

# EDWARDSON ASSOCIATES

*Planning & Diversification Consultants*

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NYM / 2011 / 0 7 2 3 / FL

14 October 2011

Dear Sir or Madam,

**Proposal: Use of part of the approved caravan park for the siting of camping pods at Grouse Hill Caravan Park, Fylingdales**

Please find the attached planning application in respect of the above. I would be grateful if you could regard this letter as comprising a Planning and Design and Access Statement to be forwarded to consultees as you consider appropriate.

This application relates to land adjacent to that already benefitting from consent for a total of 20 units including nine camping pods. Part of the application site is being used for the siting of four pods. They were placed in their current position to trial their popularity/customer demand as this part of the caravan park has easy access to site utilities to facilitate servicing the pods. Also, the site owners felt unable to implement the existing permission for pods at this stage because the wording of the conditions means that even if only one pod were to be installed the numbers of touring caravans would need to be reduced by 20, which simply isn't viable. It is hoped that this application can be conditioned to control the maximum overall number of units on the site at any one time rather than effectively requiring an immediate reduction in unit numbers, bearing in mind that the pods will be developed in phases over a number of years.

The pods on site have proved extremely popular in their first year and so this application seeks to regularise the retention of these units in a slightly different layout (to increase the separation between them to a minimum of 6 metres) and also to site additional pods on this part of the site so as to link upto the area already approved.

NYM/11/0723/FL  
25 OCT 2011

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## Background

Grouse Hill Caravan Park has an 11 month open season and caravans can remain stored on their pitches for the closed period over much of the site, including this corner of the park the subject of the current proposal.

The applicants wish to retain the potential to meet the demand for the better quality accommodation that is provided by static caravans, particularly from existing users of the Park who wish to upgrade from their seasonal static caravans, but the prevailing financial climate has meant that this is unlikely to be progressed for the time being. However, the demand for the more affordable type of holiday provided for by pods is proving popular in the economic downturn. This has meant refocusing the medium term business plan to try and meet the growing demand for an "outdoor camping" experience in pods from people who do not have to set up their own tents but simply want to arrive on site with a unit ready to use immediately and which doesn't need to be packed away at the end of the holiday.

## Design Component

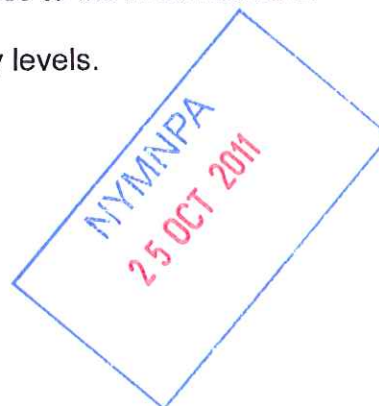
The proposal will not increase the overall number holiday pitches on the Park. This corner of the site is used by a mixture of tents and touring caravans so existing pitches will be lost in providing the pods. The proposal will not increase overall levels of activity associated with the Park. The muted/natural colours of the pods will have less impact on the appearance of the area than the predominantly white of touring caravans with coloured awnings and often large, coloured tents and so will ensure that the development is more visually recessive in the wider landscape. The camping pods are about 6 metres long by 3.5 metres wide with the apex approximately 3 metres high.

## Appraisal of Context

Appropriate rural diversification schemes are generally supported both by National Policies and those set out in the Local Development Framework. This proposal is intended to help meet current for the growing market in camping "pods".

Core Strategy policy DP14 states that the diversification of an existing business like this will be supported. This proposal is considered to accord with the criteria of policy DP14 as follows:

1. The proposal will enhance the enjoyment of visitors to the National Park in a way that does not undermine its special qualities.
2. The development has satisfactory access to the road network.
3. The proposal will reduce overall activity levels.



The replacement of tents and tourers with pods cannot be regarded as an expansion of the site to which policy DP16 would apply. However, it is worth pointing out that this proposal is considered to be within the spirit of DP16 in that the development, due to woodland/landscaping and landform, will not harm the special qualities of the National Park; no additional residential accommodation is required in connection with the proposal; the site is close to the road network and will not increase traffic generation; the scale and type of the development will not adversely affect the special qualities of the National Park; the pods can be readily removed if no longer required.

The location of the site away from any neighbouring properties is such that local communities have not yet been consulted.

### **The Access Component**

The existing access to the Park will continue to be used. The requirements of the site licence will ensure that the site can be readily accessed by emergency vehicles if required.

### **Conclusion**

The change in the nature of the units on this part of the Park from coloured tents and predominantly white caravans which can remain on their pitches all year, (most of which have awnings of a variety of colours and designs in place all season) to recessively coloured timber clad camping pods will reduce the impact of this site on the character and appearance of this part of the National Park.

The proposal will also better meet the demands and expectations of visitors in the area thereby bringing important benefits to the wider economy, with particular regard to visitors "spend" in local shops, restaurants, public houses.

The proposal is considered to be in accordance with both emerging policy in the Local Development Framework and national guidance. The "Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism" spells out the key contribution for tourism both to the local economy and in social/ job creation terms. It specifically encourages Local Authorities to take a positive approach to tourism proposals.

It is hoped that officers will be able to support this revised application and recommend it for approval. Should any additional information be required please do not hesitate to contact Roy Edwardson of this office or myself.

Yours faithfully

**Mark Southerton** BA (Hons) MRTPI

