

DC/2015/01136

PROPOSED GLAMPING PODS WITH UTILITIES AND SERVICES BLOCK.

FAIROAK, RUMBLE STREET, MONKSWOOD, NP15 1QG

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: Andrew Jones

Date Registered: 05/11/2015

1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

- 1.1 This application relates to a parcel of land adjacent to the property known as Fair Oak, located along Rumble Street in Monkswood.
- 1.2 Planning permission is sought for 10 glamping pods in addition to a utilities and services block. Each pod would measure 2.6m in height, 6m in length and 3.1m in width. They would be timber framed with larch cladding to exterior. The utility block would be sited within same parcel of land to the south of the pod locations. The structure would measure 11.8m in length, 6.6m in width and 3.5m to the ridge. With regard to external finishes these would include cedar boarding and timber doors/windows.
- 1.3 The site would be served by the existing access to the site off Rumble Street, whilst a grasscrete parking area would measure 21m x 23m and would be sited to the east of the pod locations.
- 1.4 Planning permission was refused in August 2015 for 10 touring caravan pitches and a utilities block for the following reasons:
- *The applicant has failed to provide any ecological information in support of the application. The Monmouthshire County Council biodiversity checklist identifies risks to Priority Habitats (NERC Act), Great Coed Cae Ddu Site of Importance to Nature Conservation and legally protected species including bats, dormouse, nesting birds, reptiles and amphibians. Without any information the Local Planning Authority considers that it is unable to determine with any degree of certainty whether the proposal would impact adversely on protected species. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies T1 (a) and NE1 of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan.*
 - *The Caravan Management Plan submitted could not be enforced via planning condition, and therefore the proposed development would cause unavoidable vehicle conflicts and congestion, and as a result be harmful to highway safety. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies T1 (d) and MV1 of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan.*

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DC/2013/01022	Ten touring caravan pitches with utility & services block Refused	11/08/2015
DC/2015/00325	Removal of condition 4 from planning consent DC/2012/00254. Approved	14/05/2015
DC/2012/00254	Replacement dwelling	Approved 12/10/2012

DC/2012/00127	Replacement of 2x6m wind generators in favour of 1x12m generator	Undetermined	
DC/2010/00573	Replacement dwelling	Appeal Dismissed	14/09/2011
DC/2007/01021	Certificate Of Lawfulness (existing use or development) - use of dwelling in breach of condition 1 of permission 192 (granted 18/7/1951) that required the dwelling to be occupied by a person full time employed on the adjoining smallholding.	Approved	24/09/2007
DC/2007/00164	2 X Domestic 1.4KW wind generators.	Approved	

3.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Strategic Policies

S11 – Visitor Economy
S13 – Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment
S16 - Transport
S17 – Place Making and Design

Development Management Policies

T1 – Touring Caravan and Tented Camping Sites
EP1 – Amenity and Environmental Protection
DES1 – General Design Considerations
LC1 – New Built Development in the Open Countryside
LC5 – Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character
NE1 – Nature Conservation and Development
GI1 – Green Infrastructure
MV1 – Proposed Development and Highway Considerations
MV3 – Public Rights of Way

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Consultations Replies

- 4.1.1 Llanbadoc Community Council – Recommend the application is approved, noting that members are aware and have acknowledged the number of objections from local residents in relation to this planning proposal. The Community Council have met the applicant on site to consider the local impact of the application. The clerk has brought to the attention of the Community Council the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan, and policy T2 – permanent visitor accommodation outside settlements. Also the fact that a bio-diversity report and highways report will be required for Monmouthshire County Council to consider impact on the Countryside, visibility and the impact and safety of the existing transport infrastructure. Council members felt the proposed location on the property, and appearance of the 10 pods to be acceptable, when compared with alternative proposals for the site.
- 4.1.2 MCC Highways – Provided the following comments:
- The applicant has identified that each glamping pod will have 1 parking space constructed utilising sustainable geotextile reinforcing mesh.

- The proposed development will utilise the existing means of access to Fair oak. The existing means of access is not deemed adequate to accommodate the numbers and frequency of additional vehicle movements.
- The current proposal will not generate any more or any less vehicle movements than the earlier refusal application, but it will remove towed touring caravans from the existing local rural lanes, particularly Rumble Street.
- Rumble Street is a typical rural lane that is very narrow and restrictive with limited localised passing bays. Rumble Street provides direct access from the A472, the lane provides direct access to 16 residential properties and residential and agricultural properties further afield.
- The proposed development will generate on average 2 vehicle journeys per hour throughout the course of the day, although it is accepted that some concentrated vehicular activity can be expected on change over days when vehicles may depart and arrive on mass albeit at different times of the day.
- It is inevitable that construction vehicles will require access to the site during the development of the site, the applicant should therefore make arrangement for all construction plant and deliveries to access and egress the development via Plough Lane and make internal arrangements include the means of access to enable all vehicles to access and egress the site in a forward gear.
- I would offer no objections to the proposal to provide 10 glamping pods on highway safety grounds subject to the following conditions.
- The development will be restricted to 10 number of glamping pods with no increase in the numbers nor the change of use to touring caravans.
- The existing access shall be improved in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any development commences and shall be completed in accordance with the approved details before the development is brought into beneficial use.
- Prior to the commencement of any works a Construction Traffic Management Plan and Designated Access Route Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

4.1.3 Dwr Cymru Welsh Water – We would request that if you are minded to grant Planning Consent for the development that the suggested conditions and advisory notes provided are included within the consent to ensure no detriment to existing residents or the environment and to Dwr Cymru Welsh Water’s assets.

4.1.4 Planning Policy – Provided the following comments:

- Strategic Policy S11 provides some support for the proposal noting proposals that provide sustainable forms of tourism will be permitted subject to detailed planning considerations.
- Policy T1 does not apply in this instance as the proposal does not relate to a touring caravan/tented camping site.
- Policy T2 relates to visitor accommodation outside town and development boundaries. The log pods appear to be permanent structures (approximately 19m² each) and will each have attachment to services such as water, drainage etc.. Policy T2 notes the provision of permanent serviced or self-catering visitor accommodation will only be permitted if it consists of the re-use and adaptation of existing buildings or relates to the conversion of buildings, where they comply with the criteria set out in Policy H4. No information has been included with the application in relation to agricultural diversification, the site does not appear to be linked to a farm holding and therefore criterion (a) of Policy T2 is not of relevance. Criterion (b) and (c) relate to the conversion of buildings, the proposal does not relate to the conversion of any buildings, exceptions (b) and (c) are consequently not applicable.
- The utility block is of a considerable size (approximately 78m²) and is considered a new build permanent structure.

- Policy LC1 contains a presumption against new-build development in the open countryside although identifies those type of developments involving new build that might be acceptable if justified in policies S10, RE3, RE4, RE5, RE6, T2 and National Planning Policy. None of these policies appear to be applicable.
- Policy MV1 should also be considered relating to proposed developments and highway considerations. Policies EP1 and DES1 in relation to Amenity and Environmental Protection and General Design Considerations respectively would also need to be considered along with Policy LC5 relating to the protection and enhancement of landscape character.

4.1.5 Public Rights of Way Officer – Provided the following comments:

- The applicant's attention should be drawn to Public Footpath No 24 in the community of Llanbadoc which runs through the proposed development site.
- Footpath No.24 must be kept open and free for use by the public at all times, alternatively, a legal diversion or stopping-up Order must be obtained, confirmed and implemented prior to any development affecting the Public Rights of Way taking place.
- No barriers, structures or any other obstructions should be placed across the legal alignment of the path and any damage to the surface of the path as a result of the development must be made good at the expense of the applicant.
- Post construction any damage caused by private vehicular use to the surface of the footpath must be made good to at least footpath standards.

4.1.6 Tourism Officer – Provided the following comments:

- I confirm that this development fits with the identified priorities outlined in Monmouthshire's approved Destination Development Plan 2012-15, and with Monmouthshire's accommodation development opportunities report, which identifies market potential for luxury camping or 'glamping' (glamorous camping). The proposed development also fits well with Monmouthshire's visitor product and similar sites operating in the county demonstrate strong demand for this type of accommodation.
- Tourism generated £173m for Monmouthshire in 2014 and supported 2,733 FTEs (STEAM 2014). Staying visitors generate the lion's share of the benefits of tourism - 71% (£122.8m) of total tourism revenue and 77% of direct FTEs in 2014- so increasing the number of bed spaces is key to growing tourism. Currently tourism in Monmouthshire is relatively seasonal, with significantly fewer bed spaces available between November and March compared with the peak months April to September. In order to extend the season and ensure tourism benefits are year round, bed spaces need to be available over the full twelve months. Twelve month availability of accommodation also increases the financial viability of small glamping sites like this which have limited opportunities to achieve economies of scale.

4.1.7 Biodiversity Officer – Provided the following comments:

- The revised layout does not raise an ecological objection for the scheme. I have visited the site and whilst the neutral grassland has some species rich indicators, the value at the site does not meet local wildlife site (SINC) quality. The current use of the site as a storage area for machinery and through route to the woodland is damaging the grassland present and limiting its quality. The new use for the site and enhancement of the sward and management should provide long term benefits for biodiversity. Hedgerow / tree planting along the northern boundary where the wetland apparently used to exist is proposed and detail of this will need to be secured as part of the planning permission. Please include suggested conditions.

4.1.8 Landscape Officer – Please include suggested condition for detailed hard and soft landscaping plan to be agreed and implemented.

4.2 Neighbour Notification

Objections have been received from 9 properties following the consultation exercise raising the following areas of concern:

- Experienced excessive traffic whilst Little Mill railway bridge was closed.
- Extra traffic with very few passing places, impact will be intolerable.
- Illogical assumption that people will be using glamping pods rather than their own caravans.
- Highway Officers traffic flow calculation would double the volume of traffic incurred by residents at the moment.
- Construction traffic accessing via Plough Lane and in a forward gear is wishful thinking.
- Application does not comply with criteria A, B and D of Policy T1.
- Nothing has changed since previous application.
- Impact on aesthetics and noise for people using the public right of way.
- Close proximity to two areas of ancient woodland.
- Glamping pods are in effect permanently sited caravans.
- The surface of Rumble Street is a patchwork of remedial repairs, ruts and holes and the lane regularly floods in the winter.
- Road features a number of very narrow, sweeping blind bends with no escape route for pedestrians or horse riders.
- Does not comply with Policy T2 as does not involve re-use of existing buildings.
- A commercial proposal like this is unsuitable for a residential lane like Rumble Street.
- Pods look like giant pig sties.
- It is highly likely that these large semi-permanent structures would provide enough space for more than one car load of passengers.
- Problems are exacerbated as all amenities are a car ride away from the site.
- Vehicles used would most likely be large 4x4 than small family hatchbacks.
- If permission is granted it will facilitate expansion to something of a much larger scale.
- This is a permanent large construction, a continuous blot on the landscape and environment.
- Already unsafe to walk the lane.
- Noise and disruption of 50 or more campers, dogs and children would seriously affect the quality of our lives.
- Potential damage by trespassers and dogs.
- All residents along Rumble Street will be impacted.
- No control over the opening periods.
- Risk of drainage contamination to other residents.
- Applicant has not consulted neighbours as stated in application forms.

4.3 Other Representations

4.3.1 Usk Civic Society – Provided the following comments:

- As with the previous application for caravanning facilities at this site (DC/2013/01022), no ecological information has been supplied, despite the proximity of the site to Great Coed Cae Ddu Wood;
- Glamping pods being semi-permanent wooden structures, would not appear to fall within the derogation in the LDP for temporary camping and caravanning facilities in the open countryside.

- While the traffic generated by a glamping site might be expected to be private cars rather than towed caravans, it remains the case that Rumble Street is a very narrow lane with minimal passing places and difficult access onto other roads at both ends.
- As with the previous application, therefore, it is not suitable for the increased traffic which would be generated by a commercial glamping site at this location.

4.4 Local Member Representations

Councillor Val Smith – Request that this application is considered by full committee if recommended for approval as cannot support the proposal.

5.0 **EVALUATION**

5.1 Principle of Development

5.1.1 Strategic Policy S11 *Visitor Economy* sets out that “development proposals that provide and/or enhance sustainable forms of tourism will be permitted subject to detailed planning considerations”. Proposals for tourism developments are assessed against relevant Development Management policies which seek to implement Policy S11 by providing the policy framework to support the provision and enhancement of tourist attractions, facilities and accommodation.

5.1.2 In this instance Policy T1 *Touring Caravan and Tented Camping Sites* is not strictly applicable to the current proposal as the pods cannot be defined as either a touring caravan or tent, although they are moveable in the same manner as a touring caravan.

5.1.3 Policy T2 asserts that “outside town and village development boundaries, the provision of permanent serviced or self-catering visitor accommodation will only be permitted if it consists of the re-use and adaptation of existing building and the conversion of buildings for such uses complies with the criteria set out in Policy H4”. In this instance the proposed form of tourism would not be permanent as the pods would be removed from their seasonal siting and stored elsewhere within land owned by the applicant. The standard seasonal condition for touring and tented camping sites that would see the site closed between 30th September and 1st March. The pods can be towed out at this time and would be stored on the grasscrete parking area.

5.1.4 As such it is considered that as the pods would not be permanently sited or serviced that the use is acceptable in principle. Although not a planning consideration it is also worth noting that it has been advised by the Council’s Tourism Officer that the development fits with the identified priorities outlined in Monmouthshire’s approved Destination Development Plan 2012-15, and with Monmouthshire’s accommodation development opportunities report, which identifies market potential for luxury camping or ‘glamping’ (glamorous camping).

5.2. Access, Parking and Traffic

5.2.1 As detailed in section 1.4 of this report one of the reasons for refusal of the previous application for touring caravans related to concerns with highway safety. The amendment to now propose glamping pods ensures that touring caravans would not be entering or leaving the site. The only accommodation provided would be through the 10 glamping pods and a condition is to be attached to ensure no other form of accommodation (including touring caravans) are to enter the site. It is acknowledged that Rumble Street is a narrow rural lane with limited passing places and is signed at

the southern entrance as being not suitable for heavy vehicles. However, whilst the proposed glamping site would inevitably create additional traffic through the lane, the traffic would not be encumbered by towed touring caravans.

The Council's Traffic and Development Manager has considered the potential traffic volume increase and is of the view there is no longer grounds to sustain an objection on highway safety grounds or traffic impact. This is however subject to the certain considerations which can be managed through appropriate planning conditions.

5.2.2 As noted previously the site is to be limited to glamping pods only, in addition this will also be restricted to the 10 as currently proposed. The Highway Officer has also identified the existing access as inadequate, therefore improvements are sought that will require details to be agreed prior to the development being brought into beneficial use.

5.2.3 It is anticipated that construction vehicles will need to enter the site and as such a Construction Management Plan and Designated Access Route Plan will be required to be submitted, approved and implemented before any works commence. Given the nature of these visits and the timescales involved it is considered that such a condition would be enforceable unlike the previous management plan (as part of the refused application) which related to guests visiting the site.

5.3 Visual Impact

5.3.1 The site is located approximately 110m from Rumble Street and is sited immediately to the east of the area of wood land known as Great Coedcae Du. To the south there is a small landscape bund, whilst the land steeply slopes up outside the site to the north.

The woodland provides significant screening from the West, and the existing landscape features and the proximity from Rumble Street mean that the 10 pods could be well screened from wider vantage points. Although some landscaping is proposed on the submitted plans, the level of detail is not sufficient and therefore is to be agreed via appropriate planning condition.

At a more local level, the site is crossed by public right of way and therefore views of the area for users of this footpath would be significantly different. However, it is not considered that the final landscaped site would be of unacceptable visual impact at this level.

5.3.2 The Council's Landscape Officer has recommended a detailed hard and soft landscaping scheme be agreed via planning condition. Such a scheme would include plant species, size and densities as well as information relating to drainage and pedestrian access/circulation routes. The information currently submitted is not considered to be sufficient

5.3.3 As detailed in section 5.1.3 conditions limiting the pitches to seasonal use would also safeguard against use in the winter when vegetation coverage is lessened.

5.4 Residential Amenity

5.4.1 There have been concerns raised from a number of local residents along Rumble Street relating to noise and disturbance created by people staying at the site. The nearest neighbouring dwellings (Keepers Cottage to the North East and Woodlands Farm to the East) are both in excess of 100m from the site, and in the case of Woodlands Farm on the opposite side of Rumble Street.

Additional planting, as discussed in the section above, could also help to provide additional noise attenuation. The site would not be open during the winter months

when this form of mitigation would be reduced through winter when vegetation coverage is reduced.

- 5.4.2 It is therefore considered that on balance the proposed development for 10 glamping pods would not cause unacceptable harm in terms of noise or privacy to the residential amenity of local residents.

5.5 Biodiversity Considerations

- 5.5.1 Previous application DC/2013/01022 was refused due to the omission of any ecological information to support the application. Of particular concern was an infilled pond (which are Priority habitats as defined by section 40/42 of the NERC Act). The Biodiversity Officer at the time had suggested consideration is given to creating a green buffer between the boundary of the site with the hedgerow/stream and the caravan pitches proposed at the time. Within the buffer it was suggested a pond should be reinstated along with a species-rich grassland margins. This information was not provided and the layout proposed would not have allowed for such features to be implanted via condition.
- 5.5.2 The site has been revisited and the Biodiversity Officer does not raise an ecological objection to the revised layout. Whilst the neutral grassland has some species rich indicators, the value at the site does not meet local wildlife site (SINC) quality. The current use of the site as a storage area for machinery and through route to the woodland is damaging the grassland present and limiting its quality. The new use for the site and enhancement of the sward and management should provide long term benefits for biodiversity. New hedgerow and tree planting along the northern boundary of the site where the wetland apparently used to exist is proposed and detail of this will need to be secured as part of the planning permission. Other conditions are to be attached safeguard ecological interests including clearance methods and the long-term management of the site.
- 5.5.3 It is therefore considered that given the revised layout and the implementation of the appropriate planning conditions the current proposal has overcome the previous ecological objection that necessitated refusal of application DC/2013/01022.

5.6 Response to Objections

- 5.6.1 Local concerns relating to policy compliance, visual impact, residential amenity and highway safety have been addressed in the preceding sections of this report. Other issues raised relate to the current application being the basis for future expansion and development of the site. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) can only consider the proposal as submitted rather than on speculative future intentions. In any event the site is not of excessive size and the number of units is considered to be commensurate to it. Planning conditions would ensure the size of the development is managed, and any future applications to expand would need to be considered on their own merits.
- 5.6.2 The issue of the site causing increase in damage caused by trespassers and dogs would be a police matter. The site is already crossed by a Public Right of Way which brings levels of outside footfall through the locality.
- 5.6.3 Finally concerns have been raised in relation to the applicant's statement that he has engaged in local consultation with residents. Whilst this may or may not have been undertaken, given the application type there is no statutory requirement for the applicant to engage in public consultation as part of the planning process.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Conditions:

1	This development shall be begun within 5 years from the date of this permission.
2	The development shall be carried out in accordance with the list of approved plans set out in the table below.
3	The site shall not be used for the approved use between 30th September in any one year and 1st March in the succeeding year. During this time all pods shall be stored on the car parking area identified on drawing 2016/0805/99/01 (May 2016).
4	No lighting or lighting fixtures shall be installed in the development boundary until an appropriate lighting plan which includes low level PIR lighting and allows dark corridors for bats has been agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall detail light type, specification and position.
5	All piles of rubble, stones and wood piles within the development site shall be removed by hand.
6	No construction activities including earthworks shall be undertaken within 6m of the woodland trees at the western edge of the site or within 3m of the northern hedge line including new tree planting.
7	A sparrow terrace box shall be provided on the new service block.
8	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 of the grassland and hedgerow including new planting b) Prescriptions for management actions The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
9	During the permitted period the combined total number of glamping pods on the site shall not exceed 10 at any one time. No touring caravans or tents will be allowed to enter or use the site.
10	The existing access shall be improved in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any development commences and shall be completed in accordance with the approved details before the development is brought into beneficial use.
11	Prior to the commencement of any works a Construction Traffic Management Plan and Designated Access Route Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
12	No development shall commence on site until a scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The shall include all of the following items:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The submission should be presented on an A1 plan (or plans), to scale: 1:100 - The plan should be supported by a written landscape strategy (the aims/objectives). - The plan should illustrate and where required, detail or specify the following information: - Existing levels (10m spacing's) - Location and size of existing tree(s) and hedgerows on and within 10m of the site. - Details of planting to be retained, together with measures to protect planting during construction. - Finished levels (10m spacing's) - Car park layout and details of hard surface materials and means of enclosure. - Any other vehicular access and circulation areas. - Pedestrian access and circulation areas (footways to glamping pods) and details of hard surface materials and means of enclosure (if required). - Planting plan, including name of species, plant size and densities in addition to the provision of native species rich grassland seeding - Minor artefacts and structures (play, furniture etc). - Proposed and existing service provision above and below ground (drainage, power, communications) <p>The development shall be implemented in accordance with all of the approved details.</p>
13	<p>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.</p>

Informatives;

Public Rights of Way.

Wales and West Utilities.