

Application Ref:	12/01054/FUL
Proposal:	Change use of land for all year round storage of up to 150 touring caravans
Site:	Whitepost Cottage, White Post Road North, Newborough, Peterborough
Applicant:	Mr and Mrs Christopher Clarke
Agent:	N/A
Referred by	Cllr Thacker
Site visit:	24 July 2012
Case officer:	Mr M Roberts
Telephone No.	01733 454410
E-Mail:	mike.roberts@peterborough.gov.uk
Recommendation:	GRANT subject to relevant conditions

1 Description of the site and surroundings and Summary of the proposal

Site and Surroundings

The site lies within the open countryside 1km to the east of Newborough Village and 270m to the west of a roundabout junction of the recently opened realigned A1078 road. The site lies immediately to the south of the B1443 Thorney Road and very close to White Post Road that flanks the western flank boundary of land in the ownership of the applicant. The latter road is bisected by the realigned A1078 road such that Whitepost Road is no longer a through route for traffic. The site itself would occupy an area of 0.43 hectares, the depth of the site being 80m and the width 50m. The site area is located centrally within a group of four fields that internally are marked out with substantially sized native hedgerows with heights being in excess of 4-5m and widths of up to 8m. The two fields either side of the application field also have external boundaries defined by mature hedging of similar substantially sized hedgerows as does the northern boundary of the application immediately beyond which there runs a ditch separating Thorney Road from the application site. These fields have an entirely grassed coverage. These fields cannot be viewed from anywhere other than within the site.

There is a detached dwelling known as Whitepost Cottage on the eastern side of Whitepost Road approximately 160m from the junction of Whitepost Road and Thorney Road. This is served by a 5m wide vehicular access immediately to the south. This access also serves an established car repairs business to the east of the dwelling and also the aforementioned fields beyond. The car repair business comprises a detached barn and parking areas which are not visible from outside of the site. The field immediately to the south east of the application field is being used as a certified touring caravan site for up to 5 caravans. The two larger fields have been used for many years for caravan rallies. The application field and the field immediately to the east have on occasion been used for caravan rallies comprising up to 50 caravans at a time. There is a hamlet of 4 dwellings within Speechly Drove to the north of its junction with Thorney Road.

To the north of the dwelling there is small florists shop with a small accompanying tea room.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for the use of part of the land for the open storage of up to 150 caravans all year round. However, based on the site area and the requirements of each storage pitch it is likely that no more than 100 caravans could be sited within the application field. The site is to be accessed via the existing 5m wide vehicular access shared access with the dwelling house, the car repair business and the fields. The access has an entrance width of 5m with visibility splays. The proposal is to retain all of the mature hedgerows both that surround the application site and the existing neighbouring fields. The proposal does not propose any areas of

hard standing within the site other than an area of gravel at the entrance to the site off the access road.

The current application represents a revised submission following the refusal of an application, (reference 09/00231), for the storage of 204 caravans and within an area of 1.26 hectares. The width of that application site being significantly larger than the current proposal which also involved the removal of all of the existing hedgerows to be replaced with a 2m high earth bund along all of the boundaries. The appeal against the refusal was dismissed.

2 Planning History

Reference	Proposal	Decision	Date
93/P0553	Change of use to service and repair of agricultural machinery and equipment, light commercial vehicles and cars (as amended by layout plan received 9th September 1993)	Application Permitted	13/10/1993
96/P0774	Renewal of planning permission 93/P0553 for repairs and servicing of agricultural machinery, light commercial vehicles and cars	Application Permitted	05/12/1996
99/00639/FUL	Use as horticulture business with shop, polytunnels, plant sales area, growing area and car park	Application Permitted	02/12/1999
09/00231/FUL	Change of use of paddock/agricultural use to all year round caravan storage	Application Refused	09/07/2009

3 Planning Policy

Decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan policies below, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Section 3 – Supporting a prosperous rural economy

Planning should support sustainable growth and the expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, through both the conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings.

Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011)

CS01 – Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside

The location/ scale of new development should accord with the settlement hierarchy. Development in the countryside will be permitted only where key criteria are met.

CS03 – Spatial Strategy for the Location of Employment Development

Provision will be made for between 213 and 243 hectares of employment land from April 2007 to March 2026 in accordance with the broad distribution set out in the policy.

CS14 – Transport

Promotes a reduction in the need to travel, sustainable transport, the Council's UK Environment Capital aspirations and development which would improve the quality of environments for residents.

CS16 – Urban Design and the Public Realm

Design should be of high quality, appropriate to the site and area, improve the public realm, address vulnerability to crime, be accessible to all users and not result in any unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residents.

CS22 – Flood Risk

Development in Flood Zones 2 and 3 will only be permitted if specific criteria are met. Sustainable drainage systems should be used where appropriate.

Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement) (2005)

OIW07 – Employment Uses Outside Identified Areas (Urban Area)

Will be permitted where there would be no adverse amenity impacts, the development would be related to an existing use and of a small scale.

OIW12 – Expansion of Employment Uses in the Open Countryside

Permission will be granted subject to there being no adverse impact on the environment/ local amenity including traffic impacts and acceptable design.

OIW14 – Open Storage

Permission subject to the site being within a General Employment Area/other suitable employment location with suitable screening and resulting in no unacceptable harm to local amenity.

U01 – Water Supply, Sewerage Disposal and Surface Water Drainage

Development will only be permitted if there is or will be adequate capacity and this can be achieved without a detrimental on the environment.

Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (Submission Version 2012)

Whilst this document is not yet adopted planning policy, it is at an advanced stage of preparation. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 216), considerable weight can be given to the policies contained within the document in decision-making.

PP06 – The Rural Economy

In the countryside, development involving the expansion of an existing employment use on its current site will be acceptable for employment uses within Classes B1 to B8, provided that the building is not in such a state of dereliction or disrepair that significant reconstruction would be required.

PP10 – The Transport Implications of Development

Planning permission will only be granted for development if appropriate provision has been made for safe access by all user groups and that the development would not result in an unacceptable impact on any element of the transportation network.

4 Consultations/Representations

Parish Council (17.07.12)

No objections.

National Grid

No comments received

North Level District Internal Drainage Board

No comments received.

Police Architectural Liaison Officer (18.07.12)

No objections, recommendations or observations.

Transport and Engineering Services (30.07.12)

No objections providing that customers visit the site during daylight hours. The junction of Whitepost Road and Thorney Road is safe and adequate to take the level of trips anticipated from the proposal and the access to the site off Whitepost Road is sufficient.

Drainage Team (26.07.12)

Date: 13.08.2012

No surface water drainage implications.

Local Residents/Interested Parties

Initial consultations: 5

Total number of responses: 1

Total number of objections: 0

Total number in support: 0

No neighbour representations have been received.

Cllr Thacker – I have no objections to the proposal for the following reasons:

- The site and adjoining fields are screened by mature hedging which will restrict views of the caravans stored in the field. As a result the caravans would not be visible from nearby vantage points such that there would be no harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside
- Whitepost Road is no longer a through route for traffic following the opening of the new A16 road where as before hand the road was heavily trafficked as a rat run for vehicles travelling to/from the A47 to the south. Thus the level of traffic now having to turn into and out of Whitepost Road is now minimal thereby reducing the potential for accidents.
- Caravan rallies have been held within the application site and the adjacent field for a number of years. These caravans approach and exit the site by the junction of Thorney Road and Whitepost Road and there have been no accidents as a result
- There are existing caravan storage facilities within the Newborough area that have not caused detriment to the visual amenities of the countryside and this proposal is similar to those all of which have had planning permission.

5 Assessment of the planning issues

The main considerations are:-

- **The impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the immediate countryside**
- **The impact of the proposal upon highway safety**
- **The impact of the proposal upon the drainage of water from the site**

The impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the immediate countryside.

The proposal significantly differs from the previous proposal as the mature boundary hedging is to be retained and the site area is significantly smaller. The previous application was to completely open up the current application site and land either side for the storage of caravans through the removal of the boundary hedging and its replacement with 2m high earth bunding along all boundaries which would have introduced a significant intrusion with the immediate countryside to the detriment of its character. The Planning Inspectorate upheld the Councils concerns in this regard.

The current proposal however differs significantly from the previous proposal with a reduction in the storage area and the retention of all of the various mature hedgerows along all boundaries of the application site and the adjoining fields on all sides. This will mean that the caravans would not be visible from outside of the site for the vast majority of the year and thus the storage of them would not have any adverse impacts upon the character and appearance of the immediate countryside.

The impact of the proposal upon highway safety

The previous proposal for the storage of up to 204 caravans was refused due to the lack of a Transport Statement to enable an assessment of the traffic that would be expected to be generated by the caravan storage use, upon highway safety. The Planning Inspectorate supported this requirement. However the Local Highways Authority has not required such a Statement with

regards to the current proposal due to the reduced site area, the reduced number of caravans that would be accommodated and the recent closure of Whitepost Road as a through route for traffic. The planning appeal decision however raised concerns that the number of touring caravan movements associated with the storage facility, to/from Thorney Road to/from Whitepost Road could raise issues of highway safety as vehicles travelling along the Thorney Road could be tempted to overtake them due to the cautious and slower speeds of the drivers towing touring caravans. Further the Planning Inspectorate was not satisfied that the new roundabout junction to the east of the site within the realigned A1078 roadway, now the A16, would reduce the speed of traffic from the roundabout to Whitepost Road given the separation distance between the two.

However, the authority's Highway Control Team is satisfied that the junction of Whitepost Road and Thorney Road has good and sufficient visibility splays that would allow for the safe exit of caravans onto Thorney Road. This is assisted by the reduced number of caravan movements and the major reduction of vehicle movements using Whitepost Road as a short cut for drivers to and from the A47 to the south.

The Planning Inspectors concerns with respect to the speeding of vehicles along Thorney Road approaching its junction with Whitepost Road is still a material consideration in connection with the determination of the current application. In this respect it is considered necessary to impose a temporary period of time to allow the assessment of the touring caravan movements associated with the storage both into and from Whitepost Road. Whilst the application seeks permission for the storage of up to 150 caravans it is considered the initial capacity of the storage of the touring caravans should be limited to a maximum of 50 caravans and be a temporary approval for a period of two years to ensure that the use would not cause harm to highway safety. Further to ensure the safety of the junction of Whitepost Road with Thorney Road the movements of the caravans should be restricted between 9am and 4pm throughout the year as required by the Highways section advice. This time restriction matches that of the submitted information.

In support of the application the applicant has advised that the fields including the application site are used for touring caravan rallies which can comprise up to 40-60 caravans and that these normally involve the arrival and leaving of caravans within a reasonably short time period and that this far this use has not resulted in any vehicle accidents.

The impact of the proposal upon the drainage of water from the site

The boundary bunding proposal, as a part of the previous application, was considered by the Council to make the site susceptible to flooding. However the Planning Inspectorate considered that the drainage of the site could have been dealt with by condition. No objections have been raised by the Drainage Team with respect to the current proposal. The applicant has advised that the field is drained by pipes and that there is to be no alterations proposed to the grassed surface of the field.

6 Conclusions

Subject to the imposition of the attached conditions, the proposal is acceptable having been assessed in the light of all material considerations, including weighting against relevant policies of the development plan and specifically:

- The proposal would not adversely impact upon the character and visual amenities of the immediate rural scene due to the retention of the mature hedgerows that surround the application site and the adjoining fields in accordance with policy CS1 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD. (2011)
- A temporary permission for a two year period with a restriction of 50 caravans is necessary to enable the Authority to ensure that the traffic generated by the use would not be detrimental to highways safety in accordance with policy PP10 Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (Submission Version 2012)

7 Recommendation

The case officer recommends that planning permission is **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions

C1 The caravan storage use hereby approved shall be for a temporary period expiring on 1ST October 2014.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority time to assess the highway safety implications of the use in accordance with policy PP10 Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (Submission Version 2012)

C2 The number of caravans stored on the site shall be limited to 50 in number.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to assess the highway safety implications of the use in accordance with policy PP10 Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (Submission Version 2012)

C3 The vehicle access to the site shall be solely via the existing vehicular access to the application site off Whitepost Road.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy CS14 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011).

C4 No lighting of the site or erection of security fencing shall be implemented unless in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the immediate countryside in accordance with policy CS1 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011).

C5 None of the hedgerows surrounding the application site shall be removed or have their heights altered unless otherwise agreed in accordance with details to be submitted in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter any such works shall accord with the approved details.

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the open countryside in accordance with policy LNE12 of the Peterborough Local Plan 2005 (First Replacement).

Copy to Councillor D N Harrington