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EDWARDSON ASSOCIATES

Planning & Diversification Consultants

Mr CM France
Director of Planning
North York Moors National Park
Authority
The Old Vicarage
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Our Ref: STU.D 2015.01

24 February 2016

Dear Sir

SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposal: Change of use of land for the siting of 7 (no.) static caravans at Rigg Farm Caravan Park, Stainsacre, North Yorkshire, YO22 4LP

1.0 Introduction, Site Location and Description

- 1.1 This submission comprises a full planning application for the change of use of land for the siting of 7 (no.) static caravans at Rigg Farm Caravan Park, Stainsacre.
- 1.2 The application is a product of a pre-submission site meeting and discussions with Hilary Saunders, Planning Team Leader. Mrs Saunders has advised that the proposed caravans be sited so as to be set back from the road, so as to be broadly no nearer to the road than the 4 (no.) existing static caravans on this part of the caravan site. This should ensure that the proposed new caravans benefit from the positive screening effects of the most mature planting on the site. There should be no caravans at the front of the site where the planting is currently less mature.
- 1.3 Rigg Farm Caravan Park is a well-established caravan park providing mixed accommodation for static caravans and touring caravans and tents.
- 1.4 The caravan park is set in undulating countryside within the National Park, approximately 4km south of Whitby and 3.5km west-north-west of Robin Hoods Bay.

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- 1.5 The caravan park has developed to the north and south sides of the road. This application relates to a parcel of land on the north side of the road and west of a small number of static caravans approved by the National Park Authority under planning consent reference NYM/2007/0707/CU.
- 1.6 The site is relatively linear in shape and currently comprises manicured lawn within the overall caravan site. There is undulating landform to all four sides of the application site, which offers a considerable amount of screening from views in the wider countryside. The site comprises a valley trough with a north-south axis. There is dense scrub and bushes to the rising land to the west, beyond which is a dense thicket of trees aligning Rigg Beck. This dense planting returns east, closing off and forming the northern boundary of the site. To the east there is also rising land which has been comprehensively planted with saplings which are maturing. To the southern highway boundary side there is also a considerable amount of new planting in place, which is beginning to mature and is helping to screen views of the site from Stainsacre Lane.
- 1.7 There are some traditional buildings located to the south east of the site. These are owned and occupied by the applicant, from where the tourism accommodation enterprise is managed. These buildings include a partially implemented conversion to form additional living accommodation.

2.0 The Proposals

- 2.1 The proposals seek consent for the change of use of land for the siting of a modest number of additional static caravans to complement those which are already on site. 7 (no.) additional static caravans are proposed in total. These will meet the definition of a caravan and will be laid out in accordance with the Authority's Caravan Site Licence requirements.
- 2.2 The static caravans will be laid out in an informal manner on an existing grassed area to the north side of Stainsacre Lane and to the west of some existing static caravans. Additional within site planting is proposed to break up the site into more intimate areas. Each static unit will have an off-street parking space. Surface water will discharge to ground and foul water will discharge to the existing septic tanks on the site.

3.0 Assessment Against Planning Policy

- 3.1 Applications are to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following policies and guidance are considered to be of most relevance to the consideration of this application: -

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.2 Paragraph 28 of the Framework offers clear support for a prosperous rural economy and encourages the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, including sustainable rural tourism and leisure. This application responds positively to these national planning aims and objectives as it relates to the small scale and sustainable expansion of an existing rural-based caravan park. The application comprises a modest expansion proposal and will enable the business to respond to customer demands at a popular holiday and visitor destination.
- 3.3 Paragraph 115 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Given the very small scale nature of this application proposal, it is considered that the impact on the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park will be minimal and acceptable. The existing caravan park, particularly the area to the north side of Stainsacre Lane sits within a natural valley with steep rising sides to the east and west. There is also a considerable amount of mature and more recent landscape planting in place to all four boundaries of the application site. This combination of landform and planting provides effective screening of the existing caravan park and the application site proposals. A pre-submission site meeting with the National Park's Planning Team Leader has influenced the proposed layout, which sees the caravans set back from the roadside, broadly no closer to the road frontage than existing caravans.

Adopted Core Strategy and Development Policies Development Plan Document, November 2008

- 3.4 Paragraphs 2.9 and 2.10 of the Core Strategy confirm that tourism is a significant and important element of the National Park's landscape, economy and community. This is echoed in paragraphs 3.25 – 3.27 which deal with the rural economy. Paragraph 3.26 states that "tourism is now the largest employment sector in the Park and has a considerable influence over its economic wellbeing and its communities". The applicant is engaged in a well-established tourism business and thus support for this proposal would have benefits for one the National Park's two main industries.
- 3.5 Spatial Objective 7 of the Core Strategy seeks to support the tourism and recreation industry by ensuring that development contributes to the local economy and provides opportunities for enjoying the Park's special qualities. The applicant has experienced demand from potential customers for additional static caravans. The site is very well-placed for both the coast and the inland and will be particularly attractive to those engaged in walking and cycling and those simply looking for a peaceful break in the National Park. It is reasonable to say that there will be some modest but positive

multiplier effects for other local businesses as a consequence of holidaymakers and visitors spending money on local services and facilities.

- 3.6 Core Policy A(1) offers support to new development which is of an appropriate scale and level of activity to the National Park. To be acceptable in this regard development should be satisfactory in terms of its impacts on the wider landscape and the quiet enjoyment and peace and tranquillity of the Park. Moreover, new development should not detract from the quality of life of local residents or the experience of visitors. It is considered that the very small scale nature of this application proposal is such that it will be acceptable in relation to these policy criteria. The proposals will appeal to those who want to experience and quietly enjoy the quality and tranquillity of the National Park. There are no close residential neighbours to be unduly affected and traffic generation will be light. The site also benefits from reasonable levels of screening from a combination of topography and landscape planting and thus will not be obtrusive in wider views in the countryside.
- 3.7 Given the modest size and scale of the proposal there is unlikely to be any significant impact on the peace and tranquillity currently enjoyed by existing local residents, communities or on the enjoyment of the Park by future visitors.
- 3.8 Core Policy A(3) seeks to maintain and enhance the natural environment and conditions for biodiversity and geodiversity. Given the small scale nature of the proposal there will be no perceptible loss of wildlife habitat or other natural environment of quality. The caravans and pods will be sited on a lawn which is regularly mown by the applicant and therefore does not constitute a sensitive wildlife habitat. The applicant has planted a considerable number of new trees which are maturing. The applicant therefore has a good track record of creating and enhancing biodiversity habitat.
- 3.9 Core Policy A(4) seeks to conserve and enhance, amongst other things, landscape character. The combination of natural landform and existing landscape planting provides good levels of screening of the site from wider views in the countryside. Set within the confines of this linear and well-screened valley bottom it is considered that the proposals would be compatible with local landscape character.
- 3.10 Core Policy A(7) seeks to strengthen and diversify the rural economy and provide tourism based opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Park's special qualities. The proposal will enable the applicant to generate additional income by offering some modest additional accommodation.

- 3.11 Core Policy B sets out the spatial strategy for the Park and regards the site as being within "Open Countryside". The open countryside status of the site is acknowledged but this is a well-established caravan park and the application proposals are contained within the existing boundaries of the park. Other policies offer support to the expansion of rurally-based tourism businesses.
- 3.12 Core Policy G endeavours to ensure that the landscape, historic assets and cultural heritage of the National Park are conserved and enhanced. This scheme is a small scale proposal which will be generally unobtrusive in the landscape. The Authority can use planning conditions to control the appearance and colour of the units.
- 3.13 Core Policy H sets out a Development Plan approach to strengthen and support the rural economy, by providing local communities with a range of opportunities for entrepreneurship, education and training. Amongst other things this will be achieved through sustainable tourism based on recreation activities and tourism development related to the understanding and enjoyment of the Park. This current proposal is centred on visitors coming to the Park to undertake recreational activities and for individuals and families to learn more about and experience the important characteristics of the National Park.
- 3.14 Development Policy 3 seeks to maintain and enhance the National Park's distinctive character through design. The static caravans will meet the definition of a caravan and there are a variety of models on the market. Whatever caravan is sited, the combination of landform and planting should ensure that the development is largely obscured from public vantage points.
- 3.15 Development Policy 14 is concerned with tourism and recreation and is particularly supportive of proposals that will improve the quality of the tourism/recreation product and indicates that the expansion or diversification of an existing tourism business will be supported when schemes meet several criteria. The current application proposals are very small scale and will complement the applicant's existing small scale caravan park at this popular visitor destination. The site can be satisfactorily accessed and will be suitable for access by foot or mountain bike, as well as by car. Activity levels are likely to be very minor given the scale of the proposal.
- 3.16 Development Policy 16 deals specifically with proposals for new chalet and camping sites. To be acceptable, new proposals must meet a number of criteria, as follows: -
1. The application site has established woodland and mature vegetation to its boundaries. This has been planted by and is managed by, and can continue to be managed by, the applicant. In addition, the application site is located within a natural valley therefore in combination with the

established and new planting, natural landform helps to effectively screen much of the site. The local landscape setting is therefore considered to be one which can accommodate the development proposals without causing harm to the character and quality of the wider landscape. The applicant is agreeable to entering an agreement to maintain in perpetuity the perimeter woodland planting which is mature and maturing effectively. Pre-application discussions with the National Park's Planning Team Leader have highlighted the need for the caravans to be set back from the road frontage, to be broadly no closer to the road than the existing caravans. The proposed layout reflects these discussions and requirements.

2. It is the case that the application site and proposals are physically and functionally linked to the applicant's existing and well-established Rigg Farm Caravan business. The applicant lives on site and can supervise and manage the development proposals from his existing dwelling.
3. The application site is located in close proximity to Stainace Lane which links up to the wider highway network. The main A171 route from Scarborough to Whitby is only 2km to the east. A proposal comprising 7 (no.) caravans is small in scale and is most unlikely to result in traffic increases which would be deemed harmful to local character or highway safety.
4. The scale of the proposals is small, comprising 7 (no.) units. The caravans are set back from the road frontage the maturing perimeter planting should screen and limits views of the site. Given the small scale nature of the proposals, associated activity should be minimal, and is anticipated to comprise light car movements.
5. Caravans are by definition capable of being moved and therefore the proposals are designed to minimise the level of permanency. If no longer required the caravans could be easily moved from the site.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The application comprises a small scale tourism accommodation proposal physically and functionally linked to the applicant's well-established caravan park.
- 4.2 The site benefits from good levels of existing and maturing woodland planting, which has been planted and is managed by the applicant. This planting, in combination with natural landform effectively screens much of the application site from public vantage points. It is therefore considered that the application proposals can be satisfactorily assimilated into the local landscape. The proposed layout, which sees the caravans set back from

the road frontage, is reflective of pre-submission discussions with the National Park's Planning Team Leader.

- 4.3 This is a small scale proposal targeted at genuine visitors wishing to visit to explore, appreciate, understand and respect the National Park and its environment and assets. The applicant has experienced demand from customers for additional accommodation and this proposal responds to this demand in a modest fashion. Given the small scale nature of the scheme, limited activity and traffic movements and thus pressure on the local environment and community are envisaged. There will also be some positive economic multiplier effects for other local businesses as a consequence of inevitable visitor spend.
- 4.4 In conclusion it is considered that the application proposals accord with and respond positively to National and adopted Local Plan policies, are sustainable in nature, and are therefore worthy of approval without delay.
- 4.5 It is hoped that officers will be supporting this proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any additional information or clarification on any matters.

Yours sincerely

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