
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Planning Committee

Locality	North Coast and Cumbraes
Reference	18/00315/PP
Application Registered	20th April 2018
Decision Due	20th June 2018
Ward	Dalry And West Kilbride

Recommendation	Approved subject to Conditions
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Location	Site To North Of Seaview Caravan Park Ardrossan Road Seamill West Kilbride Ayrshire
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Applicant	Mr Iain McClain
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Proposal	Formation of extension to caravan park
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1. Description

This application seeks planning permission for the change of use of vacant land to extend an existing caravan park to the north of Seaview Caravan Park, Ardrossan Road, Seamill, West Kilbride. The extended area would be 0.87Ha and the proposal would comprise of 29 static holiday caravans with associated visitor parking. The proposal would extend the width of the caravan site by approx. 117m north-east along the A78(T) coast road. The nearest caravan to the road would be located in the northern corner of the site and would be set back approx. 18m from the road. The existing shrub line boundary would be thickened with shrub/tree planting along the eastern boundary of the site with the A78.

The existing caravan site is situated on the west side of the A78(T). The extended area would be situated adjacent to the junction with A78 and the B7047. It is proposed to utilise the existing caravan park access from the A78. The Waterside Inn is situated immediately to the south of the existing caravan site and a sewage works is located approx. 200m north-west of the site beyond which are the residential properties of Arranview Gardens at the southern end of Seamill. The re-developed Chapelton Mains Farm steading which comprises of terraced and detached properties is located approx. 175m north-east of the site.

The application site is within the countryside as identified within the LDP. The site is also within a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and a Listed Wildlife Site (LWS), which essentially is the part of raised beach lying between the A78 and the shore stretching from the south end of Seamill to Ardrossan. The application requires to be assessed against Policies ENV1 (New Development in the Countryside (Excluding Housing), ENV8 (Coastal Zone), ENV9 (Nature Conservation), TOU1 (Tourist Accommodation and Facilities) and the General Policy contained within the LDP.

The caravan site was previously attached to the Waterside Inn when it was known as the Tarbet Hotel and together with the adjoining land to the north, has been subject to various applications for caravan development since 1969. In 1979 planning permission was granted for 7 caravans, taking the total number of static vans on the site to 15 (Ref: CH/79/142). Planning permission was also refused in March 1981 for the erection of a house and 33 caravans within the current application site. (Ref: CH/80/988). Planning permission for a further 6 static caravans was refused in 1984 (Ref: CH/228/C/S) and following an appeal, a further 3 caravans were approved which increased the number of static vans on the site to 18. Planning permission was approved in September 1998 for three additional static caravans Ref: 01/98/0386). Planning permission was also approved in March 2014 for an additional 2 caravan pitches. The total number of caravans are now 23. Any increase in the number of pitches have all been within the existing caravan site.

In relation to the application site, planning permission was refused in November 2014 for the extension of the caravan park by 29 pitches (Ref: 14/00608/PP). A Notice of Review was subsequently dismissed in February 2015. The most recent planning application was refused in September 2015 for the extension of the caravan park by 16 pitches. A Notice of Review was also dismissed.

There have been a number of planning approvals for the development of the Waterside Inn in recent years, the most recent of which Planning was approved on 13 March 2018 for the erection of a 2 storey hotel wing at the Waterside Inn (Ref:-18/00095/PP). The 2 storey wing would extend approx. 77m along the southern boundary of the application site.

A planning statement has been submitted in support of the proposal. The planning statement includes commentary on planning policy, economic impact, nature conservation and visual impact. A 3d visual has also been provided to support the proposals.

2. Consultations and Representations

The standard neighbour notification was undertaken and the application was advertised in the local press on 2nd May 2018. Fourteen letters of representation were received, all supporting the application. The main points of support were:

1. The development would have a positive economic benefit for West Kilbride, creating more footfall in the Town Centre and supporting local businesses. Business expansion should be supported in North Ayrshire. The proposal would create much needed jobs and investment.

Response: Noted. The applicant has indicated that the proposals would generate some £221,000 per year of which some £163,000 would be spent in the local area. It is also stated that 4.3 Full Time Equivalent jobs would be created.

2. The proposals would create tourist accommodation and encourage tourists into the area.

Response: Noted.

3. There has been no objections to the proposal. The recent approval for an extension to the Waterside Inn creates a precedent. Similarly new housing has also been approved at Seamill.

Response: Noted. Planning permission has been approved for development in the immediate locality but there is no precedent in Planning with each planning application considered on its own merits.

4. Transport Scotland has not objected to the proposals.

Response: Agreed.

Environmental Health: - No objections. The existing park is treated by a septic tank. The existing treatment system should be able to cope with additional loading. The applicant will also require to vary the licence for the site.

Response: Noted. An informative can be attached to advise the applicant to contact SEPA and NAC Licensing with this regard.

Transport Scotland: - No objections.

Response: Noted.

Scottish Water: - No objections.

Response: Noted.

3. Analysis

Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 require that decisions by planning authorities shall be taken in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This application seeks planning permission for the change of use of vacant land to extend an existing caravan park to the north of Seaview Caravan Park, Ardrossan Road, Seamill, West Kilbride and site 29 static holiday caravans.

The LDP recognises that rural areas make a valuable contribution to the economy, providing opportunities not just for agriculture but also for tourism, recreation, forestry and in certain cases housing. With regards to Policy ENV1 criterion (e) would be relevant which states that proposals for new development (excluding housing) shall not accord with the LDP unless the development is a tourism proposal acceptable under Policy TOU1.

Policy TOU1 states that development in the Countryside accords with the LDP subject to certain criteria. Given the type of development proposed criteria a) of the policy would not be relevant.

With regard to b) the site is located adjacent to the applicant's current caravan site which has existed and increased in size since the 1960's. The development would also have direct access from the Trunk Road and be provided with open views across the coastline. In terms c), the applicant has submitted an economic report in support of the application. This report refers to a profile of existing caravan owners who use the Seaview Caravan Park as: generally from the West Coast of Scotland; using their caravans often usually for weekends and longer periods during Easter and summer holidays; taking increased visits during the winter due to improvements in heating/insulation of modern caravans, which has resulted in an increase in usage and therefore expenditure in the local area.

The economic report estimates that some £58,000 per annum would be spent on site in regard to site fees and some £163,000 per annum off site. Offsite expenditure includes shopping, eating out etc. The report also indicates that some 4 Full Time Equivalent jobs would be created. Therefore the development has the potential to result in significant economic benefits.

In relation to d) the application site is not within a settlement, although it is associated with an existing caravan park. The applicant's supporting statement confirms that the applicant owns 2 other caravan parks, Crosbie Towers approx. 4km to the north east of the application site and Millglen located approx. 3km south east of the site, and as such has experience in running a caravan park.

The applicant states that the nearest residential property is Bank Cottage approx. 200m east of the site and therefore the visual impact assessment should be viewed from the standpoint of the road. The site would be viewed from 3 primary directions, from the A78 travelling south from Seamill, north from Ardrossan and the minor B7047 from West Kilbride. The applicant indicates that the hotel would obscure the view to the south and from the north, the existing trees and shrubs together with additional planting would help to screen the development. From the B7047, given the distance and adjacent development of the hotel, the caravan park would be much smaller in scale and the wall/planting screen would help to reduce the visual impact. The proposed development is modest in comparison to adjacent development of the hotel. A photomontage of the site has been provided to illustrate the setting of the proposal.

The applicant considers that the recent approvals to erect housing at Seamill and the proposed extension to the Waterside Inn, also recently approved, has meant that the landscape has changed since the previous refusal in 2014. The applicant states that the Waterside Inn, specifically, when taking into account the car park and building, has a frontage along the A78 of some 200 metres with little landscaping. The applicant's site, it is argued, would have a frontage of some 150 metres, the majority of which has mature planting along the roadside, allowing any development to be screened.

The previous refusals of planning permission indicated that the development would result in coalescence and narrowing of the gap between Seamill and the undeveloped coast, which would be further heightened by the existence of the re-developed Chapelton Mains on the opposite side of the A78 and the allocated LDP site. The refusal also indicated that the rural design guidance discourages ribbon development, as proposed in this instance. For these

reasons, it was considered that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the undeveloped coast and would not comply with the principles of the approved Rural Design Guidance.

As the development has not changed, there is the potential that the development would result in coalescence and ribbon development along the A78. Other than the proposed extension of the Waterside Inn, and ongoing housing construction at Seamill there is no significant change in the landscape since 2014 meaning that there is still the potential that the development would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area.

The visual effect of the development must be considered in light of its location on the undeveloped coast. Policy ENV8 states that within the undeveloped coast, development shall not accord with the LDP unless it is within a settlement, or is associated with an existing development, or there are specific operational needs for the proposal to be located on the site, or there are no feasible alternative sites available and the social economic benefits outweigh the environmental loss.

The site is associated with an existing caravan park and whilst it is desirable to extend existing caravan parks, there is no specific operational need for the development to be located here, other than the applicant owning the site.

The applicant argues that development in this location would ensure the caravan park, as a whole, was contained. The applicant states that the proposal would result in significant economic benefits for the wider area with local support for the development.

Whilst the refusal in 2014 considered that the development would fail to satisfy Policy ENV8, no information regarding economic benefit was submitted at that time. With this application the applicant has provided an economic report which estimates that some £58,000 per annum would be spent on site in regard to site fees and some £163,000 per annum off site. With 4 Full Time Equivalent jobs also being created.

As such there is the potential that the economic benefits could outweigh the potential loss of coastline.

A consideration is that the Waterside Inn has recently been granted planning permission for a significant extension that would extend west, towards the coast. Similarly development has started on the allocated Housing site at Seamill where some 124 homes would be delivered.

A further material planning consideration is that the Councils Tourism Action Plan 2018-2022 focusses on capitalising on the North Ayrshire coastline and states that tourism has potential to make a massive difference to local economic revival. The coastline is unique and plays a key part in attracting visitors but the plan does outline 4 key actions, one of which is 'Driving Growth'. Therefore there is a balance to be struck between protecting the coastline and encouraging growth that supports tourism businesses.

Finally, LDP2, whilst having limited influence at this point, does propose to support tourism uses where they promote economic activity, particularly where they develop coastal tourism. LDP2 does also state that development should not result in damage to the coastline, particularly sensitive or remote areas. However the site is neither sensitive nor remote, but serious consideration to its protection must be taken into account.

As a whole the proposal would result in development in the undeveloped coast and has the potential to increase coalescence to the detriment of the landscape. However in this specific circumstance, taking account the expected economic benefits and support, locally and corporately, for driving growth in the tourism sector, an incremental increase in the scale of operations at Seaview Caravan Park could justify the potential visual adverse impacts of the development and potential environmental loss.

The proposal therefore complies, in part, with Policies TOU1 and ENV8.

With regards to Policy ENV9 criterion 3. Local Designations is relevant which states that: -

Proposals for development which could affect Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS), as listed in Supporting Information Paper 3, and sites of local importance as wildlife habitats or wildlife corridors, will be assessed:

- (a) to ensure that appropriate measures are proposed to conserve, as far as possible, the site's wildlife or habitat interest including the retention of open watercourses and provide for replacement of habitats or features where damage is unavoidable;
- (b) to determine their effect on the management of features of the landscape which are of importance for wildlife, for wild flora and fauna; and
- (c) with a view to complementing the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network.

The site forms part of the Ardrossan-Seamill Shore Local Nature Conservation Site. As a whole this designation is an important coastal habitat for both vegetation and birdlife. The coastal strip, of which this site is part, is important to ecological interests. The supporting statement submitted with the application states that given the annual income and job creation from the proposed development, the social and economic benefits would outweigh negligible environmental loss. Furthermore, the proposed nature area would complement the LNCS.

It is not expected that significant effects on the LNCS would occur should development proceed on this site, specifically given its proximity to the A78 and the limited quality of the habitat at the site. However there is potential to improve the quality of the site through the implementation of a landscaping scheme that would create a habitat for wildlife, whilst also creating an attractive setting for the development.

Subject to condition the proposal would comply with Policy ENV9.

With regards to the General Policy, criteria a) Siting Design and External Appearance, b) Amenity, c) Landscape Character and d) Access, Road Layout, Parking Provision would be relevant.

With regards to criteria a), b) and c), for the above reasons, it is considered that the proposal would result in sporadic ribbon development and add to the perception of coalescence with the built up area of Seamill, which could have an adverse visual impact on the character, appearance and amenity of this area of undeveloped coast.

However the other material considerations would outweigh any potential impact and bring a benefit of ensuring that the proposals include landscape and habitat improvements would provide a balance between the economic benefit and potential environmental loss.

With regards to criterion d) Transport Scotland and NAC Transportation have no objections to the proposal.

In view of the above, it is considered that the proposal would not accord with criteria a), b) and c) of the General Policy but there are other material planning considerations which would support the proposals.

Subject to conditions it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

4. Full Recommendation

Approved subject to Conditions

Reasons for Decision

Condition

1. That prior to the commencement of development the developer shall ensure that all planting and seeding, comprised in approved drawing LS01, shall be carried out in the first planting season and seeding seasons to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation. For the avoidance of doubt, the trees and planting shall be protected with fencing during the construction of the development.

Reason

To secure the landscaping scheme in the interest of visual amenity.

Condition

2. That the site shall residential be used as a caravan site for non-permanent occupation but for holiday or tourism use only to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

In the interest of the proper planning of the area.



Karen Yeomans
Executive Director
Economy & Communities

For further information please contact Mr Ross Middleton Planning Officer on 01294 324379.

Appendix 1 – Location Plan

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