

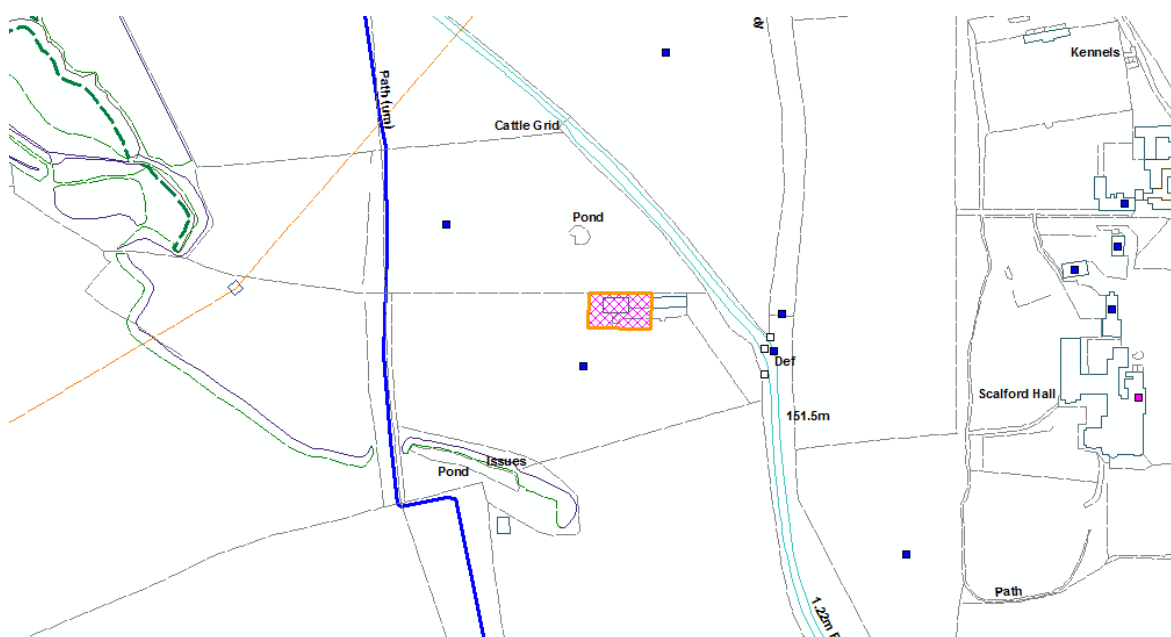
Reference: 14/00145/FUL

Date submitted: 20th February 2014

Applicant: Melton District Scouts

Location: Field OS 4821, Holwell Lane, Scaford

Proposal: Replacement of existing male and female toilet/shower block, classroom/sleeping accommodation and two storage containers with a purpose built timber frame building.



Introduction:-

The Holwell Pastures Scout Camp Site is owned and managed by the Melton District Scouts, providing a facility for groups of youths of varying ages for camping and outdoor pursuits. The site is located approximately 4 miles to the north of Melton Mowbray, and 1 mile to the south east of the village of Holwell. To the east of the site is the Scaford Hall and Nursing Home, approximately 240 metres away.

The application proposes a new purpose built timber building to replace some of the existing buildings and storage containers at the site which are used for classroom/sleeping accommodation, male and female toilets and showers, storage and a rifle range. The new building will incorporate a modern toilet/shower, including disabled, improved facilities and access.

It is considered that the main issues relating to the application are:

- **Compliance with planning policy relating to the rural location**
- **Impact upon the open countryside**
- **Impact upon highway safety**

The application is required to be considered by the Committee as the application is contrary to the development plan.

Relevant History:

There is no relevant history at the site.

Development Plan Policies:

Melton Local Plan (saved policies):

Policies OS2, R3 and BE1

OS2 states that planning permission will not be granted for development outside town and village envelopes unless, among other things, it is essential to the operational requirements of agriculture and forestry.

R3 states that planning permission will be granted for recreation facilities outside the village envelopes provided that there would be no adverse effects on the appearance or character of the locality; the size, scale, design and appearance of the buildings are in keeping with the character of the area, and that there would be no adverse effects on residential amenity. There should also be satisfactory access and parking provided.

BE1 states that planning permission will not be granted for new buildings unless among other things, they are designed to harmonise with their surroundings, they would not adversely affect the amenity of neighbours and there is adequate access and parking provisions.

The National Planning Policy Framework was published 27th March 2012 and replaced the previous collection of PPS. It introduces a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ meaning:

- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; *or*
 - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

The NPPF offers direction on the relative weight of the content in comparison to existing Local Plan policy and advises that **whilst the NPPF does not automatically render older policies obsolete, where they are in conflict, the NPPF should prevail.**

It establishes 12 planning principles against which proposals should be judged. Relevant to this application are those to:

- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made to respond positively to wide opportunities for growth.
- Always seek to ensure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings
- Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving communities within it.
- Promote mixed use development, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some land can perform many functions, such as for recreation.

On Specific issues relevant to this application it advises:

Supporting a prosperous rural economy

Policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development (paragraph 28). To promote a strong rural economy, LPAs should:

- Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations, where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres.

The National Planning Policy Framework does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be

approved and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. (NPPF paragraph 12).

Consultations:-

Consultation reply	Assessment of Head of Regulatory Services
<p>Highway Authority: No observations</p> <p>There is no change proposed to the access to the site which is from Holwell Lane. The lane itself is quite narrow, but has space for two cars to pass. The site access is sufficient for a car to stand clear of the highway whilst the gate is opened, and there is a large amount of space within the site for car parking and turning.</p> <p>The main route to and from the site would be from Scalford Road, which is to the south east of the site. Holwell Lane becomes single track with passing places and cattle grids to the north of the site towards Holwell village.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The proposal makes no amendments to the existing access and parking arrangements at the site which are considered to be sufficient for the use. Holwell Lane is not a particularly busy road, and the vehicle movements would be primarily when the children are being dropped off or picked up from the site. The parking provision is all off-street and it is considered that the visibility when exiting the site is good.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that the proposal would be able to be accommodated within the highway network and would not have an impact on highway safety, and complies with policy BE1 in this respect.</p>
<p>Parish Council: No objections</p> <p>The Parish Council have no objections to the proposal.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>LCC Ecology – No comments</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>It is not considered that the proposal would cause harm to any protected species.</p>

Representations:

The consultation was publicised by way of a site notice being posted at the entrance to the site. One letter of objection, and one letter of support were received in relation to the application.

Consideration	Assessment of Head of Regulatory Services
<p>Use of the Site</p> <p>The site has been used for weddings and parties previously, creating noise and traffic disruption in the area. New facilities will be more attractive for letting to third parties. The site should be conditioned so that this cannot happen.</p>	<p>It would appear from the history of the site that temporary event notices were granted for parties at the site previously. The licensing of the site is however separate to planning – in that even if this building is not granted permission, further temporary event notices can be granted at the site for the existing buildings / land or both. Private parties do not require the benefit of a license; any noise nuisance for this would be dealt with environmental health. If a license is required for regulated activities considerations include the potential for public nuisance.</p> <p>The site is approximately 250m from the nearest residential dwelling (to the east). This separation distance is considered to be satisfactory to ensure that there would be minimal disturbance from any temporary events taking place at the site, or private parties.</p> <p>Therefore it is considered that the proposal would not cause a noise nuisance to nearby</p>

	residential dwellings, nor would it cause highways safety issues.
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Other material considerations (not raised through consultation of representation)

Consideration	Assessment of Head of Regulatory Services
<p>Application of the Development Plan Policies</p> <p>Whilst the proposal is supported by policy R3 of the Melton Local Plan, it is not supported by policy OS2 as it is not considered to be small in scale.</p> <p>Policy R3 as stated above allows for the creation of recreational facilities outside of the village envelopes provided that there would be no adverse effects on the appearance or character of the locality, and that the size, scale, design and appearance of the buildings are in keeping with the character of the area. In terms of policy OS2, the proposed building is not considered to be particularly small in scale, hence the conflict in policy terms.</p>	<p>The building proposed would have a footprint of 33.09m x 11.7m, and would replace 5 separate buildings on site. These buildings have a smaller overall footprint when measured separately, but overall occupy a similar amount of space on site. The building would have an overall height of 4.235m, and eaves height of 2.5m, and a pitched roof.</p> <p>Whilst it is accepted that the building could not be considered to comply with OS2 as it would not be small in scale, this needs to be balanced against the benefits that the proposal would create at the site. At present there are a number of separate buildings and containers on the site which are not considered to contribute to the character of the open countryside. This building, whilst larger would reduce the amount of buildings on site, and would be built of timber, to better reflect the countryside character of the area. The building to a certain extent looks more agricultural in style due to the proposed timber construction.</p> <p>The building will provide additional benefits to the local scout group, providing better, more suitable accommodation for the children using the site for camping and outdoor pursuits. It is considered that the proposal is supported in part by policy R3, and that the benefits of the proposal outweigh the potential conflict with policy OS2 in this case. The NPPF seeks to support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit communities and respect the character of the countryside.</p> <p>It is considered that the proposal will support the scouts group that many children who live in and around the Melton area attend. Due to the design it is considered that the proposal will not cause any harm to the open countryside and is supported in general by the NPPF, and policy R3 of the Melton Local Plan.</p>
<p>Design</p>	<p>The proposed building, as discussed above will have a footprint measuring 33.09m x 11.7m, with a ridge height of 4.235m and an eaves height of 2.5m. The building will be constructed of cedar wood timber boarding, with 5 courses of engineering bricks at the base. The roof will be made of concrete interlocking tiles. The windows and doors will have roller shutter security grills painted green for additional security, and there will be a disabled ramp for access on the North elevation. There will</p>

	<p>be additional doors and windows on the South elevation (principal elevation), a large roller shutter door on the east elevation and further windows on the west elevation.</p> <p>It is considered that the building will blend in well in the countryside location due to the materials and colours proposed to be used. It will be partially screened to the east by the remaining existing buildings on site. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with policy BE1 and the NPPF which seeks to ensure that new buildings are well designed.</p>
<p>Impact upon the open countryside</p>	<p>The design of the building with a pitched roof ensures that the building will remain well screened by the trees and hedgerows to the west of the development, and the existing buildings to the east will also provide an adequate level of screening. Scalford Hall which lies approximately 250m to the east also has dense screening in the way of mature trees and hedges, therefore it is considered that the building will not have an impact upon the Hall. The building will be well related to the existing development on the site, and will be constructed of materials which are considered to be sympathetic to the countryside location.</p> <p>It is considered that the overall impact upon the open countryside of the building will not be detrimental to the appearance of the open countryside, and would comply with policy BE1 of the Melton Local Plan.</p>
<p>Amenity The building is set back from the road by approximately 55 metres, behind existing buildings which are proposed to remain. The closest existing dwellings are approximately 250 metres to the east (Scalford Hall) and are well screened by mature trees and bushes.</p>	<p>It is considered that the continued use of the site by the scout group with new / upgraded facilities would not create any significant further disturbance, loss of amenity or residential privacy to any of the dwellings (or the residential care home) to the East.</p> <p>Therefore it is considered that the proposal complies with policy BE1 in this respect.</p>

Conclusion

The proposal lies within the open countryside, set back from the highway, and is considered to satisfy the requirements of policy R3 of the Melton Local Plan. It is not considered to meet the requirements of policy OS2 as it is not considered to be small in scale, however it is supported in general by paragraph 28 of the NPPF which seeks to support a prosperous rural economy. The building is considered to be well designed, with consideration of its countryside location in terms of the proposed materials, and the overall height combined with the agricultural feel of the look of the building. The proposal is not considered to have any negative impact on the safety of users of the highway, nor is it considered to have any negative impact upon the residential privacy or amenity of dwellings in the vicinity. Therefore, the application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:- Approve, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. This decision relates to the approved plans numbered MDS-HCS-NB-01 (rev D), MDS-HCS-NB-02 (rev D), MDS-HCS-NB-03 (rev D), MDS-HCS-NB-05 (rev B), MDS-HCS-NB-08 and MDS-HCS-NB-09.
3. The building hereby permitted is for the use of Melton District Scouts and those ancillary to that organisation.
4. The external materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall be in strict accordance with those specified in the application unless alternative materials are first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details

The reasons for the conditions are:-

1. To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. For the avoidance of doubt.
3. To ensure that the use of the building is in connection with scouting activities on the site.
4. To ensure a satisfactory standard of external appearance.

Officer to contact: **Mrs Sarah Legge**

Date: 8th April 2014