

## **7. FULL APPLICATION – USE OF LAND AS TOURING CARAVAN SITE WITH TEN PITCHES – JUG AND GLASS INN, ASHBOURNE ROAD, HARTINGTON (NP/DDD/0619/0687 TS)**

**APPLICANT: MS V BONSALE**

### **Summary**

1. The application site is a very prominent position in an open landscape. The proposed use of the land as a caravan site would result in harm to the landscape character of this part of the National Park.

### **Site and surroundings**

2. The site is a paddock that lies to the south west of the Jug and Glass Inn. The Jug and Glass is a public house that lies immediately next to the A515 Ashborne Road, in the open countryside approximately 1.5km north of Newhaven and 3km east of Hartington.
3. The site is laid to grass and is rectangular in shape. Trees have recently been planted around the perimeter of the site. Beyond the public house and its associated outdoor areas and the A515, the site is surrounded to all sides by open agricultural land.

### **Proposal**

4. The application seeks full planning permission for use of the land as a caravan site for ten pitches.
5. The proposed caravan site would utilise the existing access point from the A515 that serves the public house. The proposal does not include any amenity buildings. Users of the caravan site would have use of the existing facilities and services within the public house.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the application be REFUSED for the following reason:**

1. **The use of the land as a caravan site would result in harm to the appearance of this prominent and open site and would result in harm to the landscape character of this area of the National Park. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies GSP3, L1, RT3, DMC3 and DMR1 and the guidance contained within section 172 of the NPPF.**

### **Key Issues**

- The principle of development
- Impact on the landscape character and special qualities of the National Park
- Amenity Impacts
- Highways Impacts

### **History**

2013 – A pre-application enquiry was received relating to the possibility of using the land as a seasonal caravan site for 10 pitches. We gave the enquirer the following advice:

*“Despite being sited adjacent to the pub the field is located in a very prominent location visible*

*from the surrounding roads. My view is that a seasonal caravan site with 10 pitches here would be likely to have a harmful visual / landscape impact. While the Authority's policies do support small seasonal caravan sites 'in principle' having looked at the details my view is that officers would not be able to support a planning application for a caravan site here because of the potential visual and landscape impact."*

### **Consultations**

6. Hartington Nether Quarter Parish Council – Support the application.
7. Derbyshire County Council Highways – No objections.

### **Representations**

8. No third party representations have been received.

### **Main policies**

9. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, DS1.
10. Relevant Development Management Plan policies: DMC3, DMR1, DMT3.

### **National planning policy framework**

11. National Park designation is the highest level of landscape designation in the UK. The Environment Act 1995 sets out two statutory purposes for national parks in England and Wales which are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public. When National Parks carry out these purposes they also have the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Parks.
12. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been revised (2019). This replaces the previous document (2012) with immediate effect. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered as a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In particular Paragraph 172 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
13. In the National Park the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and the Adopted Development Management Policies 2019. Policies in the Development Plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. It is considered that in this case there is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and government guidance in the NPPF with regard to the issues that are raised.

### **Development plan**

14. Core Strategy policies GSP1, GSP2 and GSP3 together say that all development in the National Park must be consistent with the National Park's legal purposes and duty and that the Sandford Principle will be applied where there is conflict. Opportunities for enhancing the valued characteristics of the National Park will be identified and acted upon and development which would enhance the valued characteristics of the National Park will be permitted. Particular attention will be paid to impact on the character and setting of buildings, siting, landscaping and building materials, design in accordance

with the Design Guide and the impact upon living conditions of local communities. Core Strategy policy GSP4 highlights that the National Park Authority will consider using planning conditions or obligations to secure the achievement of its spatial outcomes.

15. Policy RT3 of the Core Strategy states that small touring camping and caravan sites and backpack camping sites will be permitted, particularly in areas where there are few existing sites, provided that they are well screened, have appropriate access to the road network, and do not adversely affect living conditions.
16. Development Management Policy DMC3 requires development to be of a high standard that respects, protects, and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape, including the wildlife and cultural heritage that contribute to the distinctive sense of place. It also provides further detailed criteria to assess design and landscaping, as well as requiring development to conserve the amenity of other properties.
17. Policy DMR1 states that the development of a new touring camping or touring caravan site, or small extension to an existing site will not be permitted unless its scale, location, access, landscape setting and impact upon neighbouring uses are acceptable, and it does not dominate its surroundings.
18. Policy DMT3 sets out that development will only be permitted where a safe access that is achievable for all people can be provided in a way that does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality.

## **Assessment**

### **Principle**

19. Policies RT2 and DMR1 allow for the creation of small camping and touring caravan sites when they would not have detrimental landscape or amenity impacts. The supporting text to policy RT2 notes that camping and caravanning is the most popular type of holiday accommodation in the Peak District. The meaning of “small” camping and touring caravan sites is not defined in policy RT2 but the supporting text clarifies that appropriate size will vary from site to site. For guidance, sites up to 30 pitches are more likely to be acceptable, although the text says that this may be too large in many circumstances.
20. It is fully acknowledged that camping and caravan sites can help to support the local economy and provide diversification for existing businesses. Whilst no supporting information has been provided with this application in respect of benefits to the public house business, it is assumed that income from the proposed caravan site would help to support the public house business.
21. At 10 pitches, it is reasonable to take the view that this would be a small touring caravan site. The site would have benefits in terms of promoting enjoyment of the National Park and may also support the local economy. However, policy DMR1 stresses the need for camping and caravanning development to integrate well with and not dominate its surroundings.
22. The proposed touring caravan site use is broadly acceptable in principle under policy RT2. However, the impact on the landscape is key to the acceptability of this type of development. The landscape impact is discussed below.

### **Impacts on the character and appearance of the landscape**

23. The site is in the Limestone Plateau Pastures character area as defined in the Authority's Landscape Strategy. This is detailed as an upland pastoral landscape with a regular pattern of straight roads and small to medium sized rectangular fields bounded by limestone walls. Tree cover is mostly limited to occasional tree groups, or small shelter belts, allowing wide views to the surrounding higher ground. This description accurately reflects the land surrounding the application site.
24. This is particularly relevant in respect of tree cover in the area. Whilst trees are present in the locality, this is by no means a wooded landscape. The trees that do exist are generally in small groups of linear shelter belts. The site itself is a group of open fields that do not contain any trees other than the ones that have been planted around the perimeter of the application site.
25. In 2013 we gave advice that the application site was unsuitable for use as a touring caravan site because of its prominent location in an open landscape.
26. At that time, the application site did not appear to contain any trees or soft landscaping. It was simply demarked by a drystone wall that was in keeping with other field boundaries in the landscape.
27. Since then, a dense band of trees has been planted around three sides of the application site, forming a very obvious U-shape of planting. The trees have been planted extremely close together, forming an almost solid landscaped barrier around three sides of the site. It is clear that the trees have been planted with the purpose of screening the inside of the site.
28. At the moment, the trees are not high enough to completely screen caravans in the site. However, it is likely that they would grow to a height that would largely screen the site in the near future.
29. The issue however is that the tree planting itself, in its very dense U-shaped formation, forming an enclosed rectangle in the middle of the open plateau pastures landscape is entirely incongruous in this location. The landscape has been manipulated in order to screen the site.
30. This is therefore an unusual situation whereby tree planting has clearly taken place in advance of the application being submitted in order to establish screening for the development. In future years it is likely that the tree planting would screen the proposed caravan site fairly effectively. The problem is that the tree planting itself is discordant with the open character of the landscape.
31. Whilst the tree planting itself is not development, the Authority should not endorse a development (i.e. the caravan site use) which can only be screened by tree planting that is itself harmful to the landscape. It is clear that the tree planting has only been carried out in this manner to form a visual barrier around the site – it does not form a shelter belt in the way that other lines of mature trees in the locality do. Without the tree planting, the proposed caravan site would be clearly visible in far reaching views from all directions, would be very prominent and would have an unacceptable impact on the landscape character of the area.
32. The view must therefore be taken that this is not a suitable site for a touring caravan site and the development would be harmful to the landscape character of this part of the National Park.
33. The development is therefore contrary to policies L1, RT2, DMR1, DMC3 and the

guidance in paragraph 172 of the NPPF.

34. The benefits outlined further above in respect of promoting enjoyment of the National Park and supporting the public house business do not outweigh the landscape harm.
35. Policy RT2 sets out that small camping and touring caravan sites will be supported particularly in areas where there are few existing sites. It is noted that there are numerous caravan sites, both large and small, along the A515. This is not an area where there are few existing sites.

#### Amenity impacts

36. The site is over 300 metres from the nearest neighbouring property. Given this, and that the site is adjacent to the existing commercial use at the public house, the proposed caravan site use would be unlikely to have any detrimental impacts on the amenity of any nearby users or residents by way of noise or other associated disturbance. The application accords with policy DMC3 in this respect.

#### Highways Impacts

37. The proposed caravan site would be accessed using the existing entrance to the public house site from the A515. This is in regular use for the public house. The Highway Authority has raised no objections. It is therefore considered that the intensification in the use of the existing access point is acceptable in this instance and would not be harmful to highways safety.
38. The proposal accords with policy DMT3.

#### Conclusion

39. The proposal would be harmful to the appearance of this prominent and open site and would result in harm to the landscape character of this area of the National Park. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies GSP3, L1, RT3, DMC3 and DMR1 and the guidance contained within section 172 of the NPPF.

#### Human Rights

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

#### List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Nil

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