

Planning Committee: 31 March 2010

Item Number: 7

Application No: W 09 / 1551

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Town/Parish Council: Baginton

Expiry Date: 05/04/10

Case Officer: Rob Young

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Roswood Farm, Coventry Road, Baginton, Coventry, CV8 3AD

Retention of storage containers for self access storage (retrospective application)
FOR Mr R Clements

This application is being presented to Committee in order to request that enforcement action be taken.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Parish Council: Object. Seven of 9 councillors object for the following reasons. Lack of planning permission for the buildings, visual impact adverse, security issues with the proposals and current condition of the site. The neighbours object for the same reason, i.e. on the grounds of visual impact, security of their property and current condition of the site. There also doubts over the accuracy of some of the statements made in the notes accompanying the application:

- The containers are already positioned on the site and are visible from Roswood Farm. The fence is in fact 6' 8" high and does not obscure the containers (8' and 9' 6" heights given on the application).
- The "numerous buildings" on the site - farm shop, poly tunnel, greenhouse etc. have no planning permission.
- The area of the scaffolding yard has been extended into the field in order to accommodate the containers - the fence has been moved.
- The farm shop does not currently supply animal feeds.
- The intended use of the containers is not for self storage - rather for rental for third party use. This facility is currently advertised on the premises and on the roadside. How many containers are needed for box files for a small business?
- When the main gates to the farm shop are locked access to the site has been made by trespassing on Roswood Farm drive and garden. This gives severe security problems.
- The site is already a source of environmental pollution - fires and vermin this would be exacerbated by the proposal.
- The applicant uses Roswood Farm as his address - erroneously. This is unclear to site visitors and very annoying to the West family.

Public response: There have been 2 objections to the proposals, one from the occupiers of the adjacent bungalow (Roswood Farm Bungalow) and one anonymous objection. The following concerns have been raised:

- invasion of privacy for adjacent bungalow;
- loss of security for adjacent bungalow;
- noise and disturbance for adjacent bungalow;

- there are no toilet facilities in the yard;
- the containers are placed on Green Belt land and are an eyesore;
- the established farm yard has plenty of storage spaces in buildings for implements; and
- there are many storage places in the area without spoiling the outlook of the countryside.

The occupier of the adjacent bungalow has also stated that there are inaccuracies in the supporting statement that was submitted with the application. A number of alleged inaccuracies have been pointed out, including the following:

- there have been no previous planning permissions for containers on the site;
- the fence around the site is 6ft 8in, not 7ft 6in;
- the containers are not hidden from view, the tops of the containers can be seen over the fence; and
- the farm shop does not supply animal feeds.

Coventry Airport: No comments received.

WCC (Highways): Object. The Highway Authority does not have any available information regarding the number of trips that the self storage use of such storage containers of this type are likely to generate. As this application is retrospective it is anticipated that the applicant can provide an indication of the trips that are or have been generated by their use to date. Therefore the Highway Authority requests that the applicant submits verifiable information with respect to the trip rates to further enable the Authority to properly assess the impact the proposals will have on the public highway in order to make a considered response.

The applicant has responded to this request for further information and this has been forwarded on to the Highway Authority for further comments. Further comments from the Highway Authority will be included in the addendum report to Planning Committee.

Environmental Health: Comments awaited.

RELEVANT POLICIES

- DAP1 - Protecting the Green Belt (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP1 - Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP2 - Amenity (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP6 - Access (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP14 - Crime Prevention (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP13 - Renewable Energy Developments (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- RAP6 - Directing New Employment (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP9 - Pollution Control (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)

PLANNING HISTORY

In 1980 planning permission was granted for "Erection of stable block and barn" (Ref. W80/0694).

In 1981 planning permission was refused for "Stationing of residential caravan" (Ref. W81/0082).

In 1983 planning permission was refused for "Stationing of mobile home for temporary period" (Ref. W83/0008). A subsequent appeal was dismissed.

In 1986 planning permission was refused for "Use of land as a nursery garden for retail and wholesale use; erection of greenhouses and a single storey building for the making of potting compost and ancillary products" (Ref. W86/0689).

In 1991 planning permission was granted for "Erection of an agricultural managers bungalow" (Ref. W90/1300). This related to Rosswood Farm Bungalow.

In 1991 planning permission was granted for "Erection of an agricultural managers bungalow (amended design)" (Ref. W91/1137). This related to Rosswood Farm Bungalow.

In 1992 planning permission was granted for "Erection of a detached double garage" (Ref. W92/0429). This related to Rosswood Farm Bungalow.

In 2003 planning permission was granted under delegated powers for "Construction of a vehicular access" (Ref. W03/1065). This provided a separate access to Rosswood Farm Bungalow.

In 2006 planning permission was granted for "Change of use of former livestock building and associated yard to the storage of scaffolding. Erection of storage racks for scaffolding (retrospective application)" (Ref. W06/1121). No objection was raised by the Highway Authority to the application.

KEY ISSUES

The Site and its Location

The application relates to a site on the western side of Coventry Road, in open countryside to the south of the village of Baginton. The application site is located within the Green Belt and is situated to the rear of a group of buildings accessed from Coventry Road. Open fields adjoin the northern, southern and western boundaries of the site, while the other buildings of Rosswood Farm are situated to the east. The nearest dwelling is Rosswood Farm Bungalow, to the east of the site.

The site comprises a yard area with a gravel surface and a total of 9 storage containers positioned around the edge. There is a 2m high fence along the northern and western boundaries of the site, and a hedge along the southern boundary. There is a sign adjacent to the site access from Coventry Road advertising the site for self access storage.

Details of the Development

The application proposes the retention of storage containers for self access storage including an extension of the yard into part of the field at the rear of the site. The storage containers are in position and therefore this is a retrospective application.

Assessment

The main issues relevant to the consideration of this application are as follows:

- Green Belt policy and the impact on the openness and rural character of the Green Belt;
- whether this is a sustainable location for new employment development;
- the impact on the living conditions of nearby dwellings; and
- highway safety.

Green Belt policy and the impact on the openness and rural character of the Green Belt

PPG2 and Local Plan Policy DAP1 stipulate a general presumption against "inappropriate" development in Green Belt areas and list specific forms of development which can be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The proposed development does not fall within any of the categories listed in the policies and therefore represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt. PPG2 and Policy DAP1 state that inappropriate development should only be permitted if the applicant can demonstrate very special circumstances to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

I consider that the storage containers represent prominent and incongruous features that extend the built development of the site onto an area where there have previously been no buildings. The development has also extended partly onto an area that was previously an open field. This represents encroachment into the Green Belt and the containers have an industrial and utilitarian appearance that is not in keeping with the rural landscape. The proposals therefore have an urbanising effect that detracts from the openness and rural character of the surrounding area. Whilst the containers may be capable being moved, given the nature of the proposed use they will be permanent features on the site and they are unlikely to be moved if planning permission is granted for their retention.

The applicant has been requested to submit very special circumstances to justify the proposals, and they have made the following comments:

"Rosswood farm shop lies on the outskirts of Baginton village. The farm is on the junction of Stoneleigh Road and Bubbenhall Road and has a relatively level appearance.

Rosswood farm shop is a working small farm and extends to 7.5 acres which is owned by the applicant. The farm enterprise is based on chicken, duck, pig, plants and animal feeds.

Included on the land there is a brick and timber farm shop and numerous outbuildings, greenhouse, polytunnels and buildings to shelter poultry. 1 storage container is used for storage of implements and equipment and 3 for animal feed. The other containers are to be used for self storage. The reason for change of use is that I wanted to stop scaffolding trucks driving through the village and constantly using my yard."

In considering the issue of very special circumstances, I note that the supporting statement largely relates to the existing agricultural use of the site, whereas the proposal is for self access storage units that would be unrelated to the agricultural use. Therefore, I do not consider that the applicant has demonstrated very special circumstances to outweigh the harm to the openness and rural character of the Green Belt. In conclusion on this issue, I am of the opinion that the proposals would cause unacceptable harm to the openness and rural character of the Green Belt and would be contrary to PPG2 and Local Plan Policy DAP1.

Whether this is a sustainable location for new employment development

The site is situated within open countryside and the accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport is poor. Local Plan Policy RAP6 outlines the circumstances in which new employment development will be permitted within the rural area. The proposed development does not comply with any of the criteria of Policy RAP6 and represents a form of development that should usually be located within urban areas. There is currently a large amount of vacant employment premises and land within the urban areas of the District and nearby in Coventry and therefore granting permission for the retention of the storage containers on the application site would result in a dispersal of activity that would prejudice the vitality of nearby urban areas. This would also prejudice the objective of reducing reliance on the private car and would thereby compromise sustainability objectives.

Impact on the living conditions of nearby dwellings

I note the concerns that have been raised by the occupiers of the adjacent bungalow regarding noise and disturbance and loss of privacy. However, I do not consider that a use for self access storage is likely to have any greater impact in these respects compared with the previous use for scaffolding storage or compared with the use of the site as a working farmyard. Therefore I do not consider that a refusal of planning permission could be justified on these grounds.

Highway safety

I note the comments of the Highway Authority. The applicant has responded to these comments and a further response is now awaiting from the Highway Authority. This will be included in the addendum report to Committee. If the

Highway Authority consider that a refusal of planning permission is justified on highway safety grounds, then a further reason for refusal will be recommended.

Other matters

The current proposals differ from the scaffolding storage that was approved in 2006 because they do not relate to the re-use of an existing building. The scaffolding storage proposals related to the re-use of a substantial building on the site, together with some external storage of scaffolding. Consequently this was considered to be in accordance with Local Plan Policy RAP7, which deals with the conversion of rural buildings. The self access storage does not relate to any established buildings. In fact, this has required the installation of new structures on the site, i.e. the storage containers.

I note the concerns that have been raised regarding loss of security for the adjacent bungalow. However, the bungalow has a separate access from Coventry Road and the development has not altered the access arrangements for the application site or the bungalow. Therefore I do not consider that a refusal of planning permission could be justified on grounds of security.

There has been no response from Coventry Airport. However, given the nature of the proposals and the limited height of the containers, I am satisfied that the development does not impact on the operation of the airport.

RECOMMENDATION

1. REFUSE for the reasons listed below.
2. AUTHORISE ENFORCEMENT ACTION to require the use of the site for self access storage to cease, and to require all of the storage containers to be removed from the site. Compliance period to be 2 months.

REFUSAL REASONS

- 1 The site is situated within the Green Belt and the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011 and Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 state that, within the Green Belt, the rural character of the area will be retained and protected. Policy DAP1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011 contains a general presumption against "inappropriate" development in Green Belt areas and lists specific forms of development which can be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The development does not fall within any of the categories listed in the policy and, in the Planning Authority's view, very special circumstances sufficient to justify departing from the development plan have not been demonstrated.

In the opinion of the District Planning Authority, the storage containers represent prominent and incongruous features that extend the built development of the site onto an area where there have previously been no buildings. The development has also extended partly onto an area that was previously an open field. This would represent encroachment into the Green Belt and this would have an urbanising effect that would

detract from the openness and rural character of the surrounding area.

The proposals would therefore be contrary to the aforementioned policies.

- 2 The site is situated within an area of open countryside where accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport is poor. Policy RAP6 of the Warwick District Local Plan outlines the circumstances in which new employment development will be permitted within the rural area. The proposed development does not comply with any of the criteria of Policy RAP6 and represents a form of development that should usually be located within urban areas. There is currently a large amount of vacant employment premises and land within the urban areas of the District and nearby in Coventry and therefore granting permission for the retention of the storage containers on the application site would result in a dispersal of activity that would prejudice the vitality of nearby urban areas. This would also prejudice the objective of reducing reliance on the private car and would thereby compromise sustainability objectives.
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