

## **8. FULL APPLICATION - CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND TO CARAVAN AND MOTORHOME CAMP SITE, HOLMESFIELD FARM, MILLBRIDGE, CASTLETON (NP/HPK/0422/0586, JRS)**

**APPLICANT: MISS J BRADLEY**

### **Summary**

1. The application seeks full planning permission for the use of part of a field to site 20 motorhomes. The proposed use of the agricultural field as a caravan site would result in harm to the landscape character of this area of the National Park. The development would also cause harm to the character and significance of the setting of Castleton Conservation Area. There are also concerns about the access to the site and that the works required to address these would cause further landscape harm. The economic benefits of the application in providing a site for visitors and providing additional visitor accommodation do not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the protected landscape and Conservation Area. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

### **Site and Surroundings**

2. Holmesfield Farm is located between Hollowford Road and the A6187, to the north of the village of Castleton. The house and buildings are accessed off Hollowford Road, near Millbridge, which is a small lane that leads northwards out of the centre of Castleton village. The farm bungalow and associated buildings are positioned on elevated ground above a brook that flows around the north side of Castleton and through the farm. The bungalow is about 50 years old and built from artificial stone under a roof of artificial concrete slates. To the side of the bungalow there is a collection of farm buildings and sheds. Peakshole Water runs to the south of the site, separating it from the rear of houses on How Lane. There are residential properties to the south-east and south-west of the site, beyond the river. The land surrounding the site to the north is agricultural.
3. Although the application says that this is no longer a working farm, at the time of an application for an agricultural building in 2012 it was described as being a working farm with 100 acres of owned land adjacent to the farm buildings and an additional 100 acres of rented land that is located nearby.
4. The site is not within Castleton Conservation Area, which lies mainly to the south, and there are no listed buildings on the site.

### **Proposal**

5. The application is for the provision of 20 caravan/motorhome parking bays for self-sufficient units with their own toilet/shower accommodation. No toilet/shower blocks are to be provided.
6. The Design and Access Statement says that there will be no camping areas for tents. It says that the land is to be divided into bays for short period use by caravans and small & large motorhomes, which have their own toilet and shower facilities. The bays will be separated by grass segregation areas. The existing tree belt will be reinforced with additional tree planting and new areas around the parking bays will be planted with native trees to screen them from view from the surrounding areas. It proposes that substantial tree belts and planting areas will be provided, designed to screen the site, using native species. Access to the site will be via the existing track from the A6187 to the east, with no access allowed from Millbridge. It adds that although the use of the site by children will be discouraged, well-behaved dogs will be welcomed.

7. Following submission of the application, the applicant's commissioned a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) and have revised the site plans to respond to the Highway Authority's response. These were received in May and March 2023 respectively and on this basis an additional public consultation was carried out.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the application be REFUSED on the following grounds:**

1. **The proposed development would result in a form of development that would be visually prominent and harmful to the valued landscape character and scenic beauty of the National Park. This harm would be exacerbated by the measures necessary to meet the requirements of the Highway Authority in order to make the access safe to use. The development would result in significant harm to landscape character, contrary to policies GSP1, L1, RT3, and DMR1 and the guidance within section 15 of the NPPF.**
2. **The proposed development would cause harm to the character and significance of the setting of the Castleton Conservation Area, contrary to policies L3, DMC3, DMC8 and the guidance within section 16 of the NPPF.**

### **Key Issues**

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

### **History**

- 1969: Full planning permission granted for a bungalow for agricultural use.
- 1971: Planning permission granted for a barn on the south side of the land to the rear of the bungalow.
- 2012: NP/HPK/0212/0210: Erection of agricultural building, Approved.
- In the last 2-3 years there has also been a history of complaints about the use of the site and this has been investigated by the Authority's Enforcement team, although no enforcement notices have been served.

### **Consultations**

8. Highway Authority:

*"The proposed site will be accessed via a private access track which emerges on Castleton Road (A6187), is a Classified Road subject to a 30mph speed limit and a bus route. The proposed site could also be accessed from Hollowford Road, as this access is also within the blueline boundary of the site. The traffic management measures to stop vehicles accessing and egressing from Hollowford Road need to be demonstrated.*

*The proposed access from Castleton Road also provides access to Holmsfield Farm; therefore, information regarding cumulative traffic generation, including proposed caravan vehicles and farm vehicles be provided.*

*The access from Castleton Road clearly appears to intensify the use of the access; therefore, Castleton Road, which is subject to a 30mph speed limit, should provide emerging visibility splays of 2.4m x 47m on the controlled land. The area in advance of the sightlines being maintained clear of any object greater than 1m in height (0.6m in the case of vegetation) relative to the adjoining nearside carriageway channel level. A revised plan be submitted demonstrating advised visibility splays for approval.*

*The access road to the proposed site is of single-width up to its junction with Castleton Road (A6187), without having passing places and not suitable for two-way traffic movements. The proposal appears to intensify the use of the access; therefore, this Authority would recommend that the passing places be installed along the access road in the interest of road safety. The passing places are constructed in such a manner which increases the width of the track to a minimum of 5.5m for a minimum length of 15m (to allow two vehicles to pass). Furthermore, the first 10m of the private access road from A6187 be widened to 5 metres to avoid a vehicle waiting on the main Road if another vehicle is exiting from the site in the interest of road safety. A revised plan to this effect should be submitted for approval.*

*The first 10m of the proposed access road from A6187 should not be surfaced with loose material and should be upgraded to tar or any other hardstanding surface. There shall be no gates or other barriers within 6m of the nearside highway boundary, and any gates shall open inwards only.*

*The swept path assessments of the largest vehicle expected at the site need to be demonstrated to validate the access junction design. Information about the procedure of refuse collection be provided.*

*There are a number of issues highlighted in my response which will need further consideration and revised information to be submitted before the highway Authority may be in a position to provide further comments on this proposal. I would be grateful if these comments could be brought to the applicant's attention so that they may be given the opportunity of addressing the identified issues; in the meantime, the application should be held in abeyance. However, if your Authority wishes to determine the application 'as submitted,' I would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss the Highway Authority's position further”.*

(NB. No response has been received from the Highway Authority to the revised plans. Any response will be reported to the Committee meeting).

9. Borough Council: No response.

10. Castleton Parish Council:

Initial response: *Main concerns raised are as follows: This is a major road with heavy traffic, with vehicles entering and exiting the site on a bend, with poor visibility in both directions and affecting both the vehicles using the site and road users approaching the bend with the access. The report from Highways on the planning website, has only recently been posted but supports this concern. It is felt that there is not adequate time to read, digest and make a sound decision within the current timescale. The next Council meeting will not be held until 29th September where the matter will once again be discussed. The Council are requesting a site visit with the Planning and Highways Department and would like to draw attention to traffic survey “8223750 Traffic Calming in Castleton” taking this into consideration whilst deliberating the application.*

The Council also requested additional public consultation and more time to consider the response from the Highway Authority (the Parish Council response was submitted in August 2022; no further response has been received since, but a site notice was put in place to notify the public of the application and a number of responses were received following this – see below).

Response to additional information:

*The Parish Council considers the proposed caravan and motorhome site as detrimental to the village of Castleton, and wishes to object to the planning application and its recent amendments on a number of grounds:*

- *Road issues*
- *Loss of privacy for neighbouring properties, noise and disturbance*
- *Capacity of infrastructure and health fears*

- *Impact on landscape and character, with reference to the design and appearance, layout and density of the proposed caravan and motorhome site.*

The response from the Parish Council is very full and detailed, so only the key points are repeated here, but a full copy can be found on the Authority's website:

Road Issues:

The revised Design and Access Statement provides data and statements on use of the proposed caravan/motorhome site and traffic movements at its east side where it opens onto Castleton Road (Spital Bridge), to justify a history of safe use of the Castleton Road access. We question the accuracy of the information:

- The site has certainly been opened for motorhomes, but rarely for 15-20 of them at a time, whereas the document suggests this extent of use for 56 days in 2021 and then for 28 days in 2022. The site has been mainly used for the parking of cars during that time rather than motorhomes.
- The WEST end of the site at Hollowford Road/Millbridge has been the primary access for most vehicles, with much less access from Castleton Road, and only very recently (and which has more regularly been used as the exit). Most cars using the pop-up car park on the site currently use the Millbridge entrance, but the lane from the main road is narrow and common sense would dictate that it is not suitable as an access by caravans/motorhomes.
- The Castleton Road access has had very limited use by agricultural vehicles over the years, with regular access only during hay making, perhaps for a couple of weeks per year.
- Castleton Parish Council requested speed monitoring by the Highways Authority at the Spital Bridge (adjacent to the applicant's access) in 2012, because of concerns about traffic speeds exceeding 30 mph. No action was taken by the Authority because they have received no reports of major accidents causing injury or death. The average speed (over one week in November 2012) was 26mph, but with an average of nearly 15% of cars exceeding 30 mph. Average traffic flow measured during this survey during the hours of 8am to 5pm was between 300 and 400 vehicles per hour.
- Traffic often speeds into the bend from both directions, and that traffic levels, speeding and road safety at both ends of the village have worsened significantly since 2012.
- Even 30 mph is a dangerous speed for the proposed caravan site access given its visibility issues at a double bend in the main road. In addition to the limited visibility for vehicles leaving the proposed site, access is also a potential hazard to towed caravans or campervans entering the site, because of traffic approaching around the bend.

Loss of privacy for neighbouring properties, noise and disturbance

- The Design and Access Statement makes the point that the nearest neighbouring properties are sufficiently far away (50m and 100m) from the site and will be sufficiently well-screened by existing and proposed trees to prevent adverse effects by the proposed motorhome site. The proposal aims to make this an "adult-only" site and guests will be asked to respect nearby residents and the tranquil setting.
- The current partial screening of the proposed site is all deciduous trees so for at least six months of the years screening would be practically non-existent. The mixture of trees proposed for screening would take a long time to mature and the vast majority will drop leaves in winter.
- Reports of antisocial behaviour by users of the site were made by residents (noise, urinating users) in their responses to the original application. An "adult-only" demographic is no guarantee of respectful behaviour. How would this be monitored?

- Neighbouring properties are not necessarily only dwellings e.g. fields are used for the private stabling and use of horses and the gardens for the private and quiet enjoyment of their owners. These personal uses would be significantly disturbed by the proposal.
- There is no mention of lighting on the site but it is likely that the applicant would wish to install some in due course.

Capacity of infrastructure, Health fears:

- There would be no provision for toilets on site as all the users would be expected to have their own toilet facilities. How would this be monitored? Where would the toilet waste from the vehicles be disposed of, particularly those staying for longer than a couple of days? Peaks Hole Water borders the proposed site and could provide a tempting site for disposal of human waste/chemical loos.

Impact on landscape and character, with reference to the design and appearance, layout and density of the proposed caravan and motorhome site:

- This section is a detailed response to the Landscape and Visual Appraisal, so it is summarised more briefly. In summary the Parish Council says that they understand that Castleton has welcomed tourism for centuries, and continue to welcome the increasing numbers and diversity of visitors who appreciate the area, but the village is at the point of saturation and at great risk of being spoilt for everyone, both visitors and residents.
- It goes on to question the conclusions of the Appraisal and ask “*how can 15 to 20 large, high, white campervans or caravans gathered together in a block at all times of year not impact the landscape setting in short-range views (e.g. Spital Bridge) or long range elevated views, e.g. from Peveril Castle and the ridgeline?*”
- They add “*the views from Castleton Road and Squire’s Lane are not “limited” or “filtered”. The filtering by newly planted trees will only be there in the summer. Both these sites give some of the very best views of Mam Tor and Peveril Castle in the context of the surrounding landscape in the whole of Castleton.*”

11. Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA): The LLFA has no formal comment to make.
12. PDNPA Landscape Architect: A detailed response, setting out the landscape character of the locality, with the following conclusion (a full copy can be seen on the Authority’s website):

**“Likely effects:** *The mobile homes (and associated vehicle movements) would form new adverse elements within the local landscape and in views.*

*A landscape scheme is proposed – while this isn’t adequately detailed (species, sizes etc), it would fit in with the objectives (in terms of woodland creation) for the LCT, so the planting would be a positive landscape feature. This would offer adequate screening in some areas, but is not wide enough (one tree width) in others.*

*I think if this was increased in width and was adequately specified (a mix of native trees and shrubs, with some evergreens) it would offer adequate screening in short distance views once it became established (5 years+). Until that point mobile homes would be visible.*

*In addition, I think that the development would be visible from elevated (but distant) views to the north – it would extend development further north and would be an adverse new element in views. It would form a new detracting element in views from Peveril Castle.*

**LVA:** *An LVA has been submitted to support the application. This considers the site to have a medium value, medium susceptibility resulting in a medium sensitivity. I would disagree with this assessment – its value is high and I think that it has a high degree of*

*susceptibility to the form of development proposed – mobile homes would offer significant conflict with its pastoral character.*

*An assessment on the immediate landscape setting of the site (on the edge of Castleton) is not considered, which is a major omission in my view.*

*The assessment states that at year 1 there would be a negligible adverse effect on the site and negligible beneficial effects at year 15. This is flawed finding and my view is that adverse landscape effects would be of a higher magnitude than that stated - probably minor adverse on the site (and its setting) at year 1, falling to negligible adverse at Year 15.*

*In terms of visual effects, the appraisal considers the majority of effects to be negligible adverse (other than Peveril Castle and pedestrians on the A6187, which re minor adverse). While I don't fundamentally disagree, my view is that the cumulative effects of the numerous negligible/minor adverse effects results in a development which conflicts with visual amenity and the setting of a National Park.*

*I therefore do not support the application”.*

13. PDNPA Archaeology: *“There are no statutory designations within the proposed development site. However, the site is just north of the Castleton Conservation area, approximately 50m from the west end of the proposed development site. At the east end the development site is some 75m from Spittal Buildings a former mill.*

*There are no known heritage assets on the HBSMR that are located inside the proposed development site which is located just outside the core of the village of Castleton. However, the site lies at the southern end of an area of fossilised Medieval cultivation strip fields and earthworks, The earthworks can be seen on Lidar data and there are three ridges probably former ridge and furrow or lynchets running along the length of the proposed development site. Although the ridge and furrow at the southern end of the medieval cultivation strip fields is less prominent than further north the complex of medieval agricultural features is of medium, or regional, significance overall but the area of proposed development is low to medium significance.*

*The physical impact of the proposed works will depend on the depth of road and parking bay construction. But within the footprint of the proposed campsite this will be negative and probably low to moderate. Mitigating the impact of the loss of the field system features will not be possible. The impact of such loss will be low to moderate and negative.*

*The setting and visual impact of the proposed development will primarily be on the conservation area, the Spittal building and the medieval field system. The proposed camping ground will also be visible from the A6187 just before it enters Castleton. The setting and visual impact will again be negative with the impact being medium. The visual impact could be mitigated to some extent by screen planting but this would have to be undertaken in sensitive manner with trees chosen and located to provide the maximum screening option in the short term while avoiding the loss of potential views through the landscape. The valley around Castleton is generally open fields with trees along water courses such as Peakshole Water and occasional trees along field boundaries. There is a fine view across the site entrance toward Mam Tor and excessive screening could lead to the loss of this view.*

*As a non-designated heritage asset a balanced planning decision needs to be made that has regard to the significance of the heritage asset and the scale of any harm or loss to its significance (NPPF para.203)”.*

## **Representations**

14. We received 90 representations to the initial public consultation in 2022, with 20 objecting to the application, one raising concerns and 10 supporting it. Those objecting to the application are almost all local residents, whereas those supporting it are mainly visitors who refer to their experience of using the site.

15. The objections raise the following points:

- While the proposed caravan/motorhome site is not within the conservation area, it is very close to it and the setting of the conservation area within the wider landscape is key to the special character of the village. Because of Castleton's location surrounded on three sides by hills, any new development within the village would be visible from surrounding viewpoints, including, Peveril Castle and Mam Tor.
- Proposed access to and from the site onto A6187 is hazardous, specifically with slow vehicles due to 'blind' bend to west with poor sightlines. Vehicles typically accelerate out of village heading east. Visibility of the access for vehicles approaching the site from both directions is also poor. Even the permitted speeds of 30mph for general road traffic present a problem for caravans or motorhomes entering or leaving the site as these vehicles are slow and awkward to manoeuvre in the face of oncoming traffic.
- The footpaths on this road (Castleton Road/ How Lane) are widely used by visitors to the Caravan Club site at Losehill and by walkers between Hope and Castleton.
- Inappropriate use of land /intensification of use potential disturbance to existing residents. Applicants indicate limitations on clients but how will this be enforced, specifically "not for use of families"?
- No access will be allowed from Millbridge: presumably no vehicular access, but for pedestrian access this is the easiest, safest most likely access to village amenities from site. Potential disturbance especially returning late at night pubs /restaurants etc.
- Toilet facilities: Note that there is no intention to install toilet facilities or waste disposal facilities. Whilst most caravans and motor homes now have onboard toilets these need to be emptied on a regular basis. If there are no facilities it could lead to disposal in the surrounding area and possible fouling of the nearby river.
- Noise: Currently there is hardstanding for a small number of vehicles which is generally fine, but noise does travel and even small groups of people do make a noise, so it is a concern to see such a large increase in size to the site. Although the application states it will discourage any booking with potential for noise, what measures will be in place to ensure this, and who will deal with noise problems?
- General concern that the whole farm will become a party venue especially since the large agricultural barn was used for a family wedding with camping available for guests a few weeks ago and photos appeared on Facebook saying, 'Book this venue now.'

16. The representation of concern also refers to the access limitations and the lack of facilities for disposing of waste.

17. Those supporting the application raise the following points, which are representative of the comments:

- I fully support this application. We have driven onto this site before. We can access the site, even with our 7.5m motorhome. We thoroughly enjoy spending time in the countryside. Demand for campsites around Castleton outstrips supply. Despite being members of certain caravan clubs, we have difficulty accessing bookings at Castleton caravan sites. We always ensure we support the local economy. I believe having this site would enhance the locality.
- It has the benefit of providing convenient walking access to central Castleton which benefits other local businesses.
- We have stayed on this farm many times. It is lovely, so peaceful and very central to the village. We had no issues accessing the farm or exiting.
- This idea gets my full support and other farmers should also adopt the idea - remember we are bringing in revenue to the area - which is much needed after Covid - councils should be supporting local businesses in their new ventures.

18. In response to the recent public consultation, following receipt of revised plans relating to the access and the Land and Visual Appraisal, we received a further 17 representations all from local residents, all of which object to the application. These raise the following points, in summary:

- The Landscape and Visual Assessment acknowledges that there will be a visual impact but it is understated. The Appraisal is based on an assessment, whereas photographs provided by local residents show the actual impact. These photographs are typically of the site with 10 motorhome units, whereas the proposal is for 20 so the impact will be even greater.
- The Landscape & Visual Assessment prepared for the applicant by Weddle Landscape Design is selective of the level of visual impact for the benefit of the applicant, choosing to focus on receptors where the impact is less pronounced. It does not include the visual impact on nearby local receptors such as neighbouring residents, landowners and rights of way by choosing more distant and less prominent local receptor points as examples. It plays down any impact on villager's neighbouring properties, which of course it will do as the applicant is paying for the preparation of this document. This is not an independent unbiased assessment which in my opinion makes this a very unfair process.
- The photos in the LVA have been taken recently in late spring/early summer with leaves in trees. For around 6 months of the year during late autumn through winter until late spring the lack of leaves on the trees & bushes which will accentuate the negative visual impact of 20 predominantly white vans parked in the field whose ground is raised above some of the surrounding area such as from Castleton Road.
- Many representations refer to the poor visibility at the eastern access onto the A6187 (How Lane), with a poor alignment and double white lines. They say they have witnessed the difficulties cars and motorhomes using this access. They say that the prospect of more motor homes, camper vans and caravans all entering and exiting on How Lane makes the situation even worse. The visibility is extremely poor going either way along How Lane, and to have larger and less manoeuvrable vehicles exiting and entering a busy road is a recipe for disaster. One representation notes that vehicles exiting the site were constantly nosing out and having to drop back as they couldn't see what traffic was coming from the right, and this will still be the case for cars towing caravans.
- The additional information submitted by the applicant this year has not resolved all the issues highlighted by Highways in their response to original planning application last year. It is still not possible to achieve clear visibility for 47m on the village side of access due to the bridge parapet & the wall & hedge belonging to the adjacent property, the latter of which extends to a height of approximately 2 metres and is actually within the 47m sight line. This hedge and wall have not been identified in the Proposed Access Plan diagram
- The applicant suggests the field has been operating as a car park for over 15 years and whilst this may be true, they must have used the Hollowford Road entrance. In 2021 a sign advertising parking and subsequently camping for motorhomes only was positioned at the gate. Therefore dispute the fact it has not been an issue; it is an issue and continues to be whilst vehicles continue to leave the site without having the visibility on the blind corner.
- The proposed access /exit from the site will be dangerous compounded at peak periods by causing traffic congestion. Also considers that a Sat Nav search typically used by visitors will inevitably direct vehicles to Millbridge postal location of Holmesfield Farm. This will cause significant problems. Any attempt to use this route by in particular caravans inevitably will conflict with farm vehicles and increasing traffic now using Millbridge. Attempting to reverse a caravan (for example) up Millbridge will be difficult and for some drivers almost impossible
- Lack of toilet and disposal facilities. Whilst most modern camper vans and caravans have onboard facilities these need to be emptied on a regular basis.

Without a disposal facility, they fear that toilets would be emptied in the surrounding area, which is close to Peakshole Water

- Making the site 'adult only' does not really address the noise nuisance issue. Noisy adults will cause a disturbance during unsociable hours. Will there be anyone in charge on site to deal with this eventuality?
- Diversification for farmers as a result of the phasing out of BPS is clearly important but there are other alternatives than providing more caravan and motorhome pitches. The Sustainable Farming Incentive, which was launched last year, includes grants for a variety of activities much more appropriate to this situation.
- Caravan pitches are more than adequately provided at other sites locally, which are better screened, have better services and cause much less adverse impact on an area of natural beauty.

### **Main Policies**

19. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, GSP4, DS1, CC1, HC1, L1, L2 and L3.

20. Relevant Development Management policies: DMC3, DMC5, DMC10, DMH6, DMT3, DMT8.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

21. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 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 the National Park the development plan comprises our Core Strategy 2011 and the 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. There is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the development plan and the NPPF and our policies should be given full weight in the determination of this application.

22. Paragraph 176 states that "*great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.*"

### **Peak District National Park Core Strategy**

23. Policy GSP1 sets out the broad strategy for achieving the National Park's objectives having regard to the Sandford Principle, (that is, where there are conflicting desired outcomes in achieving national park purposes, greater priority must be given to the conservation of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, even at the cost of socio-economic benefits). GSP1 also sets out the need for sustainable development and to avoid major development unless it is essential, and the need to mitigate localised harm where essential major development is allowed.

24. Policy GSP2: *Enhancing the National Park* states that:

- Opportunities for enhancing the valued characteristics of the National Park will be identified and acted upon.
- Proposals intended to enhance the National Park will need to demonstrate that they offer significant overall benefit to the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
- When development is permitted, a design will be sought that respects the character of the area.
- Opportunities will be taken to enhance the National Park by the treatment or removal of undesirable features or buildings. Work must be undertaken in a manner which conserves the valued characteristics of the site and its surroundings.
- Development in settlements necessary for the treatment, removal or relocation of nonconforming uses to an acceptable site, or which would enhance the valued characteristics of the National Park will be permitted.

25. Policy GSP3 sets out development management principles and states that all development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings, paying particular attention to, amongst other elements, impact on the character and setting of buildings, scale of the development appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park, design in accordance with the National Park Authority Design Guide and impact on living conditions of communities.

26. Policy GSP4 says that to aid the achievement of its spatial outcomes, the National Park Authority will consider the contribution that a development can make directly and/or to its setting, including, where consistent with government guidance, using planning conditions and planning obligations.

27. Policy DS1 sets out the Development Strategy for the National Park. DS1.C. sets out the forms of development that are acceptable in principle in the countryside outside of the Natural Zone. There is no scope for the erection of new housing here other than as part of development needed to secure effective conservation and enhancement.

28. Policy L1 says that development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character and valued characteristics, and other than in exceptional circumstances, proposals in the Natural Zone will not be permitted.

29. Policy L3 'Cultural heritage assets of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance' states that:

A. Development must conserve and where appropriate enhance or reveal the significance of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic assets and their settings, including statutory designations and other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest;

B. Other than in exceptional circumstances development will not be permitted where it is likely to cause harm to the significance of any cultural heritage asset of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance or its setting, including statutory designations or other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest;

C. Proposals for development will be expected to meet the objectives of any strategy, wholly or partly covering the National Park, that has, as an objective, the conservation and where possible the enhancement of cultural heritage assets. This includes, but is not exclusive to, the Cultural Heritage Strategy for the Peak District National Park and any successor strategy.

30. 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
31. Policy CC1 states that development must make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources, taking into account the energy hierarchy and achieving the highest possible standards of carbon reductions and water efficiency.

#### Development Management Policies

32. The most relevant development management policies are DMC3, DMC8, DMC14, DMR1, DME2 and DMT3.
33. Policy DMC3 says where development is acceptable in principle, it will be permitted provided that its detailed treatment is 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.
34. DMC8 requires that applications for development in a Conservation Area, or for development that affects its setting or important views into, out of, across or through the area, should assess and clearly demonstrate how the character or appearance and significance of the Conservation Area will be preserved or enhanced.
35. DMC14 states that development that presents a risk of pollution or disturbance including soil, air, light, water or noise pollution, or odour that could adversely affect any of the following interests will not be permitted unless adequate control measures are put in place to bring the pollution within acceptable limits.
36. Policy DMR1 states that the development of a new touring camping or touring caravan 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.
37. Policy DME2 states that farm diversification development will be permitted if there is clear evidence that the new business use will remain ancillary to the agricultural operation of the farm business, meaning that the new business use is a subsidiary or secondary use or operation associated with the agricultural unit.
38. 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 of proposed development

39. Policy RT3 is broadly supportive in principle of small touring caravan development. Policy DMR1 sets out that the development of a new 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. The proposal is for 20 motorhome pitches.
40. Policy RT3 does not define “small” sites but the supporting text clarifies that sites up to 30 pitches are more likely to be acceptable, although this may be too large in many circumstances. The proposal would therefore be within what can reasonably be considered to be a “small” site. However, such development is only acceptable in principle when it would not have an adverse landscape impact or on other valued characteristics,

including heritage assets. The impact on the landscape is therefore key to the acceptability of this type of development.

### Landscape and Conservation Area Impacts

41. The site lies within the Valley Farmland with Villages LCT in the Derwent Valley LCA. This is a settled pastoral landscape, often with a low lying topography associated with a network of streams and damp hollows. This is an enclosed landscape, with views filtered through scattered hedgerow and streamline trees. Stone-built villages with outlying farms and dwellings are set within small to medium fields that are often bound by hedgerows. The Castleton Conservation Area Appraisal notes the historic nature of the landscape around the village, with historic field systems and extensive views from surrounding hills, including from Peveril Castle.
42. The application site is part of the undeveloped setting of Castleton and makes an important contribution to the character and significance of the Conservation Area. The field also provides an important backdrop to the nucleated and compact form of development within Castleton, particularly when seen from the south.
43. Since the application was first submitted the applicants have commissioned and submitted a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), undertaken by specialist landscape architects. This considers the site to have a medium value, medium susceptibility resulting in a medium sensitivity. The summary of the report comes to the following conclusion:

*“The proposed development could be successfully assimilated into the local landscape with important landscape features protected, introduction of new habitats, and achieving local landscape character objectives. Long-term landscape feature and character effects would be neutral or beneficial in nature, with only an adverse effect arising due to loss of grassland.*

*Initially the proposal would have some short-term negligible or minor visual adverse effects due to visibility of the pitches whilst the landscape framework establishes, however in the long-term visual effects would become mostly neutral with some negligible adverse and negligible beneficial visual effects.*

*The proposal would respond positively to landscape related policy at National and Local levels.*

*The slight initial harm of the proposal would need to be balanced against the benefits of the provision of a caravan and motorhome pitches”.*

44. The Authority’s Landscape Architect disagrees with the conclusions of the LVA, considering that the value of the site is high and that it has a high degree of susceptibility to the form of development proposed as mobile homes would offer significant conflict with its pastoral character. He adds that an assessment on the immediate landscape setting of the site (on the edge of Castleton) is not considered, which is a major omission in his view. The assessment states that at year 1 there would be a negligible adverse effect on the site and negligible beneficial effects at year 15. He considers this to be a flawed finding and that adverse landscape effects would be of a higher magnitude than that stated, probably minor adverse on the site (and its setting) at year 1, falling to negligible adverse at Year 15. In terms of visual effects, the appraisal considers the majority of effects to be negligible adverse (other than Peveril Castle and pedestrians on the A6187, which are minor adverse). The Authority’s Landscape Architect does not fundamentally disagree with this, his view is that the cumulative effects of the numerous negligible/minor adverse effects results in a development which conflicts with visual amenity and the setting of a National Park.
45. As noted in the consultation section above, many locals consider that, based on their experience of the use of the site over the last two years, the siting of motorhomes on the

application would have an unacceptable adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. Some have provided photographs of the motorhomes on the site, supporting this objection.

46. Taking into account these responses, it is considered that the proposal motorhome site would result in development which would be very open to view from many vantage points around the village, particularly higher ground, intruding on iconic views. Whilst the proposal does not include any permanent new buildings, the proposed use of the field for motorhome pitches is likely to mean that these relatively large vehicles would be parked on the site for considerable periods of time.
47. The application does not propose any seasonal restrictions, so the site could be visible in parts of the year when any screen planting is not effective. Whilst not they are permanent structures, the motorhomes would still result in a man-made intrusion into the protected landscape and the setting of this historic village. The site is slightly higher than some parts of the village to the south, making any development on here more prominent.
48. The site is also important in the landscape setting of the Conservation Area. Policy DMC8 requires that applications for development in a Conservation Area, or for development that affects its setting or important views into, out of, across or through the area, should assess and clearly demonstrate how the character or appearance and significance of the Conservation Area will be preserved or enhanced.
49. The development would cause unacceptable harm to the landscape character and scenic beauty of this part of the Peak District National Park and to the setting of the Castleton Conservation Area. It would therefore conflict with Core Strategy Policies RT3 and L1, DMP Policies DMR1, DMC3, DMC8 and to the relevant policy guidance in the NPPF relating to the protection of the National Park's landscape and heritage.

#### Farm Diversification and Economic Benefits:

50. Caravan sites can be a form of farm diversification. Whilst farm diversification can often be acceptable in principle (and supported by policy DME2), this cannot be at the expense of the special qualities of the National Park so any benefits to a farm business or the local economy would not outweigh the harm caused by the development.
51. In this case the Design and Access Statement says that the applicant lives in Holmesfield Farm, but has not farmed it. It says that she wants to diversify the use of the land, as there is a great need for camping sites in the area, she believes this is the best use of the land. As noted above, the application for an agricultural building in 2012 described the holding as a working farm, but circumstances may have changed since then. However, no case has been made that this development would assist in the viability of a working farm.
52. It should be acknowledged that the proposed development would also provide a facility that would help to promote the second National Park purpose of promoting understanding and enjoyment of the National Park. However, the first purpose of the National Park is to conserve the environment of the National Park. Where conflict arises between conservation and public enjoyment then greater weight must be given to conservation. The development would be significantly harmful to the natural beauty of the National Park and this harm clearly outweighs the small scale economic and recreation benefits. Although the proposal would provide additional visitor accommodation, it would harm understanding and enjoyment of the National Park by visitors to the village. The proposal would be contrary to National Park purposes and cause harm to the nationally designated landscape.

### Highway issues

53. Vehicular access to the site is proposed to be from the A6187 at the eastern end of the field, in the Hope direction. This has been used as the access for the previous use under permitted development rights. The Highway Authority response notes some shortcomings of this access but requested additional information and suggest measures which may address these issues. The objectors have also raised concerns about the safety of the access, based on their local experience. It is proposed that there would be no access for motorhomes via Millbridge.
54. In response to the Highway Authority concerns, the applicant's agent has submitted additional details of the access road and passing places. The Design and Access Statement says that the existing access onto Castleton Road is 6.7m wide and currently has two galvanized 7-bar gates fitted. It is proposed that the access will be widened to 8m to allow easier movement into and out of the site, and to ensure any vehicle wanting to enter the site will not need to wait on the road if there is another vehicle at the access, waiting to leave the site. The applicant would agree to a condition preventing any gates to be installed within 10m of the road edge. This will allow motorhomes entering the site to pull clear of the road before opening any gates. As part of this application, no gates are proposed, and the access would have a cattle grid installed to allow vehicles to enter the site, but prevent any livestock straying onto the road.
55. In terms of vehicle movements within the site, the Design and Access Statement explains that the access track covers a distance of 150m from the access onto Castleton Road, to the cattle grid at the entrance into the motor home pitch area. At present, this access is a track formed with two wheel-tracks divided by a central grassed strip and is currently only suitable for single lane traffic. To avoid the possibility of conflict if two vehicles attempt to leave and enter the site at the same time, it is proposed that two passing places would be constructed, increasing the width of the track to 5.5m and allowing two vehicles to pass.
56. The Highway Authority has been asked to provide its recommendation based on the application as submitted; any further response will be provided at the Committee meeting. Given the alignment of the A6187 at this point, with double white lines and bends in both directions, albeit with a 30mph speed limit, it does not appear to be a safe entry and exit point for the proposed development. Moreover, it would appear that in order to meet the requirements of the Highway Authority to make the access safe to use, given that it meets the A6187 close to bends in the A road, there would have to be passing places, a bound surfaced section to the access road, and visibility splays. All these would have an adverse impact on the character of the field and the roadside walls and would add to the existing concerns about the landscape impact of the development.
57. In terms of the landscape impact of the access track and the alterations to the access point itself, it should be noted that photographs of the site taken over a number of years, including Google images, show that the track across the fields from the farm to the A6187 How Lane is relatively recent. Images from 2017 show a muddy track, whereas by 2021 this has a stone surface. Going back to 2009 there was no track, just a gate, which was narrower than the existing gate. These images show the change in character of the access; the proposed works would exacerbate this harmful change in character.

### Impact on residential amenity

58. The nearest neighbouring properties are over 30m to the south-west of the motorhome bays. as they will be screened by the additional tree planting there will be no impact on these dwellings. In terms of the development itself, there would be no direct impact on the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties.

59. As noted above, several local objectors have raised concerns about the impact of the use on their privacy and amenity, particularly through noise. The main concern with this appears to be the possibility that visitors would walk to the village via Hollowford Road and Millbridge, rather than the longer route via the vehicular access to the east. This is likely to be the case, given the relative distances involved. However, it is not considered that this would cause such a level of noise and disturbance that the application would be refused on this basis. Issues relating to the disposal of waste from the motor home units have also been raised, but this is a site management issue which is capable of being controlled, either through planning conditions or site licence requirements. The proposal therefore accords with policies GSP3 and DMC3 in these respects.

### **Conclusion**

60. The proposed expansion of the existing caravan site would result in significant harm to the landscape character of this area of the National Park. There are also concerns that the access point would require visually harmful alterations to make it safe to use. The economic and tourism benefits of the scheme have been fully considered but do not outweigh this harm. The application is contrary to policies L1, RT3, DMR1, and DMC8 and the guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework on the protection of designated landscapes. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

### **Human Rights**

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

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

62. Nil

63. Report Author: John Scott