

SITE PLAN

BEXHILL

RR/2022/2988/P

East Parade – Land at



## Rother District Council

Report to - Planning Committee  
Date - 16 February 2023  
Report of the - Director – Place and Climate Change  
Subject - Application RR/2022/2988/P  
Address - East Parade – Land, at  
Parish - BEXHILL  
Proposal - Retain 110 existing beach huts.

[View application/correspondence](#)

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**RECOMMENDATION:** It be **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE (FULL PLANNING)**

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**Director: Ben Hook**

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**Applicant:** Rother District Council – Attn. Mr M. Johnson  
**Agent:** Rother District Council – Attn. Ms L. Goodwill  
**Case Officer:** Mrs M. Taylor  
(Email: [maria.taylor@rother.gov.uk](mailto:maria.taylor@rother.gov.uk))

**Parish:** BEXHILL SACKVILLE  
**Ward Member(s):** Councillors T.J.C. Byrne and H.L. Timpe

**Reason for Committee consideration:** Council Own Development

**Statutory 8 week date:** 14 February 2023  
**Extension of Time Requested:** 23 February 2023

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This application is included in the Committee site inspection list.

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### 1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks permission for the retention of 110 beach huts positioned on the beach directly adjacent to the promenade.
- 1.2 The beach huts are let out and licenced by Rother District Council (RDC). The licence stipulates the rules and regulations as well as the size of beach hut and veranda permitted.
- 1.3 Any planning permission granted would be temporary requiring renewal every five years due to the construction and materials of the beach huts. Conditions are imposed in regard to its use and appearance. The time limited condition helps in regard to monitoring the condition of the huts to ensure their appearance does not deteriorate to the detriment of the location.

- 1.4 The view is taken that the proposal is acceptable as beach huts are a traditional and historic feature along sections of Bexhill seafront and would be in keeping with the character and appearance of this seafront location and therefore concur with Policies OSS3 (vi), OSS4 (iii), EN1 (v) and EN3 (i & ii) of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and DEN1 of the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan (DaSA). As such they would promote the use and enjoyment of the beach as a recreational facility in line with Policies BX1 (ii), BX2 (i & v), CO3 (vi) and EN4 (iii) of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy, whilst providing social and economic benefit for Bexhill Town Centre and the wider area in line with Policy DCO1 of the DaSA Local Plan.
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## **2.0 SITE**

- 2.1 The application relates to a long established site with beach huts in situ on the shingle beach directly adjacent to the promenade. The site extends along the beach in an eastly direction opposite the Dorset Road South junction, past Bethune Road, the junction with Brookfield Road, Sutton Place and finishing near the fishermans' beach by the Bexhill Sea Angling Club.
- 2.2 The beach huts are let to the public by RDC whom issue yearly licences and charge an annual fee.
- 2.3 The site is outside the development boundary for Bexhill as defined in the DaSA but is within Flood Zone 3 as identified on the Environment Agency website. To the south below the mean high water mark the area is a Marine Conservation Zone known as Beach Head East (Royal Sovereign Shoals).
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## **3.0 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 This application seeks permission for the retention of 110 existing beach huts positioned on the foreshore adjacent to the promenade, De La Warr Parade.
- 3.2 Access to the beach huts will remain as existing via steps at various points along the promenade down to the shingle beach.
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## **4.0 HISTORY**

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|-----|-----------------|---|
| 4.1 | B/62/756        | Proposed beach hut sites. APPROVED  |
| 4.2 | B/69/737        | Erection of 10 beach cabins on the beach opposite Cavendish Court. APPROVED CONDITIONAL   |
| 4.3 | RR/2005/2206/3R | Stationing of beach huts (retrospective application). APPROVED (TEMPORARY)  |
| 4.4 | RR/2009/1717/3R | Relocation of six beach huts (retrospective application). APPROVED CONDITIONAL  |
| 4.5 | RR/2011/1469/3R | Removal of Condition 1 Re RR/2005/2206/3R to enable the retention of beach huts along East Parade – Reinstatement of original huts site (RR/62/756) and |

(RR/69/737) and subsequent permission RR/2005/2206, as per conditions of licence. APPROVED CONDITIONAL

- 4.6 RR/2017/880/P Retain beach huts 1-28 and 31-44. Erection of additional 12 huts to be sited within the same footprint of existing. Access to foreshore will remain as existing and spacing between beach huts will remain. APPROVED CONDITIONAL
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## 5.0 POLICIES

- 5.1 The following policies of the [Rother Local Plan Core Strategy 2014](#) are relevant to the proposal:
- OSS3: Location of Development
  - OSS4: General Development Considerations
  - BX1: Overall Strategy for Bexhill
  - BX2: Bexhill Town Centre
  - CO3: Improving Sports and Recreation Provision
  - EN1: Landscape Stewardship
  - EN3: Design Quality
  - EN4: Management of the Public Realm
  - EN7: Flood Risk and Development
- 5.2 The following policies of the [Development and Site Allocations Local Plan](#) are relevant to the proposal:
- DCO1: Retention of Sites of Social or Economic Value
  - DEN1: Maintaining Landscape Character
- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance are also material considerations. Of particular relevance in this instance are paragraphs 98 and 99 contained within Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities.
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## 6.0 CONSULTATIONS

### 6.1 Planning Notice

- 6.1.1 One email received objecting to the application and can be summarised as follows:
- Views of the beach and sea from the promenade are fragmentary and disappointing for those many locals and visitors unable to walk along the beach.
  - Their numbers must be far in excess of the few who hire these huts and their economic contribution also. What is the net income?

One email making general comments and is summarised as follows:

- We have beach hut No. 43 East Parade and do not understand why you need planning for the 110 beach huts.

6.2 Bexhill-on-Sea Town Council

6.2.1 *“It was **RESOLVED** to support this application.”*

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**7.0 APPRAISAL**

7.1 The main issues for consideration are:

- Character and appearance within the street scene and the wider locality.
- Impacts upon neighbouring and nearby properties.
- Other matters.

7.2 Character and appearance within the street scene and the wider locality

7.2.1 Policy OSS3 (vi) of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy focuses on the development being in context with the location, Policies OSS4 (iii) of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and DEN1 of the DaSA seek to ensure all development maintains, respects and does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality with is further supported by Policies EN1 (v) and EN3 (i & ii) of the Roither Local Plan Core Strategy.

7.2.2 Policy OSS3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) states that when determining planning applications, proposals should accord with the relevant policies of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and be considered in the context of: *(vi) the character and qualities of the landscape; and*

7.2.3 Policy OSS4 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy states *“.... all development should meet the following criteria: ... (iii) it respects and does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality; ...”*

7.2.4 DEN1 of the DaSA states that: *“The siting, layout and design of development should maintain and reinforce the natural and built landscape character of the area in which it is to be located, based on a clear understanding of the distinctive local landscape characteristics in accordance with Rother Local Plan Core Strategy Policy EN1.”*

7.2.5 Policy EN1 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy states: *“Management of the high quality historic, built and natural landscape character is to be achieved by ensuring the protection, and wherever possible enhancement, of the district’s nationally designated and locally distinctive landscapes and landscape features; including ... (v)... including the visual character of settlements, ...”*

7.2.6 Policy EN3 states that new development will be required to be of high design quality by:  
*(i) Contributing positively to the character of the site and surroundings, ...*  
*(ii) Demonstrating robust design solutions tested against the following Key design Principles as appropriate tailored to a thorough and empathetic understanding of the particular site and context: ...”*

7.2.7 The beach huts are of a traditional appearance, normally of timber construction, a standard size and all fairly uniform in appearance being coloured white under a pitched felt roof. They are a historic and common feature on parts of the Bexhill seafront along with other furniture on the

promenade, such as the Grade II listed shelters, which all add to the seaside resort setting of the seafront.

- 7.2.8 The huts are set on the shingle beach just below the level of the promenade where views towards the sea can be obtained between them and at some points over them. Where benches are sited on the promenade behind the huts, views are more limited. However, unlike the situation on other parts of the seafront, the huts here are generously spaced maintaining acceptable views of the beach and sea beyond.
- 7.2.9 Each year a licence is issued detailing the responsibility of each licensee to ensure that their hut is maintained in good condition and that the size of the beach cabin does not exceed the standard size and also details the size of veranda that is permitted. Compliance with the licensing agreement ensures that the beach huts are uniform in appearance and are kept in good condition so that they are not detrimental to the character and appearance of the seafront. In addition, planning permissions granted for beach huts are temporary as the construction and materials of the hut are not considered suitable for erection of a permanent building in respect of the long-term visual character and amenities of an area.
- 7.2.10 An inspection of the huts has been undertaken which revealed that almost all are in situ and are in good condition. However, it was noted that beach hut No. 55 has a decked area/veranda at the front facing the sea which has been damaged by the wind and the boards lifted exposing the rafters with nails. This needs to be addressed and has been reported so the licensee can be advised and the situation rectified.

### 7.3 Impacts upon neighbouring and nearby properties

- 7.3.1 Policy OSS4(ii) of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and DHG9(i) of the DaSA seek to protect the amenities of neighbouring properties.
- 7.3.2 The beach huts are situated on the opposite side of the road to residential development. De La Warr Parade is a wide road with parking on both sides and in addition the seafront promenade is wide with areas of grass and pavement having railings separating the beach area where the huts are located. In addition there are restrictions placed on the use of beach huts to ensure they are not used for overnight sleeping accommodation, which could result in disturbance at unsociable hours.
- 7.3.3 Taking account of the distance these huts are from residential properties and the restrictions imposed on planning permissions it is considered there would be no detrimental impact to the amenities of any neighbouring properties.

### 7.4 Other Matters

#### 7.4.1 *Flood Risk:*

- 7.4.2 Policy EN7 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy states: *(ii) When development is, exceptionally, acceptable in flood risk areas, consideration is paid to the layout and form of development to minimize flood risk.*

- 7.4.3 The application has been assessed having regard to flood risk. Within government guidance water based recreation without sleeping accommodation is referred to as ‘water compatible development’. If permission is granted, conditions can be imposed for use of the beach huts for private day time recreational purposes only and preventing overnight sleeping accommodation to accord with the government guidance. The beach huts would therefore be classed as water compatible development.
- 7.4.4 *Economy and Health:*
- 7.4.5 Policies BX1 (ii) and BX2 (i & v) of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy are specific to Bexhill and seek to develop local amenities, including improved leisure facilities and promoting these through investment in the public realm, increasing links to the seafront and activities within walking distance of the town centre. Policy CO3 (i & vi) more generally relates to the provision of sufficient recreation facilities safeguarding existing facilities and giving particular support for water-based recreation along the coast of Bexhill. In regard to public realm, Policy EN4 (iii) seeks to continue to bring forward programmes to enhance activity and the use of public spaces. Policy DCO1 of the DaSA supports the retention of sites of social or economic value.
- 7.4.6 These policies are further supported by the National Planning Policy Framework and specifically paragraphs 98 and 99 in respect of open space and recreation promoting health and well being for communities with paragraph 99 resisting any loss of such facilities without justification the use is no longer required.
- 7.4.7 Policy BX1 states the overall strategy to deliver the objectives for Bexhill includes to: (ii) *Develop local amenities, including support for community activities and facilities, ..., improved leisure facilities, ...*
- 7.4.8 Policy BX2 outlines the strategy for Bexhill Town Centre, including to:  
(i) Promote a co-ordinated town centre initiative to improve its use including links to the seafront and activities; and  
(v) Facilitate leisure within walking distance of the centre.
- 7.4.9 Policy CO3 relates to the provision of sufficient, well-managed and accessible open space, sports and recreation facilities ..., achieved by:  
(i) Safeguarding existing facilities and  
(vi) Giving particular support for water-based recreation along the coast near Bexhill.
- 7.4.10 Policy EN4 states priority will be given to working with relevant agencies to:  
(i) *Continue to bring forward programmes to enhance activity and the use of public space.*
- 7.4.11 Policy DCO1 resists the loss or diminution of sites of social or economic value.
- 7.4.12 Paragraph 98 of the National Planning Policy Framework states “Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for health and well-being of communities, ...” And para 99 seeks to retain existing open space, sports and recreational buildings unless the loss is replaced by equivalent or better.

- 7.4.13 As stated above, the beach huts are a historic feature on the seafront. Some are available to rent during the summer months and others are privately owned. They create an amenity space for enjoyment of the beach and seafront facilities, whilst boosting the economy due to their siting and use as in many cases the huts are within walking distance of local businesses and Bexhill Town Centre. It is considered the loss of the huts would have both a detrimental financial and visual impact on the vitality and appearance of the seafront.
- 7.4.14 Policies within the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and DaSA seek to promote leisure and recreational activities, with Policy CO3 (vi) specifically referencing water-based recreation along the coast of Bexhill, which the beach huts subtly achieves. It is considered the contribution the huts make to the economy, health and well-being are positive and comply with policy.
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## **8.0 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The site in general is well maintained and it is considered that the retention of the existing beach huts would not have any detrimental impact upon the locality or neighbouring properties and would therefore not conflict with the objectives of Policies OSS4, EN1 and EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy.
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### **RECOMMENDATION: GRANT (FULL PLANNING)**

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#### **CONDITIONS:**

1. The buildings hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition on or before 20 December 2027 in accordance with a scheme of work submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.  
Reason: The beach huts by reason of the construction and materials is not considered suitable for erection as a permanent building, in respect of the long term visual character and amenities of the area and having regard to Policy OSS4 (iii) of the adopted Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies DEN1 of the adopted Development and Site Allocations Local Plan.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and details:  
Site Location Plan with huts labelled East Parade received 20-12-22  
Block Plan received 20-12-22  
Floor and Elevation Plan of beach hut received 20-12-22  
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
3. The beach huts shall be used for daytime private recreational purposes only and, in particular, not for overnight sleeping accommodation.  
Reason: To preserve the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy OSS4 (iii) of the adopted Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and Policy DEN1 of the adopted Development and Site Allocations Local Plan.
4. The external walls of the beach huts shall be coloured white within one month of their erection and maintained in that condition thereafter.



Reason: To preserve the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy OSS4 (iii) of the adopted Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and Policy DEN1 of the adopted Development and Site Allocations Local Plan.

**NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK:** In accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 38) and with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.