

**Application Number: F/YR13/0700/F**  
**Minor**  
**Parish/Ward: Manea Parish Council/Manea**  
**Date Received: 17 September 2013**  
**Expiry Date: 12 November 2013**  
**Applicant: Mr R Fowler**  
**Agent: Mr C Walford, Peter Humphrey Associates Ltd**

**Proposal: Erection of 1 x single storey 3-bed log cabin for use as holiday accommodation and erection of 1.2m high post and rail fencing.**

**Location: Land North-East of 'The Woodlands', Days Lode Road, Fodder Fen, Manea, Cambridgeshire.**

**Site Area/Density: 0.7 ha**

**Reason before Committee: The proposal is before the Planning Committee following the receipt of 6 letters of support**

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 1 No. single-storey 3-bed log cabin for use as holiday accommodation involving the erection of 1.2m high perimeter post and rail fencing.

The application is to be assessed in line with policies E8, R1, T2 and EMP4 of the Local Plan and policies CS1, CS6, CS12 and CS16 of the emerging Core Strategy, together with the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies support new sustainable tourism development which is sympathetic to the character of the area and does not give rise to highways safety issues.

The key issues to consider are;

- Principle & Policy Considerations;
- Design and Layout;
- Highways and Access.

The development by virtue of its remote location and inadequate access is considered unsustainable and will lead to highway amenity and safety issues. In addition no adequate justification to prove the need for the development has been established.

The recommendation is to refuse the application.

## 2. HISTORY

Of relevance to this proposal is:

|     |               |   |           |
|-----|---------------|---|-----------|
| 2.1 | F/YR13/0498/F | Erection of 1 x single storey 3-bed log cabin for use as holiday accommodation and erection of 1.2m high post and rail fencing. | Withdrawn |
|-----|---------------|---|-----------|

### 3. PLANNING POLICIES

#### 3.1 National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 2: Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 17: Seek to ensure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants.

#### 3.2 Fenland Local Plan Core Strategy:

CS1 A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
CS6 Employment, Tourism, Community Facilities and Retail.  
CS12 Rural Areas Development  
CS16 Delivering and protecting high quality environments across the district.

#### 3.3 Fenland District Wide Local Plan:

EMP4 Development in the Countryside  
R1 Recreation and Leisure  
T2 Tourism Facilities  
E8 Proposals for new development.

### 4. CONSULTATIONS

#### 4.1 Parish/Town Council:

Object on the basis that;

- 1) The access road is inadequate to serve the development
- 2) If approved, the development would set a precedent for other proposals of a similar nature

#### 4.2 County Highways (CCC):

Comments as follows;

*“The approach roads to the site are single vehicle width, are generally devoid of passing places and in extremely poor condition, with particular regard to the 400m+ length between the site and Watering Hill Farm to the south west.*

*Whilst the level of traffic likely to be generated by the development is unlikely to contribute materially to the further deterioration of the approach road or conditions of highway safety, I would strongly question the appropriateness of the location in the context of the amenity of the future occupiers of the holiday accommodation.”*

Recommends a pre-commencement condition addressing vehicular access and a condition prohibiting any gated access within 5m of the carriageway.

4.3 ***Environment Agency:***

Raise no objection provided that the proposed use of the development is for holiday accommodation only. Consider the FRA acceptable for the proposed development. Recommend that a Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan is prepared for the site.

4.4 ***Middle Level Commissioners:***

Comments regarding lack of evidence to demonstrate effective discharge of surface water from the development and advises flood risk should be considered.

4.5 ***FDC Tourism Team:***

Raises concern over the location, limited transport options to and from the site.

Also questions the proposal within the 'additional statement' to use the log cabin for parts of the year for tourism and the remainder for family and friends.

4.6 ***FDC Environmental Health:***

No objections.

4.7 ***Local Residents:***

6 letters of support received from both local residents and visitors to the area.

5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

5.1 The application site lies directly adjacent to an existing farmstead of 'The Woodlands' and comprises of approximately 0.7Ha of agricultural land. Aerial photography establishes that the land has undergone change between 2007 and 2011 with the introduction of a pond and with the planting of trees and shrubs around the Eastern and Western perimeter. The site has been laid to lawn.

6. **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

6.1 History of the site

The site has been subject of a previous application for 2-log cabins for holiday accommodation (F/YR13/0498/F), however the application was withdrawn following advice from the LPA that the site was inappropriate for the proposal due to its remote location and with poor highway access.

## 6.2 Principle & Policy Assessment

Policy EMP4 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan resists new development in the open countryside, but can make exceptions where the development relates to Tourism, provided it does not give rise to serious highway or amenity objections.

Policy R1 supports recreation and leisure facilities where such development could be adequately serviced and would not result in highway safety problems.

Policy T2 supports the provision of new tourist accommodation where it does not conflict with other policies of the Local Plan. Paragraph 6.24 stipulates that new accommodation will normally be associated with existing development, rather than open countryside and where new development is proposed in the open countryside, the need for the particular location must be proven.

Policy E8 seeks to ensure that development is of a form, scale and character that is sympathetic to its surroundings and does not give rise to amenity harm for adjoining properties and the locality in general and provides adequate access.

Policy CS1 seeks to deliver sustainable development.

Policy CS6 of the emerging Core Strategy supports tourism facilities and sets out 9 criteria for tourist accommodation proposals. These criteria look to ensure, amongst other things, that proposals fit with the Council's spatial strategy and with the specific and broad locations for growth. In addition accessibility to public transport services and infrastructure capacity are key criteria that the development must satisfy in order to be supported.

Policy CS12 also looks to ensure that development in rural areas can be served by sustainable infrastructure such as highways. CS12 along with policy CS16 seek to ensure that development is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and farmland.

The NPPF seeks to deliver sustainable development that will function well and add to the overall quality of the area addressing the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

## 6.3 Design & Layout

The proposal is to use an existing parcel of agricultural land which has already undergone works creating a grassed, landscaped area on which to position 1No. log cabin-style structure within the site for use as holiday accommodation. The log cabin will measure approximately 16.5m in length by 6m in width with a ridge height of 3.5m and will be served by a compacted stone driveway. The frontage of the site will be open, visible from Days Lode Road and the site perimeter is enclosed with a post and rail fence to the north, south and east and with mature trees and hedgerow along the western perimeter.

Given the remote location of the site, the style of accommodation and the landscaping proposed, the development is not considered to adversely affect the amenity or character of the open countryside.

## 6.4 Highways & Access

The site lies outside any established settlement within a remote, agricultural setting. The core of Manea village, which is the closest point with access to facilities, is approximately 3 miles from the site by road and Manea Train Station is located approximately 2 miles from the site. The site is located approximately 1 mile along Days Lode Road which is its only access route.

Days Lode Road is an unclassified, primarily single track road used principally for access to agricultural fields and associated farmhouses. The road is in variable states of condition and worsens notably as you approach the site for the last quarter mile. The road, in the main, leaves very few passing places which could ultimately lead to drivers having to reverse back, in order to allow oncoming vehicles to pass. In addition, the road is unlit and this, combined with its poor condition and the site's remote location to facilities leaves it with poor pedestrian and cycle access. The site therefore, is only suitable for access by motor vehicle.

## 6.5 Other matters

The applicant has provided a planning statement which indicates that the backbone of the use will be to accommodate visiting family and friends and, during vacant periods, to allow the cabin to be accommodated commercially, by non-family and friends.

This does appear to indicate that no actual business plan identifying a demand for the use has been considered and that the holiday accommodation is a secondary use to 'overspill' accommodation for the residential use of the adjacent farmhouse of 'The Woodlands'. There appears to be no proven need for the new development which is necessary to fully satisfy Policy T2 of the Local Plan.

Therefore, it is questionable whether the application can be seriously considered under policy T2 of the Fenland Local Plan and CS6 of the Core Strategy which focus on supporting tourism in the district.

Contributions supporting the development have also been considered as have comments received by Manea Parish Council. The Parish Council have requested that should the application be supported, conditions ensuring the use of the development is solely for holiday accommodation are imposed.

The site is located within Flood Zone 3 and requires assessment in terms of flood risk. The Environment Agency are satisfied with the proposal in the basis that its sole use is for holiday accommodation and recommend that a Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan is prepared for the site. Comments received from Middle Level Commissioners are noted. Matters relating to the disposal of surface water would be dealt with through Building Regulations.

## 7. **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 This application has been assessed in-line with national and local policy in relation to issues including design and layout, highways and access.

The development is sited in a remote location with inadequate pedestrian links to facilities and with poor access roads. The proposal therefore does not accord with policies E8, R1 and T2 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan which support recreation and leisure facilities where such development could be adequately serviced and would not result in highway safety and amenity problems.

In addition, the site's poor accessibility to public transport services and unsustainable infrastructure results in the failure to satisfy CS1, CS6 and CS12 of the emerging Core Strategy along with the Core Planning Principles of the NPPF.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

### **Refuse**

- 1. The development, by virtue of its remote location, being approximately 3 miles from the nearest services, will result in a dependence on motor vehicles which is unsustainable and directly conflicts with the Core Planning Principles of the NPPF and policies CS1, CS6 and CS12 of the Fenland Local Plan Core Strategy (Submission Version) September 2013.**
- 2. The access to the development along Days Lode Road is unacceptable with poor road surfacing, combined with narrow carriageways and limited passing places which will lead to highway amenity and safety issues for existing residents and occupants of the development. The development therefore fails to accord with Policies E8, R1 and T2 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993 and Policies CS1, CS6 and CS12 of the Fenland Local Plan Core Strategy (Submission Version) September 2013.**
- 3. The proposal will result in an entirely new tourism facility in the open countryside without any justification for the need which directly conflicts with policy T2 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan.**