

PLANNING STATEMENT

Barfreston Court Farm, Barfreston Road, Barfreston, CT15 7JJ

Applicant: Mr Malcolm Ledger

Proposal: Siting of one (1) static caravan for residential occupation, access, means of enclosure and gates



Introduction

The application is being submitted as Council Enforcement Officers have informed me that this requires planning permission.

I allowed the couple to live on my land in the caravan as they were facing homelessness and being occupied on the land enabled them to provide their assistance with essential jobs around Barfreston Court Farm. They have not been able to find anywhere else to live and am making this application for formalise the situation.

Planning History

13/240 – Erection of agricultural building – Granted

19/1308 – Erection of first floor extension with alterations to windows and doors to an agricultural building – Refused

19/1309 – Alterations to agricultural building to include a first floor extension, 3 roof lights and door openings to front elevation, 3 dormer windows and shutters to rear elevation, internal works to include insertion of a staircase and first floor shutter with partitions to form room for a workshop and storage purposes. – Refused

20/443 – Rebuilding of fire damaged agricultural storage building including erection of a first floor extension – Granted

20/444 – Alterations to agricultural building to include inserting a first floor extension, rear elevation insert 2 no windows into existing openings. Insert first floor gabled loft entrance with

PLANNING STATEMENT

access doors and cantilevered platform. Front elevation insert 3 no boarded doors. Internal works include insertions of a staircase and first floor structure for storage purposes – Granted.

22/493 – Change of use of land/buildings to a mixed use agricultural and weddings/events venue, installation of hardsurfacing and parking provision – Granted

22/01614 – Change of use to include drinking establishment - Granted

Site Description

Barfreston Court Farm lies to the South East of the hamlet of Barfreston, some eight miles north west of Dover, north of Shepherdsweil and west of Eythorne. The farm is a working farm, wedding and events venue and a public house, all of which have planning permission.

The static caravan has been sited on land to the south of the collection of main farm buildings on the eastern boundary parallel with Barfreston Road. Whilst access can be made to the site via the farm the primary access to the caravan is via an access that has been made off Barfreston Road.

Post and wire fencing has been erected to separate the static caravan and associated domestically used land from the wider farmland. There are pigs and chickens on the land which are owned by the occupants and part of their small holding.

Proposal

Siting of one static caravan to be occupied by two persons on a permanent basis as their main residence. The caravan is a standard static caravan measuring approximately 3.66m wide and 10.6m in length. The caravan has been sited directly on the land (no concrete base) and has not been adapted in anyway.

The caravan used cannister for gas and is connected to mains electricity and water supply. Foul water is disposed of via a cess pit.

The occupants work in the local area and living on my land means they are very close and can provide essential support with some jobs required in connection with my agricultural business.

The occupants were facing homelessness and felt they can discreetly live on my land without causing any harm to anyone.

Double gates measuring approximately 3m in height have been erected at the site access off Barfreston Road.

Post and wire fencing measuring approximately 1m in height has been erected around the site separating it from the farmland.

No further development of the site is proposed. When the time comes the caravan can be removed leaving no lasting evidence of impact on the countryside.

PLANNING STATEMENT

Development

The application site is a parcel of open land in the countryside, beyond any settlement boundary. It is accepted that the location of the site is in conflict with local policy but, it would appear that the current local plan is out of date and in conflict with National policy.

The closest village is Elvington, by road around 1 mile from the site. It has limited facilities these include a community/learning centre, school, shop, hairdressers, and takeaway as well as a local information centre providing access to training and employment for local residents. More services and facilities are available in Dover, Sandwich and Canterbury, though these are served by infrequent and indirect bus services.

There are mostly no footways or streetlights on the route, which reduces their accessibility, however the caravan on the site is only big enough to accommodate two people. The current occupants are an older couple with no children.

Although the siting of the caravan for residential occupation is likely to mean that the majority of journeys by the occupiers away from the farm would be by car/private vehicle the impact is limited as journeys would have to be made for the occupants work on the existing farm.

Countryside impact

Due to the location of the development and its separation to nearby properties, it is unlikely that the use would lead to a reduction of the residential amenities of the occupants of any nearby dwellings.

However, the site is not in isolation from other homes and there is some support within national policy for housing that can either enhance or maintain the vitality or rural communities. This proposal could help maintain Barfrestone Court Farm.

Much of the site is grassed, and no hard surfacing has been laid. The caravan has been located close to the existing tree line and therefore, views of the development are limited from public vantage points.

The site measuring approximately 3800sqm only 380sqm is being used domestically. The bulk of the site is used for keeping livestock including pigs and chickens. This is in keeping with the wider farmland. As such, there is limited loss to the more open countryside of the area. The development has limited harmful impact upon the character, appearance, and beauty of the countryside. As the site is visually contained, it is not considered that there is a wider landscape impact.

PLANNING STATEMENT

Summary

The visual impact of the proposal is quite limited and would not be unduly harmful. The site is also close enough to the nearest village to provide some benefit to its vitality. The fact that the occupant and indeed any future occupants of the caravan work on the farm provides should also mean that some journeys are unrequired.

The provision of additional landscaping and control of fencing and lighting, through the use of suitably worded conditions, could reduce the limited impact of the development on the character and appearance of the countryside.

It is accepted that planning decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside however this development represents an essential need for a rural worker.