

**CHD/13083/9 - Mrs C Denton-Powell**  
**Siting of a Mobile Home, Meadow View Equine Centre,**  
**Ickleton Road, Childrey, Wantage**

**The Proposal**

- 1.1 The application proposes the siting of a temporary mobile home on land at the Meadow View Equine Centre which is situated in open countryside to the south east of the village of Childrey. The site lies close to, but outside, the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is accessed from the B4507. The application site covers an area of approximately ¼ hectare (0.7 acre) and is currently occupied by 9 stables, ancillary storage buildings and an all weather sand school. Additional land of over 6 hectares is also owned/rented by the applicant. A site plan is at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 Fifteen horses are currently housed on the site, of which 12 are in rehabilitation and undergoing treatment, 2 are in full livery and 1 is a dressage horse. The main core of the business is the treatment and care of injured racehorses and approximately 30 – 50 horses are treated in any one year.
- 1.3 The proposed mobile home would be sited on the southern boundary of the application site, adjacent to an existing hedgerow.
- 1.4 This application comes to Committee as the Parish Council has objected.

**2.0 Planning History**

- 2.1 In October 1993 planning permission was granted for the erection of a barn on the application site to house horses. This permission was subject to a legal agreement which prevented any further development on the site. The legal agreement, however, was revoked on 23 May 2003.
- 2.2 In April 1995, retrospective planning permission was granted for the erection of dog kennels on the site and in May 1995 planning permission was granted for the erection of a hay and straw store.
- 2.3 In May 1997 outline planning permission was refused for the erection of a four bedroom chalet bungalow to serve the stables/agricultural land (ref: CHD/13082/3-X). Prior to determining this application, the Council sought expert advice from Reading Agricultural Consultants on the application. Their findings at that time were that the enterprise did not meet the necessary functional and financial tests. A copy of the conclusions of this report is attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 2.4 A retrospective planning application was made in 1998 for the construction of a working/exercise area for horses on land outside the stable yard. This was refused on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1998 and led to the issuing of a number of enforcement notices to remove the works and the unauthorised change of use. An appeal against these notices was dismissed on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1999. The working/exercise area was removed and a smaller manege was created within the permitted equestrian site.
- 2.5** On 26<sup>th</sup> May 1998 planning permission (ref: CHD/13082/5) was also refused for the siting of a mobile home for a temporary period on the site. This refusal was considered jointly with the enforcement appeals referred to above and was dismissed. A copy of the Inspector's decision letter is attached at **Appendix 3**.
- 2.6 On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2001 planning permission was refused for the siting of a mobile home on the site.

**3.0 Planning Policies**

- 3.1 Adopted Local Plan Policy H8 refers to the provision of new housing in open countryside and states that dwellings will only be permitted where a special or exceptional justification exists in connection with a rural enterprise. Policy H12 of the Second Deposit Draft Local Plan states that new houses in open countryside will not be permitted unless they are proved to be essential to meet the needs of an established, viable agricultural or equestrian enterprise. New dwellings which are permitted are required to be located within or adjacent to existing buildings and to be of a size compatible with the enterprise.
- 3.2 Annex A of PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas - sets out the criteria under which applications for permanent and temporary dwellings in open countryside should be judged. This includes the requirement to demonstrate a functional need for a dwelling on the site and a financial test to show that the enterprise is viable and has been established for at least 3 years.
- 3.3 Policy C1 of the adopted Local Plan and Policy GS2 of Second Deposit Draft Local Plan seek to protect the character of the countryside from non-essential development.

#### 4.0 **Consultations**

- 4.1 The Parish Council has objected to the application and a copy of their comments is attached at **Appendix 4.**
- 4.2 The County Footpaths Officer – No objections, but the bridleway should not be obstructed at any time.
- 4.3 I letter of objection has been received on the basis that there has been no material change since the previous applications and appeal. The mobile home would be detrimental to the countryside and would be seen to extend the envelope of the village.
- 4.4 Two letters of support have been received from individual Parish Councillors. They consider that circumstances have changed since the previous refusals on the site and the information submitted with the application now proves a functional need for a dwelling. The site is well screened and the proposal would not conflict with countryside policies.

#### 5.0 **Officer Comments**

- 5.1 The application site is located close to but outside the village of Childrey. It is generally well screened from public vantage points, although buildings on the site are visible from a public bridleway which runs along the access drive. The proposed mobile home would be located close to these buildings and would also be seen from the footpath.
- 5.2 PPS7 requires that applications for temporary dwellings meet the following criteria.
- (i) that there is clear evidence of a firm intention to develop the enterprise;
  - (ii) that a functional need for someone to live on the site has been proven and that this need cannot be fulfilled by an existing dwelling on the site;
  - (iii) that there is clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis; and
  - (iv) other normal planning requirements are met.

PPS7 also makes it clear that planning authorities should not grant temporary planning permission for a mobile home on a site where they would not permit a permanent dwelling.

- 5.3 In order to address the above tests, the application was accompanied by a report from Kernon

Countryside Consultants, which assessed the need for a dwelling on the site. Your Officers have sought independent advice from Reading Agricultural Consultants (RAC) on the proposal. RAC are familiar with the site, having previously given advice to the Council in 1997. A copy of the conclusions of the Kernon report is attached at **Appendix 5** (a full copy is available to see on the application file) and the RAC report is attached in full at **Appendix 6**. Both reports conclude that the equestrian enterprise being run from the site now meets the tests of PPS7 and, particularly, that there is a functional need for a dwelling on the site to support the existing business.

- 5.4 Section 2 above outlines the planning history of the site. It is clear that residential accommodation on the site has been strongly resisted in the past and the siting of a mobile home on the site was dismissed at appeal in 1999.
- 5.5 However, circumstances on the site have changed since that decision was made. In the 1990's, the site was to be run as a stud and at the time of the refusals of planning permission for the permanent dwelling in 1997 and the mobile homes in 1998 and 2001, there was no established equestrian business on the site. This is no longer the case as the evidence suggests that there is now a recognised business on the site centred on the care and rehabilitation of horses and there is evidence that this business is financially sound and likely to grow in the future.
- 5.6 Therefore, despite that site's history and in light of the findings of the most recent RAC report, Officers consider that the proposal does meet the tests of PPS7 and current and proposed Local Plan policies.
- 5.7 The remaining planning consideration is the impact of the mobile home on the character of the landscape. As mentioned above, the site falls outside the AONB and the new mobile home would be located adjacent to existing buildings. The site is not prominent in the landscape and there is good screening on most of the boundaries of the site. Views of the mobile home would be available from the adjacent public footpath, but it would be seen in the context of other buildings on the site and it is not considered that it would have an adverse impact on the landscape.
- 5.8 On the basis of the information supplied with the application and the independent report from RAC, Officers consider that the circumstances now relating to this application are materially different to those which existed in the late 1990's and that there are no longer justifiable grounds to resist the proposal. It is, however, recommended that a three year temporary permission be granted with a condition requiring the occupation of the mobile home to be limited only to those working in connection with the equestrian business.

## 6.0 **Recommendation**

*That temporary planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:*

1. *MC14 Temporary Permission (Buildings) (three years)*
2. *MC19 (equestrian workers occupation)*