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| P.R. Correspondence? | |
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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR:

LAND TO THE REAR OF BLOSSOM LODGE, SITE 2.

STOCKETT LANE, COXHEATH, MAIDSTONE

31st January 2024

The site lies to the north of Coxheath, at the end of a long access road which serves a large number of static caravans and an adjacent site (known as Land to the rear of Blossom Lodge, site1). Blossom lodge site 1 was given planning consent approximately eighteen months ago for the location of ten static units for G and T use, the previous use was for G and T touring caravans.

The access to the application site is via Blossom lodge site 1. The application site has for the last 15 years been used as a caravan site for touring caravans and there are 21 hook up points established on site, with all mains services excluding gas to each pitch. There is a facility unit on site at the south east corner in a poor state of repair and the intention is to replace the existing building. In the past the site has accommodated 21 touring caravans in one go which creates considerable traffic flow; the reduction to ten static units will greatly reduce the number of traffic movements to and from the site.

Static units will also provide a more stable environment for the traveller families, without interfering with their nomadic lifestyle. The proposed site is fully sustainable with shops, health facilities, and schools within walking distance. In support of this application we bring to the attention of the planning officer the enclosed document, 'Examination of the Maidstone Local Plan Review', by the Planning Inspectorate, dated 5th July 2023. Plus there has been a recent 'call for G and T sites by the Council; the Planning Inspector states that there is a requirement for a further 604 G and T pitches.

This application is a resubmission of planning application 23/503783/FULL which was refused on the 12th January 2024; that application was for 14 static units this application is for ten, there were three reasons for refusal which we have now dealt with. Please note that since Blossom Lodge site 1 has been established the traveller occupants of the 10 new units have provided feedback on how much their level of need and acceptability has been satisfied without intruding on their G and T way of life.

The following paragraphs relate to the refusal decision notice sent by the Council, a copy is attached:

Reason 1: We respond as follows:

The density of the built form of the original application was considerably less than that on Blossom Lodge site 1, however with now reducing the proposal by four units and rearranging the layout and juxtaposition of units there is more open space and privacy between units. There is no cramped layout, each unit sits on a plot of approximately 400 sq.m. which will be segregated by mature hedgerows. The site lies between a sewage farm to the south east boundary and a development of a number of residential units on the north west boundary, with the adjacent BL site 1 to the south boundary. To the south of the access feed road to Stockett Lane lies the commercial business of S and B Car and Van Hire; the installation of ten static units shielded from view by existing mature trees and hedgerows is not going to 'destroy the character of the countryside and urbanise and domesticate the existing rural landscape'.

With regards to the point about day rooms, please note that none of the ten units on Blossom Lodge site1 were provided with a dayroom, and none of the residents have subsequently either requested one nor tried to construct one. We realise that a day room and a facility to park a touring caravan is often construed as being apart of the G and T way of life but they are not mandatory, and as the

construction of a dayroom requires planning consent it is inappropriate to use it within a refusal reason on a different application. With the removal of four of the original units plus a pitch of approx.. 400sq.m. there is plenty of space for each pitch to apply for a dayroom, tourer caravan parking areas have been indicated on each pitch, together with a space for a car/van.

Reason 2:

The revised plan now shows the increased amenity space. Each unit has approx. 400sq.m to a pitch plus there is a large community space in front of the facility block. Privacy hedge boundaries are augmented with small mature trees.

Reason 3:

The proposal complies with the Kent Vehicle Parking Standards; the access roads from Stockett Lane are wide with speed humps, Stockett Lane at the point of connection is wide and well maintained road. Ultimately the proposal serves to reduce traffic movements between the site and the amenities in the centre of Coxheath.

Conclusion:

Based on the same criteria as Blossom Lodge site 1, there is no reason why Blossom Lodge site 2 shouldn't be given planning consent. BL1 is a good example of how the general environment and wellbeing of the inhabitants can be improved

The stated policies and reasons for refusal could have been dealt with by contacting the Architect before determination and suggesting the required amendments, as has happened in my 37 working relationship with Maidstone Borough Council Planning Dept.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this planning application please do not hesitate to contact the author,

Martin Potts

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