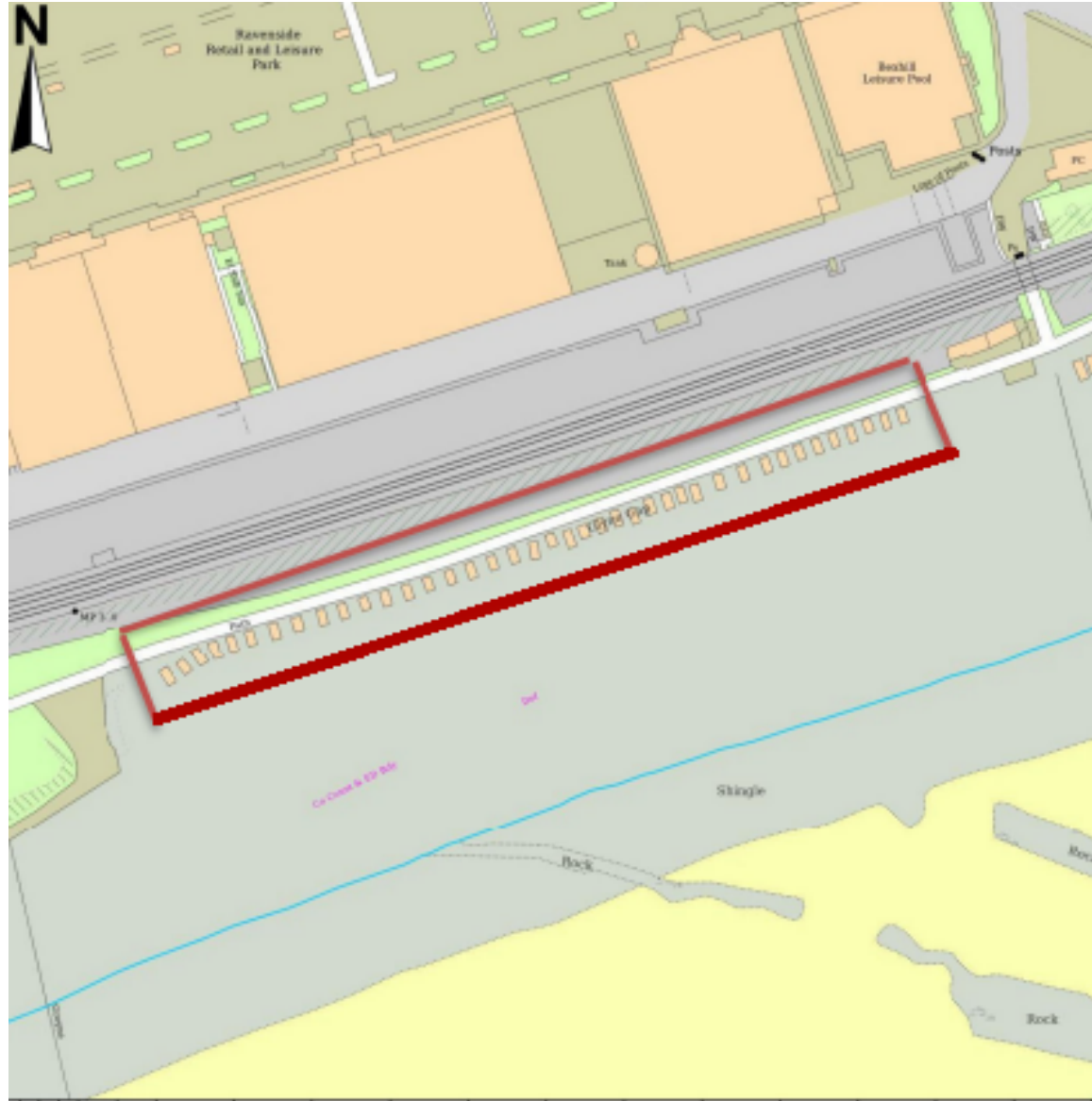


SITE PLAN

BEXHILL

RR/2022/2989/P

Galley Hill – Land at



Rother District Council

Report to - Planning Committee
Date - 16 February 2023
Report of the - Director – Place and Climate Change
Subject - Application RR/2022/2989/P
Address - Galley Hill – Land, at
BEXHILL
Proposal - Retain 40 existing beach huts.

[View application/correspondence](#)

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

Director: Ben Hook

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)

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

This application is included in the Committee site inspection list.

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks permission for the retention of 40 beach huts positioned on the beach directly adjacent to the cycle track which runs parallel to the railway line behind the Ravenside Retail Park.
- 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. Planning permissions that have been granted also impose conditions in regard to the appearance and use of the beach huts.
- 1.3 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 area in line with Policy DCO1 of the DaSA.

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 cycle track, which runs parallel to the railway line behind the Ravenside Retail Park. The site extends along the beach on the east side of galley from the bottom in an eastly direction to the café by the underpass with access to the parking area at Glyne Gap opposite the petrol station.
- 2.2 The beach huts are let to the public by RDC whom issue yearly licences and charges 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 40 existing beach huts positioned on the foreshore adjacent to the cycle track which runs parallel to the railway line behind the Ravenside Retail Park.
- 3.2 Access to the beach huts will remain as existing via the underpass at Glyne Gap towards the eastern end of the site or from Galley Hill at the western end of the site. There is no vehicular access.
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4.0 HISTORY

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|-----|----------------|---|
| 4.1 | B/59/773 | Site for 24 beach chalets – Granted by East Sussex County Council. |
| 4.2 | B/61/759 | Proposed erection of 16 additional beach huts. APPROVED |
| 4.3 | RR/2017/1750/P | Provision of a further 31 beach hut sites to the existing nine sites on the foreshore. 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 No representations received.

6.2 Bexhill-on-Sea Town Council

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

6.3 Neighbouring Authority – Hastings Borough Council

6.3.1 Consultation undertaken with Hastings Borough Council (HBC) – Letter dated 10 January 2023 received advising there may be a two month delay in response to our consultation.

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 in context with the location, Policy 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 Rother Local Plan Core Strategy.

- 7.2.2 Policy OSS3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy 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 Policy 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 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy 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 along sections of the Bexhill and St Leonards seafront.
- 7.2.8 These huts are located in the bay area between the two cliff points at Glyne Gap. The huts are set on the shingle beach beside the Bexhill to Hastings Coastal Path, which is both a footpath and cycle route. Views of the huts are obtained from Galley Hill where there are benches on the grass land with views towards St Leonards and Hastings. There is a small group of 15 huts set further east beyond the café, which are within the boundary of HBC.
- 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 fair condition. However, it was noted that hut nos. 34, 38 and the hut to the east side of No. 10 need repainting. Hut No. 8 has elevations comprising corrugated sheets, which need painting and No. 13 needs repair and painting. These points have been reported so they issue can be addressed.

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 seafront on the opposite side of the railway line to Ravenside Retail Park. There are no residential properties in the immediate vicinity which would be affected by the siting and use of the beach huts as permitted.

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 this 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 paragraph 99 seeks to retain existing open space, sports and recreational buildings unless the loss is replaced by equivalent or better.
- 7.4.13 As previously stated 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. These huts which are sited at Glyne Gap may not be regarded as walking distance to Bexhill Town Centre and therefore not directly linked to the economy of the town centre from their use, but they are however considered to be within walking distance of the nearby café and the Ravenside Retail Park which contribute to the economics and vitality of the area.
- 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 hut subtly achieves. It is considered the contribution the huts make to the economy, health and well-being are positive and comply with policy.

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, do not impact any residential neighbouring amenity and would therefore not conflict with the objectives of Policies OSS4, EN1 and EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT (FULL PLANNING)

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 dated 19 December 2022
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.