

2.3 REFERENCE NO - 15/502738/FULL		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Relocation and winter storage of 44 seasonal workers caravans and 4 mobile communal facilities.		
ADDRESS Land Behind Tinbridge Cottages London Road Boughton Under Blean Kent ME13 8YN		
RECOMMENDATION – Approve – SUBJECT TO views of the County Archaeological Officer (closing date 19 August 2015)		
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION Limited impact on the landscape character and in accordance with Local Plan Policies.		
WARD Watling	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Faversham	APPLICANT Edward Vinson Ltd AGENT The Vinson Trust
DECISION DUE DATE 16/06/15	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 15/05/15	

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 The site is open agricultural land located to the rear of Tinbridge Cottages, on the northern side of Canterbury Road, to the east of Faversham, and extends to 0.96 hectares. Currently located on the site are a number of polytunnels which are screened by the existing mature shelter belts/hedge planting on all sides
- 1.02 The site slopes downwards to the east towards Brenley Corner. The site is located in the designated countryside outside of any built-up area boundary. Access to the site is via a gate which comes out onto an existing dead-end lay-by off the A2, not direct onto the main carriageway.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.01 Planning permission is sought for the over winter storage of 44 seasonable agricultural caravans and 4 mobile communal associated facilities. The application is only for the over winter storage of the caravans and communal facilities and not for the use of the caravans during the agricultural season by agricultural workers for which planning permission is not required. The agent has stated that *‘the proposed relocation arises from and is required following the resolution to grant outline planning permission for a mixed-use residential and employment development at Love Lane where the seasonable workers caravans are currently stored over the winter’*. Some of the caravans would be moved from the existing site at Lady Dane Farm where they are currently sited, others might be replacement for caravans too fragile to be moved.
- 2.02 The site would contain 44 workers caravans with a 6 metre separation gap between each caravan and four further caravans/units containing communal facilities. The caravans measure 10m x 3.5m and would also provide a communal wash room, a kitchen and leisure facilities.
- 2.03 An additional landscaped bund and tree planting is proposed at the southern end of the site to the rear of Tinbridge Cottages. The existing landscaping along the boundary of the site will remain.

3.0 SUMMARY INFORMATION

	Existing	Proposed	Change (+/-)
Site Area (ha)	0.99 ha	0.99 ha	0
No. of caravans	44 (at Lady Dane Farm)	44	20

4.0 PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

4.01 The Countryside

Potential Archaeological Importance

5.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

5.01 Swale Borough Local Plan 2008

Policy E1 sets out standards applicable to all development, saying that it should be well sited appropriate in scale, design and appearance with a high standard of landscaping, and have safe pedestrian and vehicular access whilst avoiding unacceptable consequences in highway terms.

Policy E6 states that the character of the countryside will be protected and where possible shall be enhanced.

Policy E19 requires all development to achieve high quality design and distinctiveness.

6.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

6.01 14 letters of objection have been received (some from the same address) making the following summarised comments:

- Application detail is vague
- Serious road traffic hotspot, the 50mph speed limit is often ignored
- No information on vehicle parking has been provided
- No details on foul sewage
- Concerned about water supply
- Landscape character impact
- Will be a large scale stand-alone campsite set away from the farm buildings and management.
- Concerns over the anti-social behaviour of caravan occupants
- Access to the site is narrow and dangerous
- The caravans should remain in the old location
- Concerned they will be used as residential accommodation all year round
- Concern about loss of agricultural land
- Views already compromised by the siting of polytunnels
- The site may increase in the future
- Noise and disruption from the site
- Alternative sites should be explored
- Inadequate infrastructure

- The caravans should be located close the amenities and facilities of the existing farm
- Local parking is already insufficient
- Possibly 200+ workers living here for 11 months a year
- More suitable locations within the farm that would have less impact on the existing residents living- no benefit to the local community
- The existing caravans are only being re-sited to make room for the Love Lane development

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.01 Faversham Town Council- no response. Faversham Town Council were consulted on 21st April 2015- I am awaiting comments and hope to be able to report these to Members at the meeting.
- 7.02 Kent Highway Services- no response. Please note that the application is for the storage of the caravans over the winter period and the caravans will not be occupied during this period.
- 7.03 The County Archaeological Officer has only recently been consulted, his consultation deadline is now 19 August 2015, though I hope to be able to update Members at the meeting.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

- 8.01 All relevant plans and information submitted under 15/502738/FULL.

9.0 APPRAISAL

- 9.01 This application seeks permission simply for the storage of the agricultural workers caravans and associated facilities over the winter period on land behind Tinbridge Cottages, London Road. These caravans are currently located at Lady Dane Farm, Love Lane and would be relocated to the new site. It is important to note that planning permission for the use of the caravans for agricultural workers during the agricultural season is not required and as such I am not considering the impact of the caravans during this period in terms of matters such as noise, access, and infrastructure.
- 9.02 The main consideration in the determination of this application is the impact of the siting and storage of the caravans on the site and the surrounding landscape over the winter months, and the degree to which allowing the caravans to remain on site, rather than being removed for off-site storage each year, assists the rural economy.
- 9.03 In my opinion the site is already very well screened on all sides with established and mature hedging which a high degree of existing screening into the site. In addition as part of the application it is proposed to plant an additional landscape bund and tree planting in the southern part of the site to the rear of Tinbridge Cottages. In my view this additional planting will go some way towards mitigating the possible visual impacts of the development on the surrounding area. The polytunnels located on the site currently are not highly visible from the surrounding views due to the established landscaping along the boundaries and in my opinion there will be no significant increase in the impact on the surrounding landscape and views from neighbouring properties than the existing situation.

- 9.04 The static caravans would be stored on the site over the winter season and would not be used for human habitation during that period. I have added a condition requiring the caravans to have been occupied by an agricultural worker(s) during the preceding agricultural period to ensure that the caravans are used in the manner in which they are intended to be used.
- 9.05 As discussed above I am of the opinion that the storage of the caravans would have little impact on the surrounding landscape. However I have added a condition requiring the planting to be carried out within 12 months of any storage of any of the caravans. In my opinion the proposed additional landscape bund and tree planting would provide additional screening of the caravans both during the storage period and also during the agricultural season, though this is not a consideration of this planning application.
- 9.06 I note the comments raised by some of the neighbours and except for the visual impact considerations I cannot consider these comments as part of this application. The fact remains that the caravans can be used by agricultural workers during the agricultural season and can during that time be sited in this location without the need for planning permission under permitted development rights. As such the matters relating to parking provision within the site, access, noise, loss of agricultural land, highway safety, foul sewage and water supply cannot be considered under this application as planning permission is not required for the habitation of the workers caravans during the agricultural season. Therefore the main objections raised to the application are not planning matters for me to consider under this application.
- 9.07 My main consideration is the impact on the landscape and the surrounding wider views which have been discussed above in detail. In my view the site is suitable for the winter storage of the caravans and seems a logical solution to the need for re-siting the caravans elsewhere within farmers landholdings. The alternative of having to remove caravans at the end of each season will be very disruptive and costly, and will not assist the efficient running of the farm.

10.0 CONCLUSION

- 10.01 The storage of the caravans will have a limited impact on local landscape character; the additional landscape buffer will further reduce the impact of the caravans. In my opinion the proposal meets the aims of local planning policy and is acceptable.
- 10.02 I recommend that the application be approved, subject to strict conformity with conditions given below and outstanding comments from Faversham Town Council and County Archaeological Officer.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION – GRANT Subject to the following conditions:

CONDITIONS

- 1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the permission is granted.

Reasons: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2 No static caravan shall be stored on the site at any time unless it has been occupied by an agricultural worker(s) in the preceding agricultural season.

Reasons: As the site lies outside any area in which permanent residential use of the caravans would be permitted.

- 3 No static caravan being stored on the site shall be used for human habitation.

Reasons: As the site lies outside any area in which permanent residential use of the caravans would be permitted.

- 4 The static caravans shall be sited on the site in accordance with the details shown on the submitted drawing 19144A/20 Revision J.

Reasons: In accordance with the terms of the application and in the interests of the amenities of the area

- 5 The scheme of planting and landscaping shown on the submitted plan 19144A/20 Revision J received shall be carried out within 12 months of the first date of any storage of any caravan. Any trees or shrubs removed, dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within five years of planting shall be replaced with trees or shrubs of such size and species as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reasons: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

The Council's approach to this application:

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

Offering pre-application advice.

Where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome.

As appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

In this instance:

The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the Committee and promote the application.

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.

The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.