

DC/2015/00499

NEW HORSE RIDING ARENA AND CHANGE OF USE TO FIELD TO CARAVAN AND CAMPING SITE

CWMSOAR GLASCOED LANE GLASCOED NP4 OTX

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: Andrew Jones

Date Registered: 13th November 2015

1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

- 1.1 This full planning application relates to land to the south and west of the property known as Cwmsoar Farm, located along Glascoed Lane to the south-west of the village of Glascoed.
- 1.2 It is proposed to construct a new horse riding area within an existing grazing paddock to the south of the dwelling. The arena would measure 20m x 45m; the riding surface would be finished with silica sand and a chopped fibre surface and it would be enclosed by timber post and wire fencing. The riding area is to be used by horses already resident at Cwmsoar Farm.
- 1.3 The parcel of land to the west and north of the dwelling, measuring just over an acre, would form three areas to site caravans and tents. The lower and middle portions have already been subject to ground works, including alterations to ground levels. Other works already undertaken include the formation of a track through the middle portion of the site which is finished with road plainings. This terminates at an existing gateway, to be retained, which leads to the upper portion of the site. The route is to be continued beyond this gate, where it is proposed to be finished with a 'grasscrete' system instead.
- 1.4 Overall the site would accommodate 12 caravan pitches and 12 camping pitches. The lower and middle sections would be use for the siting of caravans, whereas the upper section would be primarily for camping use although it would have capacity for some caravans.
- 1.5 Other works proposed include the erection of a toilet and shower block within the middle section of the site. The structure would feature a shallow lean-to roof and would stand 2.8m in height, measuring 5.8m in length and 3.8m in depth. The building would be tin clad (including the roof), with timber doors/windows and fascia. To the south of the structure would be a chemical toilet disposal area. This area would measure 1.8m x 1.9m, and would be enclosed by a 900mm high timber fence.
- 1.6 The caravan and camping area would be accessed via the existing entrance directly off Glascoed Lane. The existing metal gates are to be replaced by a timber five bar gate, which would also include a side pedestrian access.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DC/2006/00258 - Erection of a steel frame lean-to agricultural building, 9.5m wide x 15m long x 3m to lowest point x 4m to highest point.
Acceptable 10.07.2006

DC/2005/00286 - Take Down Existing Barn & Lean To And Replace With 1 Barn.
Acceptable 22.04.2005

DC/2002/01244 - Erection of Steel Frame Building to Be Used As an Agricultural Implements Store.
Approved 10.12.2002

DC/2001/00517 - Erection of A Steel Frame Self Supporting Lean-to.
Approved 18.07.2001

DC/1998/00228 - Lean-to Storage Building.
Approved 06.05.1998

DC/1993/00360 - Erection of Implement Store and Hay Barn as Extension to Existing Building.
Approved 30.06.1993

3.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Strategic Policies

S10 Rural Enterprise
S11 Visitor Economy
S13 Landscape, green infrastructure and the natural environment
S6 Transport
S17 Place making and design

Development Management Policies

RE6 Provision of Recreation, Touring and Leisure Facilities in the Open Countryside
T1 Touring Caravan and Tented Camping Sites
DES1 General Design considerations
EP1 Amenity and environmental protection
NE1 Nature conservation and development
MV1 Proposed development and highway considerations
GI1 Green Infrastructure
LC5 Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Consultations Replies

Llanbadoc Community Council – recommended the application be submitted with further details, providing the following additional comments:

- The applicant was present at the Community Council meeting and stated that the 30 additional car parking spaces specified on the application form were incorrect and this was a much lower number, but this does not appear to have been corrected and resubmitted. The council could only comment on the documentation received.
- The application does not state a specific number of camping or caravan pitches, only a reference to a provisionally agreed 28 day CL Licence for caravan and camping club members.
- Also the applicant intends to offer their own 1960's caravans for alternative accommodation, again with no numbers specified. Considering the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan – It appears these caravans will fall into policy T2 as permanently sited caravans.
- Although potentially supportive of a new business proposal, under policy T1, the Community Council felt without further documented clarification on the size of the proposed business it would not be appropriate to make a recommendation as numbers of visitors would be key to understanding the impact on the local area.
- A further consideration would be the response from a highways report as Council members felt the existing transport infrastructure could be under pressure from the additional traffic generated and safety could be questioned.
- The horse riding area was not discussed as this was under the same application.
- It may be appropriate to have 2 separate applications for the horse riding area and caravan and camping site as these are 2 separate proposals and individual consideration and opinion may be provided on each. Advised applicant to consult with Monmouthshire planning department for advice on this matter.

MCC Highway Officer – there are no highway grounds to sustain an objection to the application, subject to the following comments and conditions in respect to each element:

- Riding Area
 - From the detailed submitted it is noted that the horse riding area is for private use to exercise horses.
 - The arena is proposed to be positioned at the south corner of the site accessed from the existing access off the short spur road off Glascoed Lane.
 - Would want to condition that any flood lights to be installed shall be suitably screened so as to prevent any glare directed onto the adjacent public highway.
- Caravan and Camping Site

- Glascoed Lane is a typical rural road and is used as a commuter route during peak AM and PM times.
- Whilst it is accepted the proposal will generate some additional traffic, vehicles with caravan in tow, we are mindful that Glascoed Lane has historically served large agricultural vehicles and HGV traffic.
- It is considered that the traffic generated will be sporadic throughout the day outside peak AM and PM times and based on the limited size of the development we consider the traffic generated will not exacerbate the current situation to the detriment of highway safety.
- Would want to condition that no development should take place until details of improvements to the existing access and visibility splay have been submitted to the Council and approved.

MCC Biodiversity/Ecology Officer – provided the following comments:

- Based on the current objective survey and assessment available, we have enough ecological information to make a lawful planning decision.
- An ecological assessment was undertaken to support the planning application.
- No data search was undertaken to inform the application and therefore considerations of species such as otter and white clawed crayfish which have been recorded in the vicinity were not fully appreciated.
- Due to the close proximity of the site to the Sor Brook which runs immediately adjacent to both parts of the development, impacts on white clawed crayfish and otter, both of which use the brook need to be considered.
- It is acknowledged that the scale of the scheme is relatively small and also that most of the earthworks at the site have already been completed. Further to the Habitat Survey submission, I have discussed the scheme with the Agent for the scheme to understand the proposal.
- The GI Masterplan illustrates a 7m buffer zone from the Sor Brook which illustrates that much of the site will be outside this area. A construction method statement will be required for the remainder of the works to be completed on the caravan site and the Manege element of the scheme. A planning condition is recommended for this.
- I would support the request by Benjamin Terry for a planting plan but would extend this to include a management plan (prescriptions) for the site proportionate to the scheme scale or a separate condition. Management is recommended in the Phase 1 Habitat survey but is not explicit on the GI masterplan or DAS. Management proposals should be provided for the whole application site and include all grassland, hedgerows, trees and riparian fringe habitats. The management of Japanese knotweed at the site could also be included.
- The scheme would benefit from additional planting between the 7m buffer line and the watercourse to reduce impacts on wildlife using the watercourse to create a natural undisturbed riparian fringe.
- The GI masterplan illustrates the use of lighting and in particular a 'low level bulkhead with low energy bulbs' in close proximity to the stream (at the southern end of the site). This would not be an appropriate installation unless it can be demonstrated that the light will not be cast to the watercourse. It would be more appropriate to move this fixture into the site

by 2-3m to reduce impacts on wildlife using the river or alternatively plant up the area between the bulkhead and the stream.

MCC Landscape Officer – provided the following comments:

- The principle outstanding and high evaluations for this area apply to the visual & sensory, geological, historical and cultural aspects of LANDMAP aspects. This area is considered to have a high scenic quality combining attractive topography of deep undulating valleys and wooded hills.
- The presence of Llandegfedd Reservoir SSSI nature conservation designation is another major constraint to development in this area, as is the rural character of Glascoed Lane; avoiding suburban highway improvements and removing existing hedgerows.
- Of particular significance is the adoption of the Councils Green Infrastructure Policy which requires applications to be considered more holistically – it seeks to embrace a range of multidisciplinary aspects including landscape, biodiversity accessibility, health wellbeing , community engagement and climate change, through a coherent, resilient and connected network of high quality green and blue spaces.
- It is welcomed that the Green Infrastructure statement has been informed by the ecological study however, we do not fully agree with the importance assigned to some features of the site and consider that there are a number of valuable assets at the Cwmsoar caravan site that will benefit the final scheme.
- The green infrastructure proposals need to be expanded to reflect this. Green Infrastructure assets for the site include, the Sor brook and streamside buffer areas, the grassland, the hedgerow, trees (including those associated with the Sor Brook).
- The Sor brook is not a poor habitat for many species. Records show that protected species populations including otter and crayfish depend on this watercourse.
- Japanese Knotweed control on site needs to be clarified. We believe that some preparatory works have already commenced. Excavation/s on a site with JK is a concern especially given that the Sor Brook bounds the site that feeds Llandegfedd Reservoir.
- The applicant has also identified potential connections to strategic GI assets (Pontypool Park and Llandegfedd Reservoir).
- The design and style of the toilet block is basic; its location is also unclear.
- There are no landscape design proposals within the application.
- There are no proposed levels on the site plan.
- To assess the application against Policy LC5 we require the applicant to submit an appropriate LVIA, this should inform their design and layout, with recommendations noted in their DAS.
- To determine the extent of GI assets around the site and potential opportunities linked to them. The applicant is to submit a GI Masterplan.
- To ensure that we have an accurate understanding of their proposal, the applicant must submit a fully annotated site plan, to include proposed site levels, location of buildings.
- To ensure we have an accurate understanding of material finishes and colours, the applicant is to submit a list of proposed materials (within their DAS). This should also be clearly annotated on other submitted drawings.

- To ensure we have an accurate understanding of their proposed external works, the applicant is to submit details of landscaping proposals, drainage, and surface treatments.

4.2 Neighbour Notification

Six households have submitted representations raising the following issues, which are summarised below:

- Traffic on this narrow lane has increased significantly over the last few years.
- In addition to those using BAE Systems, people now use it to access Woodlake Golf Club and the new County Hall in Usk.
- Also seen increase in number of articulated and commercial vehicles using it.
- Tourist project in this location is totally inappropriate.
- The lane is too narrow, with no passing places and a concealed entrance at the bottom of a very steep hill.
- Concerned that visitors using this caravan and camping park may trespass on my land and potentially cause greater concern if in particular dogs are allowed to roam unattended and have the potential to attack my livestock.
- Riding area will surely also increase traffic.
- The sight lines in both directions from the gate way are restricted.
- The proposal constitutes over development of the site.
- The site is a small pocket of land bordered to one side by a narrow but relatively busy lane and a steep bank. Development of the proposed density represents over development and will fundamentally change the area.
- The route leading from New Inn is via an extremely steep hill, meeting a caravan on this hill would undoubtedly result in a vehicle reversing.
- It should be noted that Glascoed Lane is not in a good state of repair at present, the proposed caravan site will aid to exacerbate the situation.
- We would ask that Highways Department is included in a site visit prior to making your decision.
- The application does not include a figure for the number of caravans and tents likely to be accommodated on the site, but parking for 30 cars has been specified, this appears to be excessive.
- In one section it is stated that the Arena will enhance use for the owners, but elsewhere it is mentioned that it will be accessed via the existing gated entrance on the road which is level and suitable for wheelchair users.
- It appears that this application may be a proposal for the inception of two possible businesses, a riding centre as well as a caravan/camping site.
- It should also be noted that planning permission for similar ventures in the area has previously been turned down: at another nearby farm to accommodate the storage/over wintering of caravans. At land off Coed Chambers Road to be used for caravans and the same land off Coed Chambers Road to be used for holiday accommodation in the form of log cabins.
- The site is also completely inappropriate as it is next to a brook - Sorbrook- that runs directly into the adjacent Llandegfedd Reservoir. This will be a health hazard should it get polluted by the campers or caravans.

- I also do not wish to be overlooked by campers or have any noise from any. I value my home & privacy & the peace & tranquillity of the place I grew up.
- I sometimes have sheep on tack in my field and I and my neighbouring sheep farmer whose fields are next to the proposed site are worried about dogs getting loose if they come with visiting campers. I have already had a sheep attacked by a loose dog.
- Worried about the noise and that our privacy will be totally gone, especially in the summer when we ourselves may want to be outside or keep the windows open.

4.3 Local Member Representations

Councillor Val Smith – No objections.

5.0 **EVALUATION**

- Principle of the proposed development
- Landscape and Visual impact
- Residential amenity
- Highway considerations
- Biodiversity considerations
- Response to other issues raised

5.1 Principle of the proposed development

Policy T1 of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out various criteria for new touring caravan and tented camping sites, detailed below, which need to be satisfied for proposals to be permitted subject to detailed considerations:

- a) there is no unacceptable impact on the countryside having regard to biodiversity, landscape quality and the visibility from roads, viewpoints and other public places;
- b) there are no permanently sited caravans;
- c) the development can be satisfactorily supervised without the need for additional permanent living accommodation for wardens; and
- d) there are no adverse safety and / or amenity effects arising from the traffic generated and access requirements.

5.1.1 The visual impact of the development in the wider countryside is to be considered in section 5.2 of this report below.

There will be no permanently sited caravans, conditions are to be imposed relating to a 28 day restriction on stay as well as the closure of the site during the winter months.

The applicant lives in a dwelling immediately opposite the proposed camping/caravan site and as such there would no requirement for additional permanent living accommodation for a warden. Finally, the traffic generated and access requirements are to be considered in section 5.4 of this report.

5.1.2 Policy RE6 *Provision of Recreation, Touring and Leisure Facilities in the Open Countryside* also sets out that ‘development proposals for recreation, tourism and leisure uses in the countryside will be permitted provided that they are of a small-scale, informal nature and subject to detailed planning considerations, including adequate safeguards for the character and appearance of the countryside (particularly its landscape, biodiversity and local amenity value)’. In this instance the proposal is considered to be of small scale, and as noted the detailed considerations including landscape, biodiversity and local amenity value are to be discussed in the ensuing sections of this report.

5.1.3 With regard to the riding arena, it is considered that in principle such a feature within the rural context would not be alien and would be typical of what one might expect to find within the open countryside.

5.2 Landscape and visual impact

The proposal has been considered by the Council’s Landscape Officer and following discussions the applicant has provided a Green Infrastructure Plan and Statement.

The proposed caravan and camping site would benefit from an existing mature hedgerow that encloses the site along Glascoed Lane which provides a good degree of natural screening. It has been established that additional soft landscaping works, including the planting of hedgerow and trees, are to be included to help mitigate the visual impact when the site is occupied.

5.2.1 The proposed shower and amenity block is considered to be of modest size and commensurate to the size of the site. The use of tin cladding and timber joinery is considered to be appropriate given the rural context and also the presence of a large metal-clad agricultural building on the opposite side of Glascoed Lane. However, no information is provided with regard to the colour of the building so this is to be agreed via an appropriate planning condition.

5.2.2 Within the central portion of the site a track has been provided to allow vehicles to access their pitch; this has been finished with road plainings. It was originally proposed to continue this into the upper section, but this has been amended to employ a grasscrete system which would have a significantly reduced visual impact.

5.2.3 Lighting is proposed to the caravan and camping site, which is considered to be acceptable in principle to ensure the health and safety of visitors. Whilst, the position of the lighting has been indicated no information has been detailed with regard to the height of any columns and therefore this is to be conditioned.

5.2.4 Some ground levelling works would be required to provide an even surface for the proposed riding arena. These are not considered to be excessive, and whilst it was suggested the riding arena be reduced to 20m x 40m, the proposed size would not be of unacceptable scale. The area would be enclosed by simple post and wire fencing and additional planting has been proposed to minimise visual impact. It was requested that the new tree planting be scattered throughout the paddock; however the linear layout proposed to the front of the

arena is not considered to be unacceptable. In addition no lighting is proposed to illuminate this facility which is not to be for commercial use.

5.3 Residential amenity

The primary concern raised by local residents within the consultation responses has been the impact on highway safety. This matter is covered in section 5.4 below.

The nearest neighbouring property to the camping and caravan site, The Poplars, is located approximately 70m to the north. Concerns have been raised with regard to the generation of noise and the potential loss of privacy. Owing to the distance between the site and the neighbouring property, and the presence of mature trees within this space, it is not considered that the camp site would give rise to an unacceptable loss of privacy or increase in noise levels to the detriment of any third party.

- 5.3.1 Concerns have also been raised from a number of properties in relation to the potential of tourists' dogs causing injury to other animals including livestock. However, there is a well-established public right of way network to the north and west of the site which can already generate walkers with dogs and in any event the actions of individual owners would not be a planning consideration, being a matter of personal responsibility, having regard to the Countryside Code.

5.4 Highway considerations

Glascoed Lane is a typical rural road and is a thoroughfare between Pontypool, Glascoed and the A472 leading to Usk. It is used as a commuter route during peak AM and PM times.

It is accepted by the Council's Highway Engineer that the camping and caravan site would generate an increase in traffic to the area, including vehicles which would be towing touring caravans. However, the Engineer has advised that Glascoed Lane has historically served large agricultural vehicles and HGV traffic. It is anticipated that traffic generated by the camp site would be more sporadic during the day outside of the peak AM and PM times. The site is not of considerable size and therefore the Local Planning Authority is of the view that the potential traffic that would be generated would not exacerbate the current situation, and therefore would not cause such demonstrable harm to highway safety so as warrant refusal.

Improvements to the existing points of access have been identified as necessary by the Highway Engineer; a condition is therefore required to agree the works required and for them to then be implemented.

5.5 Biodiversity Considerations

The application has been informed by an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey. The Council's Biodiversity Officer has confirmed that the LPA therefore has sufficient information to make a lawful planning decision.

The camping and caravan site is positioned in close proximity to Sor Brook, which runs along the western edge of the site. As such the potential impact on white clawed crayfish and otter needs to be considered. The GI Plan submitted provides a 7m buffer zone from the Brook, however the Council's Biodiversity Officer has requested a Construction Method Statement be submitted via condition for the remainder of the works to be carried out.

In addition a GI Management Plan is to be provided through planning condition to cover all grassland, hedgerows, trees and riparian fringe habitats. This could also cover the management of Japanese knotweed at the site.

5.5.1 As noted previously in section 5.2.3 of this report it is proposed to provide lighting to the camp site. The Biodiversity Officer has expressed some concern with the location of these, in particular their proximity to Sor Brook. Consequently their exact positioning can be agreed as part of a lighting plan as part of the previously referenced lighting condition.

5.6 Response to other issues raised

The application form states that the site will provide 30 parking spaces; this has been questioned by the Community Council. The site will provide two designated spaces at the site entrance, whilst each of the total of 24 pitches will have sufficient space for the parking of one vehicle.

The Community Council have also raised issue with the presence of the applicant's own vintage caravans and whether they would be permanently sited and therefore contrary to Policy T1. However, all caravans will be subject to the same 28 day and seasonal restrictions and therefore would not be permanently sited.

6.0 **RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE**

Conditions

1. 5 year time limit
2. Development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans
3. No development, demolition, earth moving shall take place or material or machinery brought onto the site until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The content of the method statement shall cover both the caravan and manege elements of the scheme and include:
 - 1) details of measures to protect the watercourse from incidental pollution during development and therefore protect local populations of white clawed crayfish
 - 2) details of the measures to safeguard Otter during development e.g. no work after dusk or before dawn, no trenches left uncovered during the night where otters can become entrapped

The construction Method Statement shall be completed in consultation with an appropriately experienced ecologist.

4. A Green Infrastructure Management Plan shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the local planning authority prior to the operation of the development. The content of the Management Plan shall include the following;
 - a) Aims and objectives of management
 - b) Prescriptions for management actionsThe approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
5. No caravans or tents shall remain on the site for more than 28 consecutive days and no caravans or tents shall be permitted on the site between 30th September in any one year and 1st March in the succeeding year.
6. A register of touring caravans showing the dates of arrival and departure shall be maintained by the site operator and shall be made available at all reasonable times for inspection by the Local Planning Authority.
7. During the permitted period the combined total number of touring caravans and/or camping pitches on the site shall not exceed 24 at any one time.
8. Samples of the proposed external finishes to the toilet block and chemical toilet disposal area shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority in writing before works commence and the development shall be carried out in accordance with those agreed finishes which shall remain in situ in perpetuity. The samples shall be presented on site for the agreement of the Local Planning Authority and those approved shall be retained on site for the duration of the construction works.
9. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species.
10. A scheme of lighting/ illumination including column heights and positioning shall be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority before the caravan and camp site is brought into use, and shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and maintained in perpetuity.
11. Notwithstanding the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no lighting or lighting fixtures shall be attached to or be positioned so as to illuminate the riding arena hereby approved.
12. The riding arena hereby approved shall be for private domestic use only.
13. No development shall take place until the details of improvements to the existing access and visibility splay have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details before the use hereby approved commences and remain as such in perpetuity.

Informatives

Japanese Knotweed

Otters

Highways Section 184