

Application No: 22/01001FULL Full Application

Site: Land to the North of Beachern Wood, Aldridge Hill,
Brockenhurst SO42 7QD

Proposal: Temporary stationing of a mobile home for agricultural worker;
creation of hardstanding for two vehicles

Applicant: Grainmarket Properties Ltd

Case Officer: Carly Cochrane

Parish: Brockenhurst Parish Council

1. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Contrary to Parish view

2. POLICIES

Principal Development Plan Policies

DP2 General development principles
 DP18 Design principles
 DP31 Agricultural and forestry workers' dwellings
 SP5 Nature conservation sites of international importance
 SP7 Landscape character
 SP15 Tranquillity
 SP17 Local distinctiveness
 SP19 New residential development in the National Park
 SP21 The size of new dwellings

NPPF

Sec 12 - Achieving well-designed places
 Sec 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

3. MEMBER COMMENTS

None received

4. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Brockenhurst Parish Council: Response following Natural England's response:

Recommend refusal. Our original concerns remain about the undesirable and detrimental impacts of this application adjacent to the SSSI.

Initial Response:

Recommend refusal. The site is adjacent to SSSI and any development here would be detrimental to the ecology of the forest.

5. CONSULTEEES

Natural England: No objection, subject to appropriate mitigation being secured.

Reading Agricultural Consultants: The application meets the NPPF, PPG and Local Plan tests for an agricultural worker's temporary dwelling.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

Two letters of representation have been received; one providing support from the owner of the closest neighbouring property (Beachern Wood), and one raising an objection. The concerns raised are summarised as follows:

- Proposal would have a detrimental effect on the natural character and distinctiveness of the location. Any new form of residential use should not be considered to be appropriate development.
- Position of the building is far too prominent- it will be clearly visible from the road and will detract from the scenic beauty and tranquillity of the location.

7. RELEVANT HISTORY

Temporary stationing of a mobile home for agricultural worker; creation of hardstanding for two vehicles (22/00528) withdrawn on 14 October 2022

8. ASSESSMENT

Application Site

- 8.1 The application site comprises an 8.15 hectare parcel of agricultural land split into four paddocks, located to the eastern side of Aldridge Hill, and to the north of the residential properties of Beachern Wood, New Cottage and Little Orchard. There is an existing site access at the south western corner of the site, which is an informal track and forms the southern and part of the eastern site boundary, and which continues eastwards to Ober Farm at Rhinefield Road. To the north east and adjacent to the northernmost paddock is Black Knowl Caravan and Motorhome Club campsite, and Aldridge Hill campsite is to the north west, beyond woodland. Immediately adjacent to the western site boundary is the New Forest SSSI, SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. The site is used for the breeding and keeping of alpaca, and there are two field shelters and two muck clamps adjacent to the eastern site boundary.

Proposed Development

- 8.2 This application seeks permission for the stationing of a mobile home for an agricultural worker within the south western corner of the site close to

the site access, with parking for two vehicles, for a temporary period of three years. The mobile home is required in order to allow a shepherd to live on site to provide constant supervision of the herd for the wellbeing of the animals.

Consideration

8.3 By way of background, a similar application was withdrawn in 2022 following the receipt of Reading Agricultural Consultants comments, who were unable to conclude that the application met the relevant NPPF, PPG and Local Plan tests for a temporary agricultural worker's dwelling due to the lack of and incorrect information submitted.

8.4 In respect of the relevant policy background, paragraphs 79 and 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) set out:
“To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

(a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside...”

8.5 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states:

“Considerations that it may be relevant to take into account when applying paragraph 79a of the NPPF could include:

- evidence of the necessity for a rural worker to live at, or in close proximity to, their place of work to ensure the effective operation of an agricultural, forestry or similar land-based rural enterprise (for instance, where farm animals or agricultural processes require on-site attention 24-hours a day and where otherwise there would be a risk to human or animal health or from crime, or to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or products);
- the degree to which there is confidence that the enterprise will remain viable for the foreseeable future;
- whether the provision of an additional dwelling on site is essential for the continued viability of a farming business through the farm succession process;
- whether the need could be met through improvements to existing accommodation on the site, providing such improvements are appropriate taking into account their scale, appearance and the local context; and
- in the case of new enterprises, whether it is appropriate to consider granting permission for a temporary dwelling for a trial period.”

- 8.6 Policy DP31 of the adopted Local Plan sets out that permission will be granted for an agricultural worker's dwelling provided:
- a) The nature of the work concerned makes it essential for one or more people engaged in the enterprise to live at, or very close to, their place of work;
 - b) The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned;
 - c) No other dwellings either on or closely connected to the holding/enterprise have been sold separately or in some way alienated from the holding/enterprise;
 - d) The size of the proposed dwelling would not result in the maximum total internal habitable floor area exceeding 100 square metres; and
 - e) Where practicable and appropriate, first consideration has been given to the conversion of an existing building under Policy DP49.
- 8.7 Where evidence of the financial soundness and future sustainability of the holding/enterprise appears inconclusive, consideration may be given to permitting a caravan or other temporary accommodation for a limited period in order to provide time for the viability of the enterprise to be proven.
- 8.8 As an aside, and in relation to the provisions of paragraphs 79 and 80 of the NPPF, it is not considered that an application made solely on this basis would be successful as the site would not be considered 'isolated' for the purposes of these paragraphs. However, Policy DP31 is considered to align with national policy and essentially provides for such dwellings in all locations within the National Park, subject to compliance with all relevant policy criteria.
- 8.9 In relation to criterion a) of Policy DP31, the nature of the work relates to the breeding and keeping of alpacas, with the long-term objective of establishing a stable, commercial herd producing fleece and fibre for sale, and some stock would be sold. As owners of livestock, the applicants have a legal responsibility to ensure that their stock is kept in a manner which accords them freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition; appropriate comfort and shelter; the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment of injury, disease or infestation; freedom from fear; and freedom to display most normal patterns of behaviour. In terms of labour requirements, it is considered that there is an essential need for a person/s to be readily available at most times.
- 8.10 In relation to criterion b), there are no other dwellings on the land. The property of 'Beachern Cottage' is currently on the market for £895,000. It is separated from the application site by three other properties and there is no natural surveillance. It does not have any land associated with it. It is considered that this property is unlikely to be financially viable or suitable to serve the need.
- 8.11 In relation to criterion c), there are no other dwellings which have been sold or severed from the holding, and in relation to criterion e), there are

no other buildings the land which are redundant or suitable for conversion to habitable purposes. Criterion d) requires the dwelling to be limited to a maximum of 100sqm in floorspace, which also aligns with Policy SP21 of the Local Plan. The proposed mobile home would have a floorspace of 100sqm, and overall, the proposal would be in accordance with criteria a) to e) of DP31.

- 8.12 As aforementioned, the previous application was withdrawn based on comments from Reading Agricultural Consultants. Significantly more financial information has been provided with this application such that Reading Agricultural Consultants have been able to objectively conclude that the business could be profitable and sustainable within three years. The proposal therefore meets all criteria of Policy DP31.
- 8.13 The design of the mobile home would be of a 'log cabin' style and therefore would be constructed using timber boarding on a brick plinth, with a slate roof. There would not be an excessive amount of glazing, and overall, the design is considered acceptable. Concern has been raised that the dwelling would be prominent and visible from outside the site. The western site boundary is formed of hedgerows and vegetation which provides adequate screening, however, it is reasonable to suggest that the dwelling would be visible from outside the site. It is noted that the ground levels rise west to east, and therefore should the proposed dwelling be located further east, it is likely it would be unduly prominent within the landscape. The proposed siting relates well to the access and is set against a backdrop of woodland when viewed from the north. Overall, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any significantly adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area. Information regarding lighting is not detailed within the application and a condition is therefore necessary seeking details of any lighting to ensure that the dark skies of the immediate area are retained in compliance with Policy SP15 (tranquillity).
- 8.14 Whilst there are residential properties to the south of the site, there are significant separation distances between, as well as screening in the form of trees and vegetation. Overall, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any significantly adverse impact upon neighbouring amenity.
- 8.15 The site is located adjacent to the New Forest SPA and there is therefore the likelihood of increased recreational pressure on this area from the additional dwelling. In accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('the Habitat Regulations') an Appropriate Assessment has been carried out as to whether granting planning permission would adversely affect the integrity of the New Forest and Solent Coast European sites, in view of that site's conservation objectives. The Assessment concludes that the proposed development would, in combination with other developments, have an adverse effect due to the recreational impacts on the European sites, but that the adverse impacts would be avoided if the planning permission were to be conditional upon the approval of proposals for the mitigation of that impact in accordance with the Authority's adopted Mitigation Strategy (2020). In relation to urban edge effects, due to the expected small scale

and wide distribution of individual windfall developments, the Local Plan HRA judged that these were not likely to give rise to significant urban edge effects on New Forest SAC or SPA, either individually or in combination with other windfall developments within 400m of the New Forest SAC and SPA.

- 8.16 Natural England have advised that there is uncertainty as to whether future housing and visitor accommodation development will adversely impact the protected habitats of the Solent due to increased levels of nitrates entering the system. In accordance with Natural England's advice to local planning authorities along the Solent coast, the potential impacts from nitrates have been considered in assessing this application. The applicant has provided a nitrate mitigation checklist which sets out the applicant's willingness to accept a Grampian condition in order to secure an appropriate avoidance and mitigation package in respect of nitrates. Subject to securing appropriate mitigation, the Authority's obligations as a 'competent authority' under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 are met, and Natural England are satisfied with this approach.

Conclusion

- 8.17 It is therefore recommended that permission be granted subject to conditions, as the proposal is in accordance with Policies DP2, DP18, DP31, SP5, SP7, SP15, SP17 and SP21 of the adopted Local Plan 2016-2036 (2019).

9. RECOMMENDATION

Grant (TP)

Condition(s)

1. The building shall be removed and the use shall cease on or before 26 September 2026 and the land restored to a condition which has first been agreed in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority.

Reason: The need for a permanent dwelling at the site has not and cannot at this stage be justified in accordance with Policy DP31 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019).

2. Development shall only be carried out in accordance with drawing nos:

190301-01, 190301-160, 190301-170, 190301-161, LDS/15240
TP1

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 SP16, SP17, DP18 and DP2 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016- 2036 (August 2019).

3. Unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority the external facing and roofing materials shall be as stated on the application form hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable appearance of the building in accordance with Policy DP2 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016- 2036 (August 2019).

4. No external lighting shall be installed on the site unless details of such proposals have been submitted to and approved in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the area in accordance with Policies DP2 and SP15 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019).

5. The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working, in the locality in agriculture or in forestry, or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependants.

Reason: The dwelling is only justified on the basis that it is necessary to provide accommodation for an agricultural worker in accordance with Policy DP31 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019).

6. All materials, machinery and any resultant waste materials or spoil shall be stored within the red line application site unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the New Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest in accordance with Policy SP6 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019).

7. Prior to the commencement of development the applicant shall provide:

- a) A water efficiency calculation in accordance with the Government's National Calculation Methodology for assessing water efficiency in new dwellings has been undertaken which demonstrates that no more than 110 litres of water per person per day shall be consumed within the development, and this calculation has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority;

b) A mitigation package addressing the additional nutrient input arising from the development has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Such mitigation package shall address all of the additional nutrient load imposed on protected European sites by the development when fully occupied and shall allow the Local Planning Authority to ascertain on the basis of the best available scientific evidence that such additional nutrient loading will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the protected European sites, having regard to the conservation objectives for those sites; and

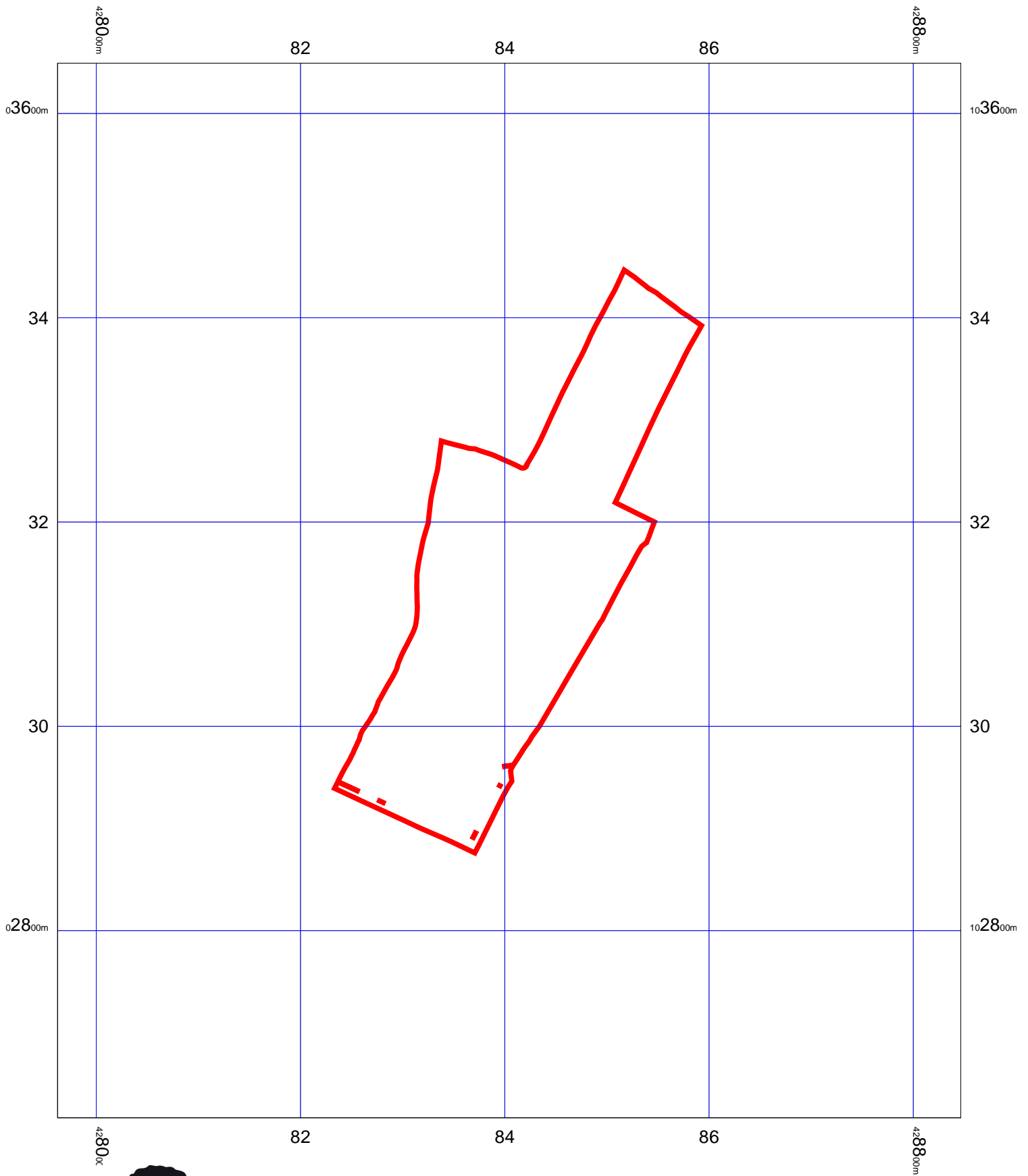
c) All measures forming part of that mitigation package have been provided to the Local Planning Authority.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with and subject to the above details.

Reason: There is existing evidence of high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus in the water environment with evidence of eutrophication at some European designated nature conservation sites in the Solent catchment. To ensure that the proposal may proceed as sustainable development, there is a duty upon the Local Planning Authority to ensure that sufficient mitigation is provided against any impacts which might arise upon the designated sites. In coming to this decision, the Authority has had regard to Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and Policy SP5 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan (2016 - 2036).

8. Prior to the commencement of development ecological mitigation for the Solent and New Forest Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority. The ecological mitigation may take the form of a planning obligation which secures financial contributions in accordance with the Authority's Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the Solent (SRMP) Explanatory Note.

Reason: To safeguard sites of international ecological importance in accordance with Policies SP5 and SP6 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019), the Authority's Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the SRMP.



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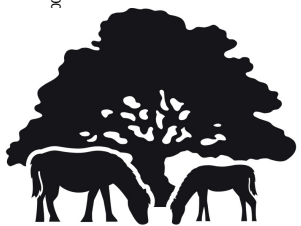
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NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

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