



DESIGN ACCESS AND JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT

CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FROM 66 PITCHES FOR
TENT UNITS TO ALLOW 66 PITCHES FOR EITHER
TENTS, TOURING CARAVANS OR MOTORHOMES TO
BE SITED (NO INCREASE IN NUMBERS OF PITCHES)

MIDDLEWOOD FARM HOLIDAY PARK
MIDDLEWOOD LANE
FYLINGTHORPE, ROBIN HOODS BAY

PREPARED BY
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DATED October 2020

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Middlewood Farm Holiday Park is a very well established caravan park on the southern outskirts of the small village of Fylingthorpe. The site has been developed and operated by the Beeforth family for many decades who are also local farmers.
- 1.2 At present the site provides pitches for tents and touring caravans, camping pods and a small number of holiday hire static caravans. The site is situated just a short walk to the local bakery, convenience store, pub and bus stops in the village. The site is also a short 10 minute walk, along a footpath from the popular village of Robin Hoods Bay. The site is popular and has been recognised by Tripadvisor as being in the top 10% of accommodation providers worldwide. By bringing customers to the area Middlewood Farm makes a significant contribution to the local economy.
- 1.2 This application seeks to allow a small part of the site which is currently approved for 66 tent pitches to now be used for either tents, touring caravans or motorhomes. There are currently 66 pitches for tents and there will be no increase in numbers as a result of this application.
- 1.3 In making this application the Beeforth family are wanting to diversify the type of pitch they can offer to customers. Allowing these pitches to be used for either tents, touring caravans or motorhomes will allow the site to weather-proof the business as demand for tent pitches is very dependant on the weather. Allowing the site to meet the demand from customers will in turn will benefit both the park and the local economy.
- 1.4 The application area is to the rear of an area of the park adjacent to a small area which already has permission for touring caravans, the application area is well screened by trees and mature vegetation and the proposed use will not have any additional impact on the landscape of the local area.
- 1.5 We consider that this small application is in accordance with the policies of the North York Moors National Park Authority Local Plan, adopted July 2020 and as set out within this report the application also meets the three dimensions of sustainable development outlined in the Revised NPPF.

2 COVID19 PANDEMIC

- 2.1 Following the Covid 19 pandemic all caravan parks were required to close on 24th March 2020 and were unable to open again until July 2020 and upon re-opening sites were subject to restrictions. Accordingly parks, and businesses in the local community have lost a substantial amount of income from the loss of tourists to the area.

- 2.2 Since the pandemic many UK holiday makers have changed their habits. Many are taking ‘staycations’ for the first time and are looking to stay safe in UK holiday parks. Further rather than staying in tents, which are heavily reliant upon the communal toilet/wash block facilities provided by the park, customers are buying their own caravan or motorhome which are much more self contained and allow holiday makers to feel more comfortable about making a holiday trip.
- 2.3 It is in response to this change that the applicant is looking to increase the flexibility on the park to allow either tents, touring caravans or motorhomes on the application area.
- 2.4 Furthermore the application will allow more holiday makers to visit when the weather is wet or cold as touring caravans and motorhomes have modern heating systems and are much more weatherproof than tents. This will allow the business to recoup some of the loss made during its closure for Covid 19 in the early part of the year and possible future loss with potential closures which may apply in the coming months and years due to Covid 19 restrictions.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Middlewood Farm Holiday Park is a successful and well established caravan park providing holiday makers with access to the many attractions of the East Yorkshire Coast and in particular Robin Hoods Bay. All customers are short stay holiday visitors and the park has many repeat customers who support local businesses during their stay.
- 3.2 The application area benefits from planning permission under a Certificate of Lawful Use Or Development dated 14 June 1996 Ref: NYM4/029/0125A/LU. The First Schedule of the CLUOD states at paragraph 2 that *‘The use of the land outlined in red on the plan attached to this certificate for tented camping.... to a maximum of 80 tents at any one time’*. The application area forms part of the area outlined in red referred to above.
- 3.3 Part of the land edged red on the plan attached to the CLUOD has been granted permission for 14 holiday pods. Accordingly the application area excludes this area and relates to the remaining 66 pitches.
- 3.4 This application seeks to allow this small part of the site which is currently approved for 66 tent pitches to be used for either tents, touring caravans or motorhomes. There are currently 66 pitches for tents and there will be no increase in numbers as a result of this application. The proposal does not involve any site works or change in ground levels.
- 3.5 As discussed above this application will address many of the problems Covid 19 has raised. It will also allow the site to further weather-proof the business by allowing pitches to be used during times of poor weather. This will greatly benefit the park and local businesses.

- 3.6 This application is very small in scale and will have a minimal impact on the locality other than in a positive way by supporting local businesses.

4 ACCESSABILITY

- 4.1 The subject caravan park is situated in an accessible location and less than 3km from the A171. The park's entrance is just off Middlewood Lane. The access to this area of the caravan park is via a level road from the public highway into the park. All internal roads and pathways are developed fully in accordance with the requirements of the current caravan park site licence issued under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.
- 4.2 The proposal does not require a new access to the public highway or create any changes to the existing layout. As there are no changes in pitch numbers it is not envisaged that there will be any significant increase in traffic movements to and from the park.
- 4.3 The park customers can easily access the popular towns of Whitby and Scarborough via the local bus route which runs two buses an hour and stops in Fylingthorpe. The park is also a short 10 minute walk from Robin Hoods Bay and thus once the customers arrive on the park many don't use their cars again, preferring public transport to finding car parking places in these busy seaside resorts.

5 COMMUNITY

- 5.1 The caravan park is a viable and popular local business. The park brings holiday makers to the area they then use local shops and pubs in Fylingthorpe and Robin Hoods Bay. The park is the hub of the local economy and thus it is important that the caravan park business is allowed to adapt to meet demand from customers and continue to remain viable.
- 5.2 As stated below the application does not have any negative impact on the community and is socially sustainable. We have not carried out any community consultation as part of this application as we do not envisage there would be any negative comments received.

6 SUSTAINABILITY

- 6.1 Paragraph 11 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018, which revises the 2012 NPPF, advises that at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is the basis of plan making and decision taking. This is also incorporated into the ethos of the North York Moors Local Plan.

- 6.2 This proposal responds positively to the three key dimensions of economic, social and environmental sustainability set out in the NPPF. Firstly economic sustainability; holiday makers are keen to take UK holidays and since Covid 19 many are looking to touring caravans and motorhomes to provide their own self contained holiday accommodation. To allow tents, touring caravans and motor homes on the application area is responding to a current need, providing the business with flexibility and weather proofing the business. This in turn creates an economic gain not only for the site but also for other local businesses, which will benefit from the additional visitors to the park.
- 6.3 Secondly, looking at social sustainability, by allowing customers to visit in their heated caravans and motor homes on wet or colder weeks which would otherwise be unattractive to tenting customers the park is able to keep more regular visitor numbers. This continues to support the local shops and services, such as the local bus service thus ‘normalising’ the impact of tourism on the area throughout the opening season of the park.
- 6.4 Thirdly, looking at environmental sustainability, the proposal does not affect the local landscape as the application area is well established, set back behind the existing area for touring caravans and is well screened. Further there is no additional visual impact as the existing planning permission already allows cars and large tents on the area.

7 FURTHER PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Local Planning Policy

- 7.1 The North York Moors National Park Authority Local Plan 2020 does have specific policies on Camping, Glamping, Caravans and Cabins at Policy UE2. Policy UE2 States:
“Development will only be permitted for small scale holiday accommodation.... where:.....
2. It is in open Countryside and is not isolated from an existing business.....’
 It goes on to state:
‘....sites must be screened by existing topography, buildings or adequate well established vegetation.
- 7.2 As this is an application to change the use on a parcel of land within an existing site which is set back from the road and screened both by the existing park and well established trees and shrubbery both the criteria referred to above are met.
- 7.3 In addition further criteria have been set by the LPA. The first of these is
a) The accommodation avoids extensive alteration to ground levels and has a low environmental impact through limited foundations to enable the accommodation to be removed without harm to the landscape.
 The proposed application will not require the alteration of levels or the building of new roads.

7.4 The second states:

b) It does not lead to unacceptable harm in terms of noise and activity on the immediate area.

The application does not request additional pitches and thus there is no increase in the intensity of the use of the land. The park has strict rules which include 'No noise after 10.30pm' and 'No car engines running between 9pm and 7am'. These rules are strictly implemented for the benefit of local residents and other holiday makers on the park.

7.5 The third states:

c) The proposal does not, in combination with existing development detract from the character, tranquility or visual attractiveness of the area.

The proposal does very little to vary the current use of the land. The land is currently used for holiday camping, with touring caravans and pods already permitted in the area adjacent to the application area. The change of use will not therefore detract from the character of the area.

7.6 The fourth states:

d) The accommodation is of a high quality design which compliments its surroundings.

Middlewood Farm Holiday Park is an award winning caravan park and the applicants work hard to ensure that the park is laid out in an attractive manner with excellent facility buildings. The proposed use of the application area will provide spacious pitches for holiday makers to fit the 'rural retreat' ethos of the park.

National Planning Policies - NPPF

7.7 As referred to in paragraph 6.1 above the Revised NPPF 2018 advises that at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and we have discussed the sustainability of this application at paragraphs 6.2 to 6.4 above.

7.8 Paragraph 83 of the Revised NPPF 2018 goes on to state that in order to promote a strong rural economy LPA's should support tourism and leisure proposals that help support rural communities and attract visitors which respect the character of the countryside. We consider that this application does support the local community by encouraging tourism to this area.

8 OVERALL CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This application seeks to allow this small part of the site which is currently approved for 66 tent pitches to now be used for either tents, touring caravans or motorhomes. There are currently 66 pitches for tents and there will be no increase in numbers as a result of this application. The proposal does not involve any site works or change in ground levels.
- 8.2 As discussed above this application will address many of the problems Covid 19 has raised. It will also allow the site to further weather-proof the business by allowing pitches to be used during times of poor weather. This will greatly benefit the park and local businesses.
- 8.3 This caravan park is the hub of the visitor economy for the local area. The visitors to the park are holiday makers who support many complementary businesses within the locality.
- 8.4 This proposal is sustainable, it does not impact on the landscape nor does it impact upon the character or nature of the locality. The customers have easy access to bus routes to Scarborough and Whitby and Robin Hoods Bay is a 10 minute walk from the park. Customers are just a short walk from the shops and the local pub in the village of Fylingthorpe, and the caravan park is itself an important part of the local community.
- 8.5 The application is in accordance with the policies of the adopted Local Plan 2020 and is also in accordance with national planning policies, particularly the Revised NPPF.
- 8.6 Having regard to all the above comments the planning application should be approved under delegated powers.

Planning Statement
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