

Application No: 16/01028/FULL Full Application

Site: Fernlea, Sway Road, Brockenhurst, SO42 7SG

Proposal: Change of use to house of multiple occupation for use of up to 12 people

Applicant: Mrs C Simons

Case Officer: Deborah Slade

Parish: BROCKENHURST

1. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Contrary to Parish Council view

2. DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATION

Defined New Forest Village

3. PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

CP12 New Residential Development
DP1 General Development Principles

4. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Development Standards SPD

5. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Sec 3 - Supporting a prosperous rural economy
Sec 6 - Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

6. MEMBER COMMENTS

None received

7. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Brockenhurst Parish Council: object to this proposal for the same reasons as for the previous application, the reduction in numbers to 12 persons has not allayed any of the previous concerns. Whilst the councillors were very sympathetic to the intention to provide accommodation for local hotel workers, they are concerned at the potential for noise disturbance to the neighbouring dwellings and increased vehicular movements on the site, possibly at unsocial hours. The potential for increased parking on Sway

Road was also a concern. Once HMO status is granted it would be permanent and future use could be even more disruptive to the neighbours than this proposal.

8. CONSULTTEES

- 8.1 Highway Authority (HCC): No objections provided the gates are widened to 4.5 metres and cycle parking is provided.
- 8.2 New Forest District Council (Employment & Tourism Officer): Supports the proposal as it will support local businesses and will be an economic benefit to the Forest.

9. REPRESENTATIONS

- 9.1 16 letters of objection received, mainly from adjacent residents:
- Concern about who will live there
 - Increased noise
 - Increased traffic movements and insufficient parking and turning space on site
 - Highway safety problems
 - Environmental impacts
 - No supervision of residents
 - Will not provide for Forest residents
- 9.2 Objection received from the Friends of Brockenhurst on grounds of noise and traffic at unsociable hours; impact upon the residential amenity of surrounding neighbouring properties; impact upon the SPA. The proposal is not aimed at the residents of the National Park.
- 9.3 Nine letters of support received, mainly from local businesses who need such accommodation for staff:
- Staff work long hours and need to live close to their work
 - The hotel industry does not pay well enough for staff to live in the New Forest. It is hard to retain senior staff due to the cost of living in the area
 - There is very little other suitable accommodation in the New Forest.

10. RELEVANT HISTORY

- 10.1 Change of use of House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) for use by up to 12 people (16/00854) withdrawn on 29 November 2016
- 10.2 Change of use to domestic residence (Use Class C3) (16/00580) approved on 1 September 2016
- 10.3 Rear conservatory (08/93620) approved on 15 January 2009

11. ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 Fernlea is a 12-bedroom premises, formerly in lawful C2 use as a care home. In 2016, consent was granted to change the building to a single dwellinghouse (C3 use) and then it was converted to a small House of Multiple Occupation (C4 use) under permitted development rights. It is presently lawfully used by up to 6 people as a HMO. The building provides accommodation for young professionals who could not otherwise afford to live in Brockenhurst, many of whom work in hotels in the vicinity of the site.
- 11.2 However the building is already large, having 12 bedrooms, and consent is therefore sought to allow up to 12 people to live in the house. There would be no physical changes necessary to the building to provide for this, although access and parking arrangements would be amended to enable better vehicular access to and from the site.
- 11.3 The main issues to consider are whether the proposal would affect neighbouring amenity or the character of the area; whether this would deliver a form of "affordable" housing for hotel workers; whether it would consequently support local businesses.
- 11.4 As the site comprises a large building which has historically (and until very recently) been used for quite intensive institutional purposes, it is not considered that the proposal would result in a significant increase or impact of activity. Fernlea was most recently used as a specialist residential facility for up to 12 young adults aged 16 to 25 with autistic spectrum disorder, including Asperger's syndrome, associated learning difficulties and complex emotional and behavioural needs. The neighbouring sites comprise Daisybank Cottage, a B&B which accommodates up to 16 people, and the long back gardens of residential properties along Woodlands Road. Fernlea is already equipped with kitchens, utility spaces and a communal lounge so is fully equipped to provide for 12 people in a shared living arrangement. There is sufficient parking space at the back of the site and the nature of the residential activity proposed is not likely to cause undue noise or disturbance to surrounding residential properties, or any other tangible impact upon residential amenity. The building is under-used at present by enabling only 6 of the 12 bedrooms to be used, and the future of the building is likely to be of an institutional nature due to its existing scale and type of accommodation.
- 11.5 The character of the area will change very little as a result of the proposal. The only visible changes will be the removal of 2 parking spaces from the front of the site, and their displacement to the back of the site, and the widening of the front access to allow two cars to pass. This would result in the gate being moved

slightly further back into the site with no consequential impact upon the streetscene. The exact details of the new gates to be provided can be secured by planning condition.

- 11.6 The Authority's policies acknowledge the difficulty of providing and retaining affordable housing in suitable locations. There is also increasing pressure on existing business premises to provide staff accommodation, as evidenced by several recent planning applications at hotels and licensed premises across the Forest. This proposal would make use of a suitable, existing building to meet a particular local need for staff accommodation, and would consequently help to support local businesses to retain staff, thus meeting the Authority's duty to foster economic and social well-being without detracting from the Park's purposes. Allowing accommodation here reduces pressure for accommodation at individual sites throughout the forest.
- 11.7 The application is supported by several local businesses who wish to make use of the proposed accommodation, such as Careys Manor, Forest Park Hotel, Thatched Cottage Hotel, Rhinefield House Hotel and Cottage Lodge Hotel which the applicant runs. The current occupants work at Elmers Court, Lymington and in various restaurants in Brockenhurst. Presently there are only 2 cars between 6 people. The site would provide sufficient on-site parking as required by the Development Standards SPD, and is located where there are good rail and bus links. Cycle parking facilities are also available at the site in an existing outbuilding.
- 11.8 Concern has been raised by local residents about the 'lack of supervision' of the residents. The residents will not require supervision; they have no special requirements and would live in the house in a normal residential fashion. Whilst some may undertake shift work this will not have any significant impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties. The building overall will be managed by the applicant who is based a short distance up Sway Road at Cottage Lodge Hotel.
- 11.9 Given that the building already provides 12 bedrooms it is not considered that it would be reasonable to require SPA mitigation in this instance. As the accommodation already exists, it is only reasonable to assume that it will be in some way inhabited.
- 11.10 Concern has been raised by residents that 12 people will escalate into a greater number of people living at Fernlea. However it is usual with such HMO cases to condition the number of residents; this can be enforced in the normal way. It is therefore recommended that consent is granted subject to conditions.

12. RECOMMENDATION

Grant Subject to Conditions

Condition(s)

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied by the 7th - 12th person until the arrangements for parking and turning within its curtilage (including cycle parking) have been implemented in accordance with drawing 196.01 B. Prior to the installation of any new gates, the details of these shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

These areas shall be kept available for their intended purposes at all times.

Reason: To ensure adequate parking provision is made in the interest of highway safety and to comply with Policies DP1 of the New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (DPD) (December 2010) and Section 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 The number of occupiers within the property shall not exceed 12 persons.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the residential amenity of local residents from intensification of use and to define the nature of the consent for the avoidance of doubt; in accordance with Policy DP1 of the New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (DPD) (December 2010).

- 4 Development shall only be carried out in accordance with:

Drwgs; 196.01 Rev B, 196.02.

No alterations to the approved development shall be made unless otherwise agreed in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable appearance of the building in accordance with policies CP7, CP8, DP6 and DP1 of the New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (DPD) December 2010.

