

North York Moors National Park Authority

Parish: Fylingdales

App No: NYM/2020/0792/FL

Proposal: change of use from the siting of 66 tents to the siting of tents or campervans (on perimeter pitches only) (no net increase in number of pitches)

Location: Middlewood Farm Holiday Park, Middlewood Lane, Fylingthorpe,

Applicant: Mr Peter Beeforth
Middlewood Farm Holiday Park, Fylingthorpe, Whitby, YO22 4UF

Agent: Barrs & Co Chartered Surveyors
fao; Mr Rob Barrs, Prospect House, Sovereign Street, Leeds, LS1 4BJ, United Kingdom

Date for Decision: 11/12/2020

Extended to: 29/01/2021

Director of Planning's Recommendation

Approval subject to the following condition(s):

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than in strict accordance with the following documents:

Document Description	Document No.	Date Received
Site/Location Plan Amended	Revised plan 29 January 2021	1/2/2021

or in accordance with any minor variation thereof that may be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
3. Notwithstanding the provisions of Class B, Part 5 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, or any Order revoking and re-enacting that order, no development required by the conditions of a site license shall be permitted without the granting of planning permission by the Local Planning Authority.
4. No motorhome/touring caravan or tent shall remain on site between 8th January and 6th February in any calendar year. Any variation to this will require a new grant of planning consent from the Local Planning Authority
5. No external lighting shall be installed in the development hereby permitted. Any variation to this will require a new grant of planning consent from the Local Planning Authority
6. No more than 20 motor homes/campervans shall be sited within the red line of the application site. . Any variation to this will require a new grant of planning consent from the Local Planning Authority.

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7. Prior to the development being brought into use details of a landscaping scheme for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall provide for additional tree/hedge planting along the southern boundary and shall include details of any existing hedges and trees to be retained on the site together with any measures for managing/reinforcing these and shall specify plant species, sizes and planting densities for any new areas of planting. The approved details shall be carried out no later than the first planting season following the occupation of the buildings, or completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, or in accordance with a programme agreed by the Local Planning Authority. The approved landscaping scheme shall be maintained in perpetuity unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
8. No trees, shrubs or hedges on the southern, eastern or western boundary of the site shall be felled, uprooted, wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back or removed without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority. Any work approved shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 Tree Work - Recommendations. If any retained tree/hedge is removed, uprooted, destroyed or dies within five years of the completion of the development, it shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of a similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason(s) for Condition(s)

1. To ensure compliance with Sections 91 to 94 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended.
2. For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the details of the development comply with the provisions of Strategic Policies A and C of the North York Moors Local Plan, which seek to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park.
3. In order to enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control over future buildings at the site in the interests of safeguarding the landscape character of the locality and in line with Strategic Policies A and C and Policy UE2 of the North York Moors Local Plan, which seek to enhance and conserve the special qualities of the National Park and secure high quality design for new development.
4. In order to ensure that the caravans and associated levels of activity are not occupied on a year round basis when tree cover is minimal and in order to comply with Strategic Policy A of the North York Moors Local Plan.
- 5 & 6. In order to comply with the provisions of Strategic Policy A of the North York Moors Local Plan which seeks to ensure that new development does not detract from the quality of life of local residents.
7. In order to comply with the provisions of Strategic Policy C of the North York Moors Local Plan which seeks to ensure that new development incorporates a landscaping scheme which is appropriate to the character of the locality and retains important existing features.
8. In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and in order to comply with the provisions of Strategic Policy C of the North York Moors Local Plan which seeks to ensure that development proposals incorporate suitable hard landscaping details.

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Consultations

Parish - 21 January 2021 – Object due to narrow access roads, in places only single track not suitable for larger vehicles. On their web site the main route is via Church Lane then down Middlewood Lane both are narrow and during winter months very problematic. It is also considered over development due to the extension of time for use.

18 February 2021 – Revised plans - Object due to greater volume of heavier vehicles using the local roads that were not build for the volume and size of present vehicles, vans, motor homes and caravans. This includes Church Lane, Middlewood Lane, Thorpe Green Bank and 'back' Church Lane. From the cross roads in Fylingthorpe Church Lane is virtually one way until the junction with the back road, further up towards Old Stephen's Church the road is narrow and has sharp bends.

Highways - 19 November 2020 - The LHA has received information highlighting the concerns about the unsuitability of the routes leading to the application site for vehicles that are long because they are towing caravans. Whilst the campsite has long been established and has brown directional signs for drivers to navigate to the site on the most appropriate routes, these routes still have pinch points and tight corners which have become more difficult for drivers to manoeuvre around as the on street parking of vehicles has increased over the years. Consequently, recommend refusal due to insufficient widths of the roads leading to the site and unsuitable for the traffic which would be likely to be generated by this proposal.

9 March 2021 - No Objections. The Local Highway Authority has received further information since the issue of the recommendation dated 19/11/20.

The previous recommendation for refusal was based on the intensification of long vehicles that the proposals would attract. Whilst the revised proposals are still likely to increase the amount of traffic visiting the site, the number of vehicles pulling caravans along the road has been removed from the proposals. The route to the site is still expected to have pinch points and tight corners which have become more difficult for drivers to manoeuvre around as the on street parking of vehicles has increased over the years but as long as the increase in traffic is not long vehicles towing caravans, it is expected that traffic will still be able to manoeuvre around the parked cars with only minor inconvenience.

There are no recorded collisions along the route to the site but the LHA has received requests for additional waiting restrictions (double yellow lines) on Thorpe Green Bank. There are no plans to impose any additional restrictions along this route and therefore, the on street parking is expected to remain an issue for the foreseeable future. The longer the vehicles passing along the road, the more difficult it is for drivers to find passing places.

Environmental Health Officer -30 October 2021 - No objections. However, should planning permission be granted the applicant should be aware of the need to update the site licence accordingly, and ensure that there are sufficient toilet and washing facilities provided on the site to satisfy the requirements of the site licence.

Site Notice Expiry Date - 23 November 2020

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Others

A Murphy, Withens, Church Lane, Fylingthorpe – 20 November 2021 – Substantial increase in traffic is a considerable concern. The Lane is narrow and a busy thoroughfare with mostly no pavements. It is in daily use by heavy farm vehicles and in the holiday season the increase in traffic is substantial. There are two dangerous corners and before any application is considered a serious study should be made as to the nature of Church Lane and its safety and suitability for any increase in traffic.

Mr& Mrs Fox, Church House, Church Lane, Fylingthorpe – 16 November 2020 - Object. There has been a significant increase in capacity at Middlewood Farm Holiday Park in the past 30 years and this site is open all year round. The site adjoining the railway line was originally for tents but now also includes campervans/motorhomes with an increased number of electric points. The third site (which this planning application relates to) is for tents, touring caravans and motorhomes. More recently this was extended with the addition of Glamping Pods. This site is also open all year round.

The vehicular access to Middlewood Farm Holiday Park is limited and there has been a significant increase in the volume of traffic. The existing road network to Middlewood Farm Holiday Park already cannot cope.

The permanent change in the nature of the intended use for these pitches will inevitably result in more vehicles of a larger size, compared with people who are camping who travel by car or public transport.

We believe Fylingthorpe and Robin Hood's Bay has reached saturation point. Any further increase in the number of large vehicles using the existing inadequate road network will result in total gridlock and contribute towards the erosion of the quality of life of the local residents.

5 February 2021 - We note the amendment however the potential for a significant increase in the volume of campervan/motorhome traffic (up to 66) and its ensuing problems remain. Therefore the observations submitted in our initial response are still relevant.

In essence, the amendment to the original application makes no substantial difference.

Dave and Denise Graham. The Cabin, Raw, Whitby – 22 October 2021- There is no easy way into this site. We hope due consideration will be given to try and reduce the volume of motor homes, rather than increase. We have witnessed considerable confusion at the Thorpe Store junction, when motor homes realise they cannot complete the turn, these huge vehicles reverse onto the main road which is most worrying especially when it coincides with school finishing times. This is clearly a very popular site, which is fine, but do we have the foresight to reduce some of the future problems?

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P Davies, Applegarth, Middlewood Lane, Fylingthorpe – 23 November 2020 – The lane here is simply not wide enough for larger vehicles and to allow extra traffic down here could cause unnecessary hazard and inconvenience to other car users, dog walkers and children's pony rides.

18 February 2021 – This will lead to an increased volume of traffic, hazardous to residents and visitors alike. The first part of the lane is narrow and parked cars render it virtually single track. In the caravan season particularly there is scope for a serious incident.

The Revd JM and Mrs S Waters, Blacksmiths Cottage, Middlewood Lane, Fylingthorpe – 23 November 2020 – Object. The local road system is ill-equipped for more heavy traffic. It is true that lorries, delivery vehicles and farm vehicles use these roads but they are local and know the roads. Those towing caravans and driving motorhomes are only driving them at weekends or on holidays and don't know the roads. We think that an increase in traffic would out-balance the financial advantage.

18 February 2021- We do not believe the changes will make a difference. There will be an increase in traffic on the roads not well adapted to camper vans. Does having them around the perimeter of the site mean they will sit better in the countryside. It is true little can be seen from the road but as the site lies in the valley, perimeter sites are no less of an intrusion into the landscape.

Clare White, West Lodge, Fylingthorpe – 23 November 2020 – Express some concern regarding the above application on two grounds: firstly, the view of the Bay from the top of Sledgates or from the Old Church, and to avoid it becoming a vast caravan park. Secondly, the roads in the village are not suitable for large vehicles. These are small, country lanes, and this valley already has its share of motor-homes and caravans.

10 February 2021 - would be totally wrong for the village and the area. The access for heavier campervan traffic, small roads and a narrow water-splash, are unsuitable and hard on local residents. Visually, from the moor top, would further spoil a treasured valley as there is no attempt at screening. I am not in favour.

Mrs Rosemary King, Ebor Cottage, Thorpe Green Bank, Fylingthorpe – 29 November 2020 – Strongly object. Although the application does not alter the number of pitches it does allow for much larger vehicles to use those pitches. We have already experienced a change in size of vehicles of all types accessing Middlewood Farm, frequently requiring drivers to knock on resident's doors to ask them to move their own parked vehicles. Camper vans and Motorhomes continue to increase in size and these larger vehicles are unable to get along this road safely with vehicles frequently having to mount the pavements to progress. We would therefore ask that the above application is refused in view of the safety and inconvenience concerns

13 February 2021 - The changes make no difference to the points I made in my initial objection. It is greatly concerning the Planning Authority is even considering allowing this application in view of the dangers and inconvenience additional campervan traffic will have to residents of Fylingthorpe.

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As previously stated, vehicles of this type are constantly increasing in size and already cause problems when trying to access Middlewood Farm Holiday Park when residents vehicles are parked in nearby access roads outside their homes. Some properties on Thorpe Green Bank open directly onto the pavement, and when large vehicles chose to drive onto the pavement to get through, it can be only a matter of time before someone risks being injured merely by exiting their own property. It should be recognised that there are no size restrictions on vehicles coming down Thorpe Green Bank but which is completely unsuitable for large vehicles. Many of the larger vehicles accessing Middlewood Farm have to use Thorpe Green Bank as they are unable to go through the ford on the alternative road as they are too large to accommodate the bends in that road.

Mrs Janet McGeehin, Ivy Cottage, Middlewood Lane, Fylingthorpe – 4 December 2020

The planning application does not seek to increase the number of sites, but it would result in larger vehicles and more cars towing caravans driving through the village on roads which were not designed for this type of traffic. Sometimes the vehicles mount the kerb to get past parked vehicles. It is not safe and there is an increasing likelihood of an accident involving pedestrians.

The visual impact of this site should not be underestimated. The site is visible from much of the surrounding area. The beautiful views from the hillsides are a valuable asset to the area. There are many footpaths and bridleways used by visitors and residents where the views are over this farm land and out to sea. A site full of caravans/motorhomes for most of the year would be an eyesore. Whilst I appreciate that tourism is important to the economy and employment in this area, I do not feel that this change of use would help. Robin Hood's Bay and Fylingthorpe already have a vast influx of visitors all year round, providing ample customers for local businesses. The provision of accommodation and facilities for tourists needs to be balanced with the quality of life for residents who have a right to be considered.

13 February 2021 – Object – All reasons in original objection are still applicable, though I appreciate not allowing caravans and only allowing a limited number of sites for mobile homes will cause fewer traffic problems. It does not, however, alter the fact that we already have a large amount of traffic driving through the village to access this camp site.

The hedge line does prevent this part of the site being seen from Middlewood Lane, but the site is very visible from nearby properties and other places. Even with fewer mobile homes and no further caravans, the combination of mobile homes, tents of various colours, the pods and the caravans are an eyesore. It would require very tall trees round the whole site to screen it adequately

I strongly feel that Middlewood Farm Holiday Park has already been overdeveloped for this area. Any extension to these sites would have an adverse impact on residents and the location.

Janet Wallis, Stoneleigh, Church Lane, Fylingthorpe – 11 February 2021 – Modern campervans or motorhomes are often large and this application will cause a totally unacceptable rise in the amount of traffic on the roads in Fylingthorpe that are not adequate.

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The proposal would allow up to 132 additional large vehicle movements on changeover days and the roads and residents cannot accept this increase.

Mrs Angela Barber of Frecaro, Church Lane, Fylingthorpe 23 November 2020 - Whilst I understand the application is for change of use and not for incremental pitches, we are extremely concerned about the potential change in traffic, specifically larger vehicles (motor homes) driving in the area. Our concern is not just for our own road, Church Lane, where there are very narrow parts of the road, namely at the upper 2 corners, outside Church Cottage and also further down the lane at the junction of Church Lane and Thorpe Lane. Also there is restricted passing further along Middlethorpe Lane towards and at the water splash. The roads are not built to cope with these large vehicles. Safety is a major concern, as there is no footpath and there is more danger with wider larger vehicles.

06 February 2021 - I note the changes to the application and comments remain as previously noted by way of objection. The issue remains that siting "campervans" in any form will generate impact on the local community.



Indication of site (red line I've annotated is larger than site so can see boundary hedge). Pink are PROWs.

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Zoomed in view from google from lane down from Fylinghall School – red line shows outer hedge line – can just make out tents and existing caravan site



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**Background**

Middlewood Farm comprises a working farm and long established caravan and camping site situated on the northern edge of Fylingthorpe village, close to the residential areas of Middlewood Lane and Middlewood Crescent. The Grade II Listed Farmhouse and associated mix of traditional and modern large agricultural buildings are located at the north side of the lane with the static caravan park (30 vans) and overspill camping site. The touring caravan (20 pitches) and camping site (66 tent pitches and 14no. camping pods) are at the opposite side of the lane extending into open countryside. Views into the farm yard and caravan sites are fairly limited from the surrounding roads and lanes. However, the touring caravan and tent pitch field is visible from the road and public footpaths that lead south east from Fylinghall School towards Boggle Hole.

The touring caravan site and camp site have permission to operate for up to 11 months per year.

This application seeks planning permission to use part of the field that currently has 66 tent pitches for use by motor homes.

The proposals have been amended to omit the proposed use by touring caravans, due to concerns from the Highways Authority and also only to seek permission for motorhomes around the edge of the site, retaining the more central part of the site for tents only. This would mean that the motorhomes would only be sited adjacent the hedge boundaries of the field.

It is not proposed that there would be an increase in total numbers using the site from 66, but to allow a mix of tents and camper vans/motorhomes with a recommended maximum number of motorhomes being 20 so the minimum tent pitches available would be 46.

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The applicant's agent has submitted a supporting statement which advises that the applicants are wanting to:-

diversify the type of pitch they can offer to customers. Allowing these pitches to be used for either tents or motorhomes will allow the site to weather-proof the business as demand for tent pitches is very dependent on the weather.

Since the pandemic ... 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 motorhomes which are much more self-contained and allow holiday makers to feel more comfortable about making a holiday trip. It is in response to this change that the applicant is looking to increase the flexibility on the park ... Furthermore the application will allow more holiday makers to visit when the weather is wet or cold as 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.

Main Issues**Local Plan**

Strategic Policy J - Tourism and Recreation - seeks to support such development where it is consistent with the principles of sustainable tourism, does not lead to unacceptable harm to the local landscape character or an ecological or archaeological asset; provides opportunities for people to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park; is of a quality, scale and design that takes into account and reflects the sensitivity of the local landscape; any accommodation is used only for short term holiday stays; it does not compromise the enjoyment of existing tourism and recreational facilities or Public Rights of Way.

Strategic Policy K - The Rural Economy - seeks to support development that fosters the economic and social well-being of local communities where it promotes and protects existing businesses by providing flexibility for established rural businesses to diversify and expand; it helps maintain or increase job opportunities in the agricultural, forestry and tourism sectors and provides for and supports small and micro business through the provision of flexible start-up businesses; it provides additional opportunities to diversify and better equip the National Park's workforce, or provides additional facilities, or better use of existing facilities for educational and training uses.

Policy UE2 - Camping, Glamping, Caravans and Cabins – seeks to permit small scale holiday accommodation (such as tents, pods, yurts, teepees, shepherd huts, cabins, chalets, caravans and motorhomes etc.) where it is within Helmsley or the main built up area of a village and it is in close proximity to an existing residential unit which will be used to manage the accommodation, or it is in Open Countryside and is not isolated from an existing business or residential unit which will be used to manage the accommodation.

In order to respect the sensitivity of the local landscape all sites must be screened by existing topography, buildings or adequate well established vegetation which is within the applicant's control. The accommodation should avoid extensive alteration to ground levels,

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has a low environmental impact, does not lead to unacceptable harm in terms of noise and activity on the immediate area; does not detract from the character, tranquillity or visual attractiveness of the area.

The intention of the policy is to allow for small scale and sensitively designed holiday accommodation to support local businesses and allow people to enjoy the special qualities of the National Park.

Policy CO2 – Highways - only permits new development where it is of a scale which the adjacent road network has the capacity to serve without detriment to highway safety.

Material Considerations

The main issues are considered to be whether the proposal (which does not propose an increase in the numbers of pitches on the site) would result in an intensification of the site to the detriment of the amenities of local residents or users of the local highway network, or whether the introduction of campervans/motorhomes in an area currently used for tents would have a greater or unacceptable impact on the surrounding landscape.

Landscape Impact

The site is within a field which currently has permission for use by up to 66 tents. Whilst tents are generally not white and are smaller scale than campervans, they are often brightly coloured and are in the case of this field, are visible from surrounding footpaths and local roads at higher level to the north.

It is accepted that white motorhomes would be more likely to visually intrusive in the wider landscape consequently; it is proposed that the camper vans/motorhomes proposed will only be able to be sited around the boundaries of the site, so viewed against existing established hedge lines, which will help reduce their visual impact. They will also be viewed in the context of the existing caravan pitches. It is acknowledged that they will be visible and if this site was not already a long established camping and caravanning field the proposals would be unlikely to be considered acceptable, however, in the context of existing development here, it is not considered the proposal would have a significantly greater landscape impact to warrant refusal.

Relationship to Existing Business

The site is physically and functionally linked to the established camping and caravan site and will be managed as part of the existing business. No additional permanent residential accommodation will be required to serve the development.

Effect of Proposal on Traffic and Activity Levels in the Locality

A number of objections have been received from local residents and the Parish Council concerned with the effect of additional traffic or larger vehicles travelling through the village on roads that are not suitable for such traffic due to their narrow nature, and current levels of on street parking, making the roads even narrower.

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The application was originally submitted to include caravans as well as motor homes, but the Highways Authority objected to the additional use of the roads by cars towing caravans, consequently the proposals were amended to campervan/motor homes only.

The Highway Authority has been re-consulted on the revised scheme and has no objections to increased use by such vehicles. It should also be noted that families holidaying with tents, often have either trailer tents or bring their camping gear and tents in trailers.

In terms of the overall use of the Middlewood Farm site which already has a mix of caravans, static caravans, motorhomes and tents, it is not considered that the change of up to a maximum 20 campervans pitches in place of twenty tent pitches would have such a significant impact on either the character of the landscape, activity levels or nature of road use as to justify a recommendation for refusal.

Conclusion

Strategic Policy J and Policy UE2 supports tourism and recreation within the National Park providing the associated activity levels are compatible with the surrounding area and do not detract from the quality of life of local residents. Strategic Policy K supports development that benefits the local economy and Policy CO2 seeks to ensure that development isn't detrimental to Highway Safety.

Officers consider that this proposal would not have any adverse effect in terms of associated activity levels, landscape impact and would be managed from the existing accommodation on site. Furthermore, without an objection from the Highway Authority it is not considered the proposal would have an adverse impact on highway safety.

Consequently the proposal is considered to meet the objectives of the above NYM Local Plan Policies and approval is recommended.

Pre-commencement Conditions

N/A

Contribution to Management Plan Objectives

Approval is considered likely to help meet Policy B3 and B4 which seeks to promote overnight tourism in the National Park and improve the quality and variety of tourism accommodation.

Decision under the Temporary Scheme of Delegation

Yes

Explanation of how the Authority has Worked Positively with the Applicant/Agent**Approval (Amendments Requested and Received)**

The Authority's Officers have appraised the scheme against the Development Plan and other material considerations and recommended changes to the proposal including reduction in site area and number of campervans so as to deliver sustainable development.