

**Site Address: Camping Site At The
Manor House, South Newington Road,
Barford St Michael**

14/01568/F

Ward: Deddington

District Councillor: Cllr Bryn Williams

Case Officer: Gemma Magnuson

Recommendation: Approve

Applicant: Mrs Barbara Alt

Application Description: Variation of Condition 3 of 04/00308/F – Removal of Condition 3 to allow year round usage of the camping facilities at the Warren and East Paddock

Committee Referral: Major Development

Committee date: 30 October 2014

1. Site Description and Proposed Development

1.1 The proposal covers two separate sites that form part of an existing camping site at The Manor House, a Grade II* listed building situated west of the village of Barford St Michael. The gardens associated with The Manor are bounded by a Grade II listed wall, and Grade I listed St Michaels Church is situated across the road to the south-east. One of the sites is also within the Barford St Michael Conservation Area. Notable/ UK BAP Priority and Section 41 Species the European Water Vole, Variable Damselfly, Scarce Chaser and Common Swift have been identified in the area. The sites are within an Area of High Landscape Value. The site is of high Archaeological Value as part of the Barford Old Rectory Site. The land is potentially contaminated.

1.2 The two sites are described as the Warren and East Paddock. The Warren is the smaller of the two, situated across the road from The Manor House to the south. The land is elevated and limited views of the caravans are obtainable from the road. The Warren is positioned directly behind two dwellings; Cherry Warren and Fir Warren, and adjacent to allotments, all owned by the applicant. The East Paddock is the larger of the two, situated to the west of The Manor House, in close proximity to the moat and fishing lakes.

1.3 The sites have been used for camping and caravanning since 1990, although this use was taking place without planning permission up until June 2004 when the use was regularised (ref: 04/00308/F). Condition 3 was attached to the decision that reads as follows:

That no caravan, motor caravan or tent shall occupy the site during the period before 1st March or after 31st October.

Reason - The occupation of the site on a permanent basis by caravans or tents would be contrary to the planning policies of the Council and in order to safeguard the visual amenities and character of the area, in accordance with Policy T8 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan.

1.4 The proposal seeks to remove Condition 3 to enable use of the camping and caravan site all year round.

2. Application Publicity

2.1 The application has been advertised by way of neighbour letter, site notice and press notice. The final date for comment was the 28 October 2014. Three letters were received, all objecting to the application. The following issues were raised (please

note that these have been summarised, refer to file for full versions):

- Already used all year round by caravan dwellers rather than leisure.
- No safeguards against this becoming a travellers site by back door route.
- Why is there a need for this alleviation when there is already a camp owned by same owners opposite this once which is rarely ever full at any time of the year.
- Complaint regarding year round residents at this site has been brushed aside by department.
- Why necessary to alleviate condition 3 when this is in place to prevent exactly the practice highlighted.
- Have owners given a reason why they want alleviation?
- Where will waste (general waste and bodily waste from caravan toilets/showers) from the site going/will go as there appear to be no facilities on the site in question.
- Incorrect stating that the lands used at the campsite are not overlooked by any residence except for those owned by applicant. We have a direct view.
- The Manor House does not appear to have a view of campsite.
- Touring caravan weekend at campsite three weeks ago – noise, caravans in line of vision
- Currently a caravan on site that does not comply with short stay condition.
- If site were to change from short stay to longer stay and eventually a permanent site it would affect the whole character of village.
- The village is rare and special, it has a wonderful charm which should be preserved. An increase in the use of the campsite possibly involving caravans being left parked there all year round would ruin this.
- No economic benefit to village as only shop is on applicants premises.

3. Consultations

- 3.1 Barford St Michael Parish Council states that they have no objections in principle to this application, but some Councillors feel that all screening should be natural vegetation (not Leylandii). A 10m fence does not preserve or visually enhance the amenity.

Cherwell District Council Consultees

- 3.2 Conservation Officer: This camping site is in the Barford Saint Michael Conservation Area and is in the vicinity of a number of listed buildings including :

- Manor Farmhouse (grade 2 *)
- Manor Farmhouse Garden Walls (grade 2)
- Church of Saint Michael (grade 1)

I understand from the documents that the condition in question was deemed necessary because of the reduced screening provided by broad-leafed trees in winter. It was apparent from my site visit that there is little or no screening between the West Paddock/Drive Side area of the campsite and the grade 2* Manor House. If the provision of additional screening was deemed to cancel the need for the condition in question – as set out in the Design and Access statement – I would be concerned by the harm that a high fence (or leylandii) could do to the setting of the Manor Farmhouse and Garden Walls.

- 3.3 Landscape Officer: verbally advises that there are species that could be used to screen the site that would retain their leaves during winter, including hornbeam and beech.

Oxfordshire County Council Consultees

3.4 Highways Officer: no objection.

Other Consultees

3.5 Environment Agency: We have assessed this application as having a low environmental risk and we have no objection to the variation of condition.

3.6 English Heritage: no comments received at time of writing.

4. Relevant National and Local Policy and Guidance

4.1 Development Plan Policy

Adopted Cherwell Local Plan (Saved Policies)

C2:	Protected Species
C7:	Topography and character of landscape
C13:	Area of High Landscape Value
C23:	Positive features of a Conservation Area
C28:	Layout, design and external appearance of new development
C31:	Compatibility with residential area
C33:	Settlement pattern
ENV1:	Environmental protection

4.2 Other Material Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

Planning Practice Guidance

Submission Cherwell Local Plan (January 2014)

The Submission Local Plan has been through public consultation and was submitted to PINs in January 2014 for Examination to take place in June 2014. The Submission Local Plan does not have Development Plan status but is a material planning consideration. The Plan sets out the Council's strategy for the District to 2031. The policies listed below are considered to be material to this case:

SLE3: Supporting Tourism Growth
ESD10: Biodiversity and the natural environment
ESD13: Local landscape protection and enhancement
ESD16: Character of the built environment

5. Appraisal

5.1 The key issues for consideration in this application are:

- Relevant planning history
- Principle of the development
- Visual amenity including setting of listed buildings and Conservation Area
- Highway safety
- Residential amenity
- Other matters

Relevant Planning History

5.2 The only application relevant to the current proposal is 04/00308/F when planning permission was granted for the use of the site for a 42 unit camping and caravan site on 25 June 2004. The permission restricts the number of units to 6 to be sited at Warren Gardens and 36 to be sited on West Paddock and Drive Side. In addition, no caravans, motor caravans or tents are to be stationed anywhere on the land for more than 28 consecutive nights and for a register of occupiers shall be kept and made available for inspection by an authorised officer of the Local Planning Authority at all times.

5.3 The current application seeks to remove Condition 3 that prevents the use of the site before 1st March or after 31 October. The original Officer report states that the reason behind this condition is due to the reduced level of screening in the winter months provided by the hedges and trees in the area.

Principle of Development

5.4 In determining the acceptability of the principle of the development regard is paid to Government guidance contained within the NPPF. The NPPF advises that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These roles should not be undertaken in isolation because they are mutually dependant. Therefore, to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

5.5 With specific regard to the rural economy, Local Planning Authorities (LPA) are required to support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas and promote the diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. Further, LPA's are to support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres.

5.6 Policy SLE3 of the Submission Local plan aims to support tourism growth stating that the Council will support proposals for new or improved tourist facilities in sustainable locations, where they accord with other policies in the plan to increase overnight stays and visitor numbers within the District.

5.7 The proposal seeks to enable the use of an existing successful camping and caravan site throughout the year. Whilst the applicant does not anticipate a large number of visitors during the winter months, there has been sufficient interest in the use of the site to render the submission of this application worthwhile, particularly from those

wishing to use the on-site fishing facility. I consider that the increase in visitor numbers during the winter months is likely to contribute to the rural economy, including the local shop and Post Office (on-site), and the village pub. The principle of a campsite in this location has already been established and it is considered that the principle of the use of the site for an additional four months is acceptable in accordance with the above Policies.

Visual Amenity, Listed Buildings and Conservation Area

- 5.8 Government guidance contained within the NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Further, in determining planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.
- 5.9 Saved Policy C7 states that development will not normally be permitted if it would cause demonstrable harm to the topography and character of the landscape. Saved Policy C23 seeks to retain buildings, walls, trees or other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Saved Policy C13 seeks to protect the environment within Areas of High Landscape Value. Saved Policy C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan seeks to control new development to ensure that it is sympathetic to the character of its context.
- 5.10 As stated previously, the reason behind the imposition of Condition 3 was the reduced level of screening in the winter months due to the loss of leaves from trees and hedges surrounding the site providing increased visibility of the campers using the facility. Clearly, if the applicant now wishes to remove this condition the matter of screening needs to be addressed. The justification statement submitted with the application advises that the applicant is willing to plant a screen of fast growing shrubs or trees to screen the campsite from the allotments, and the possible use of fencing to screen views from the road. Whilst fencing is not encouraged in this location, it is considered that the use of boundary planting would overcome concerns. Suggested species are hornbeam or beech that will retain their dead leaves over winter. The details of such a landscaping scheme would be required via condition.
- 5.11 It is therefore considered that, subject to the implementation of a suitable landscaping scheme, concerns over leaf loss could be addressed in order to avoid substantial harm to the significance of the setting of the listed buildings and the Conservation Area. Further, the removal of the condition would not result in significant harm to the environment within this AHLV and the visual amenities of the locality, in accordance with Government guidance contained within the NPPF and saved Policies C7, C13, C23 and C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan.

Highway Safety

- 5.12 Oxfordshire County Council Highway Authority have raised no objection to the use of the site all year round in terms of highway safety or convenience. The proposal accords with Government guidance contained within the NPPF in terms of sustainable transport.

Residential Amenity

- 5.13 The increased visibility of the campsite during winter months is not considered to impact upon residential amenity or privacy. A fence separates the site from Cherry Warren and Fir Warren and privacy is not reliant upon vegetation. I note the concerns from the occupants of Rignell Hall regarding views of the site, although the protection of a private view is not a material planning consideration. Further, the distance separating Rignell Hall and the campsite is approximately 600 metres, a distance sufficient to avoid a loss of amenity.
- 5.14 The proposal accords with Government guidance contained within the NPPF and saved Policy C31 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan that seeks compatible development with residential areas.

Other Matters

- 5.15 The use of the site all year round is not considered to result in harm to the Notable/ UK BAP Priority & Section 41 Species that have been identified in the area, in accordance with Government guidance contained within the NPPF.

6. Recommendation

Approve, subject to conditions,

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission, the development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following plans and documents: Application Form, Camp Site plan

Reason – For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and comply with Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Within one month of the date of this permission a landscaping scheme shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The scheme for landscaping the site shall include:-

(a) details of the proposed tree and shrub planting including their species, number, sizes and positions, together with grass seeded/turfed areas,

(b) details of the existing trees and hedgerows to be retained as well as those to be felled, including existing and proposed soil levels at the base of each tree/hedgerow and the minimum distance between the base of the tree and the nearest edge of any excavation,

Reason - In the interests of the visual amenities of the area, to ensure the creation of a pleasant environment for the development and to comply with Policy C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and Government guidance

contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. All planting, comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in accordance those details and with BS 4428:1989 Code of Practice for general landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces), or the most up to date and current British Standard, in the first available planting season. Any trees, herbaceous planting and shrubs which, within a period of five years die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the current/next planting season with others of similar size and species.

Reason - In the interests of the visual amenities of the area, to ensure the creation of a pleasant environment for the development and to comply with Policy C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. That no caravans, motor caravans or tents shall be stationed anywhere on the land for more than 28 consecutive nights and a register of occupiers shall be kept and made available for inspection by an authorised officer of the Local Planning Authority at all reasonable times.

Reason - In order to limit the use of the site to that of touring and not long-stay residential caravans and tents to comply with Policies H14, H18 and C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan.

6. That a maximum of 6 units shall be sited on Warren Gardens and a maximum of 36 units shall be sited on West Paddock and Drive Side.

Reason - In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and in the interests of highway safety and to comply with Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

STATEMENT OF ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No 2) Order 2012 and paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), this decision has been taken by the Council having worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive way by determining the application in a timely and efficient manner.

CONTACT OFFICER: Gemma Magnuson TELEPHONE NO: 01295 221827