally would be a hallway/study area, kitchen/living area, bathroom and two double bedrooms. The external walls would be constructed of white pine boards and the roof of timber shingles. The roof pitch is very shallow with a maximum ridge height of 2.85metres.

The applicant has stated his intention that the cabin would be for short term holiday lets for weekly bookings, is not intended to be a second home and will remain in the ownership, and be managed by, the applicant.

The cabin will 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.

5. Consultations

Corsham Civic Society strongly object to the building plans.

Highways state that the road network will accommodate the likely vehicle movements and the site as a whole will accommodate the required parking, however, the site is located remote from services, employment opportunities and is unlikely to be well served by public transport and therefore raise an objection on sustainability grounds.

Rights of way officer confirmed the location of the footpath and commented that footpath 27 should not be affected by this development but asks that if there is increased volume of traffic for the holiday cabins, to be aware of pedestrians using the route and if there are any further concerns to contact the Senior Rights of Way Warden for the area, Steve Leonard.

Ecology - Jon Taylor consulted on 5th April regarding Newts.

7. Publicity

The application was advertised by site notice, press advert and neighbour consultation.

One letter has been received and raises the following points;

- The amount of traffic this would bring to very narrow lanes and houses directly on the road;
- Road usage for horse riding, walking and cycling is extensive therefore additional traffic would be dangerous as there is no room for footpaths;
- Opening of a closed lane; and
- There are great crested newts at the pond in Monks Lane and the surrounding area therefore any disturbance would be detrimental to their environment.

8. Planning Considerations

Sustainability

The adopted Wiltshire Structure Plan 2016 policies against which applications for tourist development should be considered are RLT9 and RLT10. These policies recognise that in order to build the county's tourism it is important, generally, to extend the availability of tourist accommodation. At a strategic level it is the aim of tourism policy to increase the amount of tourist accommodation within Wiltshire, however, there is a need to comply with other adopted policies.

Policy RLT9 advises that serviced accommodation should be concentrated in towns and villages. Elsewhere, accommodation should be limited to conversion of existing buildings or be related in size and scale, character and style to appropriate existing buildings.

The Department for Communities and Local Government 'Good Practice Guide for Planning and Tourism' Annex A (Tourist Accommodation) advises that serviced accommodation (such as that proposed) should be provided in the most sustainable location wherever possible and that tourist development in more rural areas may be better located in terms of sustainability objectives in, or at the edge of, the centre of a village or small town.

The accommodation would be constructed in a location where there is no existing tourist facility on site be it destination, attraction or existing tourist accommodation, which the proposal could serve, support or extend. Equally, the site is too distant from local tourist magnets such as Bath, Castle Combe or Lacock to be used as a justification for development. There are no public transport or service facilities in the area and having regard to this and the above policy advice, it is the view of your Officers that the location of the proposed tourist facility on a remote rural site would be constructed in an unsustainable location that would be contrary to the aims of national and local planning policy.

Character and Appearance

The agent asks that the erection of the cabin is considered in the context of the existing mobile home on the site, and its consequent removal if the cabin is permitted. However, as the mobile home does not have the benefit of planning permission officers give this little weight in the consideration of the proposal.

In recent years some soft landscaping has been introduced immediately around the site. Although the photographs submitted with the application show lush beech hedging this was very sparse on a site visit in December. It is the case this will provide some visual 'softening' of the eastern elevation of the site, for as long as the landscaping remains. Additionally, there is a wooded area to the north and mature boundary to the west and south of the boundary of Ridgefield Farm. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that the building will not be entirely screened and that there would be distant views of the cabin and direct views from the public footpath next to the site.

It is considered that the size and form of the building, with its wide span and 'cabin' style appearance would be an alien feature alongside the modest agricultural workers dwelling and polytunnels which are an agricultural feature. The proposal would not meet the criteria within the relevant policies listed above which require development to be related in scale, character and style to existing buildings and to conserve and enhance the landscape of north Wiltshire.

9. Conclusion

Due to the remote nature of the site and lack of public transport and local services the proposed development would be located in an unsustainable location. Additionally, the proposed cabin would not be related in scale, character or style to existing buildings and would not conserve or enhance the rural character of the area.

10. Recommendation

Planning Permission is REFUSED for the following reason:

- 1) The proposed development would be located in a rural area remote from public transport, local services and employment opportunities and would constitute unsustainable development contrary to the aims of policies RLT9 and RLT10 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 and policy C3 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.
- 2) The proposed development by reason of its scale, character and size would be an incongruous feature in this rural area and would not conserve or enhance the rural character of the area contrary to policies C3 and NE15 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 and policies RLT9 and RLT10 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016.

