

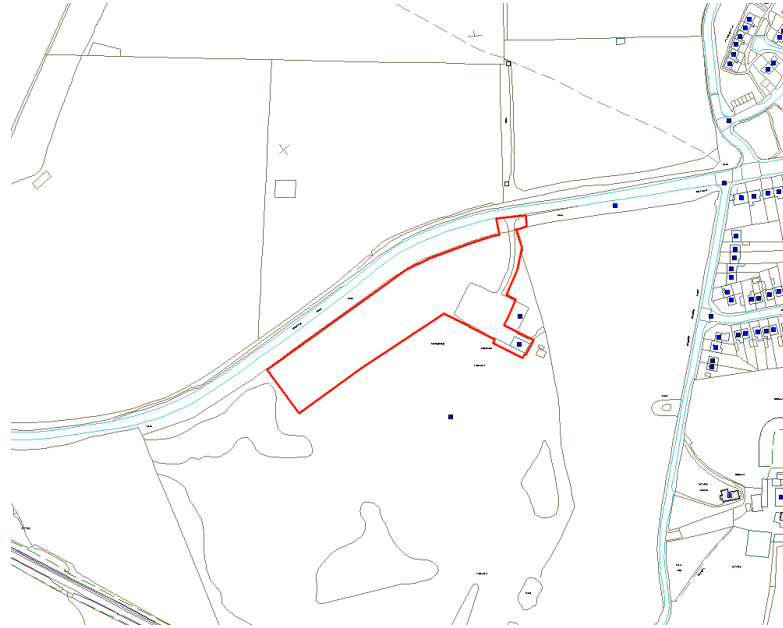
Reference: 12/00128/FUL

Date submitted: 21.02.2012

Applicant: Melton Mowbray Town Estate

Location: Asfordby Road Sports Ground, Asfordby Road, Melton Mowbray

Proposal: Extension and refurbishment of existing building to provide reception, toilets and changing rooms, golf retail area, cafe and multi use community room. Extension of existing camping and caravan facility to provide 50 pitches. Provision of 2 no all weather tennis courts and improvement to existing access and car parking.



Proposal :-

This application relates to full planning permission for expansion to an existing golfing facility which also operates as certified caravan site. The site lies outside of the town envelope falling within open countryside. The proposal seeks to extend and improve the offer currently available on the site by extending the existing building to providing a golf retail area, café and multi use community room. Two all weather tennis courts are proposed along with improvements to the access and car parking areas. As a certified caravan site they wish to expand the touring site to provide 50 pitches for use by caravans and to accommodate camping giving greater choice to visitors/tourists. Improved landscaping is to be provided to enhance the site.

It is considered that the main issues for consideration of the application are:-

- **Impact upon highways**
- **Impact upon the character of the area**
- **Compliance with the development plan policies**

The application is presented to Committee due to recommendation departing from the local plan.

Relevant History:-

11/00890/FUL – Planning permission has recently been granted for a modular building to be sited within the grounds of the sport grounds to operate as a child day care facility. Granted on the 3rd February 2012.

Planning Policies:-

The National Planning Policy Framework was published 27th March 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- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless: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 also offers advice on the weight to be given to ‘emerging’ policy (i.e the LDF) depending on its stage of preparation, extent of unresolved (disputed) issues and compatibility with the NPPF.

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

- **Support sustainable economic development.**
- **Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it.**
- **Promote mixed use development, encouraging multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas.**
- **Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable**
- **Take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.**

On Specific issues relevant to this application it advises:

Building a Strong Competitive Economy

- Planning should encourage growth, not prevent it and should plan proactively to encourage economic growth.
- Significant weight should be given to the need to support economic growth.

Ensuring the vitality of Town Centres

- Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres.
- Allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well connected to the town centre where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available.

- When assessing proposals for retail, leisure and office development outside of the town centres which are not in accordance with an up to date Local Plan an impact assessment shall be required.

Supporting Prosperous Rural Economy

- Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both new buildings and conversions.
- Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside.

Promoting Sustainable Transport:

- Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people.
- Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe.

Promoting Healthy Communities:

- Plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.
- Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

“Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism 2006” – provides guidance on the role of planning in tourism development. It also underlines the importance of protecting and enhancing the visual quality of sites to ensure the development fits in well with its environs. Annex 1 addresses accommodation and advises:

- Planners should carefully weigh the objective of providing adequate facilities and sites with the need to protect landscapes and environmentally sensitive sites.
- New sites that are close to existing settlements and other services will generally be more sustainable as some local services may be accessed by means other than by car.

The East Midlands Regional Plan - contains advice on regional priorities for tourism. Tourism is a growth industry desirable not only for the economic benefits obtained but also important in improving the quality of life in the region. Day visitors provide economic benefits but also mean that the environmental impact is proportionately large due to additional car traffic. Increasing the portion of visitors who stay overnight is therefore a regional priority. The plan seeks to encourage provisions for additional tourist facilities, including accommodation, close to popular destinations that have adequate environmental and infrastructure capacity, particularly those within walking and cycling distance.

Melton Local Plan (saved policies):

Policy OS2 - does not allow for development outside the town and village envelopes shown on the proposals map **except** for development essential to the operational requirements of agriculture and forestry, and small scale development for employment, recreation and tourism.

Policy BE1 - Siting and design of buildings: Allows for new buildings subject to criteria including the design harmonising with the surroundings, no adverse impact on neighbouring properties by loss of privacy or outlook, adequate space around and between buildings being provided and adequate access and parking arrangements being made

Policy R4 – Flood lighting: allows floodlighting to be constructed on recreational grounds providing there would not be a detrimental impact upon the amenity of the area or residential amenities and that they would not cause a hazard to motorists.

The Melton LDF Core Strategy (Publication) Development Plan document: The Core Strategy has been published and is currently coming to the end of a 6 week consultation period. The DPD seeks to support small scale attractions based on enjoying the countryside, historic town and villages, churches, events, festivals, waterways and food. Holiday accommodation (holiday lodges, caravans) linked to existing attractions may also be acceptable.

There are a number of policy objectives contained within the Core Strategy which apply to this proposal and will attract some weight given its close reflection to the NPPF.

Policy CS9 Rural Economic Development – seeks to support and help regenerate the Boroughs rural economy. Through allowing small-scale expansion or intensification of businesses in the countryside, which are not detrimental to their rural location. In regards to tourism and leisure activities they should be sensitive to the character of the area.

Policy CS13: Countryside – seeks to protect the rural environment by requiring development to be of a high standard which respects the character of its location; surroundings, and setting. The form and appearance of development should reinforce its sense of place and take into account the Melton Landscape Character Assessment.

Policy CS18: Indoor Sport and Recreation Facilities – sets out the vision to meet demand for sport and recreation facilities by 2026. To assist with these endeavours will be to seek to retain existing sports, recreation, swimming, community and village halls whilst developing long term management and investment plans for existing or replacement facilities in partnership with Sport England, the relevant sports clubs, their governing bodies, the Town Estate, Parish Councils and other partners.

The Melton Landscape and Character Assessment: The assessment identifies 20 Landscape Character Areas within the Borough. New development in the rural area, for whatever purpose it may be for, should be appropriate in scale, design and environmental limitations when weighed against the benefit of the development proposed. Negative impacts on sensitive and historic landscapes, including buildings and structures, are generally not acceptable. Where such impacts occur it is expected that suitable mitigation measures to form part of the development package.

Consultations:-

Consultation reply	Assessment of Head of Regulatory Services
<p>Highways Authority: No objection subject to conditions relating to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to the access are carried out in accordance with the submitted details • No gates within 15 metres of the highway boundary. • Car parking and turning hard surfaced and marked out. • Footpath link provided through the site to Sysonby Grange • Flood lights to have shielding 	<p>Access to the site is from Asfordby Road which is a classified road. The site is in use as a golfing leisure facility but more recently planning permission has been granted for a Day nursery to operate from the site. The access and driveway are to be improved as part of the proposal and a footpath is to be created along the inside boundary of the site to link with Sysonby Grange to encourage walking into the town.</p> <p>There is amply hard standing parking areas available within the site and this is to be improved with additional over flow spaces when demand arises. In total 66 parking spaces will be made available.</p> <p>The tennis courts are to be positioned at the</p>

	<p>northeast corner of the site and will be flood lit by 6 no. 8 metre high columns. The flood lighting will be within 15 meters of the highway and the Highways Authority have requested that the lights have shields fitted in order that the luminance of the light source(s) is not a hazard to the safety of road users. A condition has been proposed.</p> <p>The Highways Authority have not objected to the expansion nor raised any concerns in regards to the mixed uses that would take place on the site. It is considered that the increase in activity on the site would not have a detrimental impact upon highway safety.</p>
<p>Melton Borough Council Environment Health Officer:</p> <p>Cafe area is not suitable for preparation of hot and cold food as the area is too small.</p>	<p>The agent has confirmed that there is no intention of providing hot and cold food and that the cafe area will only serve hot and cold drinks along with pre packed snacks.</p> <p>Given that the area is not of adequate size for full café facilities a condition should be imposed to restrict the use of the area to that described by the agent.</p>

Representations:

A site notice and press notice was posted and neighbouring properties consulted. As a result 1 letter of objection from the Melton District Civic Society has been received to date commenting on the following;

Representation	Assessment of Head of Regulatory Services
<p>Impact upon the character of the area:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 pitches is excessive and would be viewed from the major road 	<p>The site currently operates under a certified license which allows for 5 caravans at any one time. The proposal seek to extend this facility by providing individual camping and caravan plots but it is envisaged to be short term and seasonal in that it will only run at capacity during bank holidays and school holidays.</p> <p>The site is bound by a dense mature hedge along the highway boundary which is separated by a wide grass verge up to 13 metres wide in some places. The site slopes considerably from east to west.</p> <p>It is considered that given the screening and separation distance from the highway that only limited views of the roofs of the caravans will be visible therefore the impact will be negligible from the main route into town.</p>
<p>Highway concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The position of the Tennis courts could result in tennis balls being hit out into the path of oncoming traffic causing a danger. 	<p>The tennis courts are to be positioned at the northeast corner of the site closest to the access road. The tennis courts will be enclosed by a chainmail fence which will run on the inside of the existing boundary hedge adjacent the highway verge at a height of 5 metres, reducing to 3 metres</p>

	on the other three sides. The grass verge is at its widest at this point and no concerns have been raised by the Highway Authority.
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Other material considerations (not raised through consultation or representation)

Consideration	Assessment of Head of Regulatory Services
<p>Compliance (or otherwise) with Planning Policy</p> <p>Policy OS2 provides a general presumption against development in the open countryside except for limited small scale development for recreation and tourism which is not significantly detrimental to the appearance and rural character of the open countryside.</p> <p>The site is located in the open countryside being outside of the Town Envelope and in terms of the principle and policy in question it is considered that the proposal must be considered against the policies contained within policy OS2 of the Melton Local Plan and the emerging LDF Core Strategy.</p>	<p>Tourism and leisure is one of the most important sectors of the rural economy. Local tourist attractions range from major attractions such as Belvoir Castle and twin Lakes to small tea rooms and craft work shops. There is potential for the local tourism industry to grow but in a way that is sensitive to the character of the area. The Local Development Framework Core Strategy (Publication) seeks to support small scale attractions based on enjoying the countryside, historic town and villages, churches, events, festivals, waterways and food. Advising that holiday accommodation (holiday lodges, caravans) linked to existing attractions may also be acceptable.</p> <p>The site currently has a recreational and leisure use, with a more recent use permitted for a child day care nursery. Whilst the extension of the building to improve the golfing facility and addition of the tennis courts accords with the local plan the expansion of the touring facility cannot be considered to be small scale and therefore conflicts with the terms of policy OS2. However in assessing the proposal it is necessary to consider more recent policy influences, if there would be a degree of harm resulting from the development and assess whether any benefits which may outweigh any potential harm.</p> <p>In considering the impact of tourism and leisure activities the Core Strategy advises that they should be sensitive to the character of the area. The site is close to the town centre and already operates as a sports facility with some tourist/leisure use permitted. The positioning of the additional plots will be alongside the existing boundary hedge, running along the northern boundary. An internal track will run between the two rows of plots, the southern plots being arranged more randomly to break up the uniformed row on the north. Additional tree planting is proposed with the creation of children's play spaces to provide screening from the golf course and the views beyond.</p> <p>It is considered that there would be a limited</p>

<p>National Planning Policy Framework establishes 12 core planning principles against which proposals should be judged. Relevant to this application are those to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support sustainable economic development. • Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it. • Promote mixed use development, encouraging multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas. • Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable • Take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. 	<p>degree of harm to the countryside when viewed from the south however this is to be mitigated by a landscaped screening belt with native species trees and shrub planting.</p> <p>The NPPF introduces a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ and recognises that edge of town centre sites for main town centre uses may be appropriate if they are well connected to the town centres and where there are no suitable or viable sites available in the centre.</p> <p>In location terms the site is relatively sustainable being in close proximity to the town centre and served by public transport. However visitors and tourists may not be conceived as sustainable as they are more likely to use the car to visit other attractions within the Borough and neighbouring towns. Melton has good transport links which will offer an alternative choice of transport and this should be promoted by the site operatives. However there are economic benefits to be derived from the mixed use proposal which are considered to outweigh the unsustainable behavior pattern of tourist. The development is likely to generate economic benefits to the Borough and not just the town centre as visitors will spend more in the locality, visiting the Borough’s attractions. The NPPF seeks to promote and support rural economic development providing it can be considered as sustainable.</p> <p>The enhancement of the existing facilities such as the golfing shop, addition of the tennis courts and community room (exercise classes) will provide a site with a mixed use which will benefit and compliment the recently approved child day care facility. This could result in linked trips to the site with parents using the child care facility whilst using the recreation facilities on site. The expansion of the tourism facilities will not only contribute to the viability of the site but will also contribute to the quantity and choice of holiday accommodation available in close proximity to the town. The NPPF supports sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This includes supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations. The site is close to the town to permit walking but is also supported by being situated on a main bus route.</p> <p>It is considered that whilst there is a conflict</p>
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	<p>with the local plan policy OS2 (not small scale) the benefits to be derived from the mixed use development will outweigh any potential harm to the countryside location. The site is not so far removed from the town to consider it unsustainable and will help to support healthy community strategies by providing an increase in recreational facilities for the town and provide facilities for the touring site. The proposal is considered to comply with the principles and objectives of the NPPF and will support rural economic growth and sustainable development objectives.</p>
<p>Impact on adjoining residential properties</p>	<p>The site is situated to the west of the built up area of Melton Mowbray and some distance from the residential properties on Sysonby Grange Lane. To the north, south and west is designated open countryside, golf course/recreation ground. The caravan and camping plots will be obscured from view from the nearest residential properties by the recently constructed day care nursery building with the residential properties being some 160 metres away and separated by a road and golf course.</p> <p>Therefore, it is considered that due to the location of the proposal, existing uses on the site and distance separations that the proposal is unlikely to have an impact on the residential amenities of adjoining properties.</p>
<p>Design:-</p>	<p>The existing building supporting the golfing activities is to be extended to provide a café area, toilets, showers, pot washing area, golf retail space/ pro shop and a fitness studio which will be available to hire for community events helping to support the viability of the site. The building is to be timber clad stained with a dark finish to minimise any impact upon the character of the area whilst blending with the existing building on site. The extension will be flat roofed and have a maximum height of 3 metres with a length of 14 metres by 8.4 metres which doubles the footprint of the existing building.</p> <p>It is considered that the design is appropriate in this location and no harm will result upon the character of the area and therefore complies with policy BE1 of the local plan.</p>
<p>Flood Lighting:</p>	<p>The tennis courts are proposed to be lit by flood lighting which will consist of six no. 8 metre high columns with directional lightening. Some light spillage will occur but it is considered to be at acceptable levels and comply with local plan policy R4.</p> <p>Lighting is proposed along the driveway and</p>

	within the car parking areas. No details have been provided in relation to the types or style of lighting and this will form a condition.
Compliance (or otherwise) with Planning Policy	As stated above, the development is considered to accord with the applicable Local Plan policies except in the interpretation of 'small scale'. In this instance, the policies are considered to be complemented by the NPPF and should not be set aside because of it. In terms of its promotion of economic growth, the NPPF advises that "significant weight" should be assigned and as such it is considered to weigh substantially in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion

The proposal seeks to expand an existing recreational and touring facility on the outskirts of Melton Town along the main A606. It will provide a mixed use development consisting of camping and caravanning, and increase the leisure activities available on the site which will not only benefit the visitors to the area but the existing communities in Melton. The proposal could also support the day care facilities; providing care for preschool children whilst parents enjoy the leisure facilities on offer. On the whole the proposal supports the whole viability of the golfing facility.

The proposal is considered to comply with the objectives of the Local Development Framework, regional and national planning policies in terms of generating tourist accommodation and supporting the NPPF objectives of contributing to the rural economy and facilitating access to the countryside without damage to sensitive landscape or environmental quality. There is a lack of these types of facilities within the Borough and this site is located within a mile of the town centre where there are transport links by bus and train to other major towns and cities. There are a wide range of retail and eating establishments which could benefit from the proposal. Furthermore there are many rural tourist attractions within the Vale of Belvoir that would also be supported by this proposal.

It is considered that the impact on travel patterns and other sustainability considerations would be very limited by its scale and location, such that no significantly harmful effects could be demonstrated. It is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:- Permit subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with plan drawing nos. 6538P-01A, 6538P-02 and 6538-P-03A,

3. In this condition "retained tree" means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars; and paragraphs (a) and (b) below shall have effect until the expiration of 5 years from (the date of the occupation of the building for its permitted use).
 - (a) No retained tree or hedgerow shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the local planning authority. Any topping or lopping approved shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard (3998 (Tree Work)).
 - (b) If any retained tree or hedgerow is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree shall be planted at the same place and that tree shall be of such size and species, and shall be planted at such time as may be specified in writing by the local planning authority.
 - (c) The erection of fencing for the protection of any retained tree or hedgerow shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans and particulars before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written consent of the local planning authority.
4. No works or development shall take place until full details of all proposed tree planting and the proposed times of planting, have been approved in writing by the local planning authority, and all tree planting shall be carried out in accordance with those details and at those times.
5. Before the proposed development is first brought into use, the existing vehicular access shall have been improved as per the details shown on drawing number 6538P-01A and the widened access drive shall have been surfaced in tarmacadam, concrete or other similar hard bound material for a minimum distance of 15 metres behind the highway boundary (back of verge). Once the access has been so provided it shall thereafter be permanently so maintained.
6. Before first use of the development hereby permitted, the existing gates to the vehicular access shall be removed. Any new vehicular access gates, barriers, bollards, chains or other such obstructions erected shall be set back a minimum distance of 15 metres behind the highway boundary and shall be hung so as to open inwards only.
7. The proposed car parking facilities shown on drawing no. 6538P-01A shall be provided, hard surfaced, delineated and made available for use before the proposed development is first brought into use, and shall thereafter be permanently so maintained.
8. Before the development is first brought into use, a separate hard surfaced footpath link shall be provided from the site out on to Sysonby Grange Lane, in accordance with details that shall first have been submitted to and approved by the lpa, such details to include dropped crossings on either side of Sysonby Grange Lane and possibly a pedestrian barrier to prevent pedestrians (especially children) running straight out into the highway.
9. Light fittings must be shielded in order that the luminance of the light source(s) is not a hazard to the safety of road users.
10. Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved details of all proposed floodlighting and other external illumination shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
11. The site shall be used for touring caravans/camping hereby approved and shall be occupied for holiday purposes only for no longer than a 28 day period for any one caravan and shall not be occupied as a person's sole, or main, place of residence.

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 enable the Local Planning Authority to assess the effect of the development on existing trees and hedgerows in the interests of visual amenity.
4. In the interest of visual amenity.
5. In the interests of highway safety.
6. To enable a vehicle to stand clear of the highway whilst the gates are opened/closed and protect the free and safe passage of traffic, including pedestrians, in the public highway.
7. To ensure that adequate off street parking is made to cater for the likely uses.
8. In the interests of pedestrian safety
9. To protect drivers from glare resulting from uncovered light sources near the highway.
10. To safeguard the character and appearance of the area.
11. To ensure that the use remains compatible with the site and surrounding area.

Officer to contact: Mrs D Knipe

Date: 12.04.12