

9. FULL APPLICATION – CHANGE OF USE OF THE FIELD TO PROVIDE A SMALL-SCALE, SEASONAL TOURING CARAVAN AND CAMPING SITE AT YEW TREE FARM, WETTON (NP/SM/0526/0467), MN)

APPLICANT: MR G STUBBS

Summary

1. This application seeks change of use of a roadside field for use as a seasonal campsite for both tents and touring units.
2. Whilst close to the edge of the settlement, the field is agricultural in character and very open to view from nearby rights of way, placing it in conflict with the Authority's planning policies relating to campsites.
3. The development would cause harm to the landscape character of the locality in this location, also contrary to adopted planning policy.
4. Further, the development fails to assess or mitigate for biodiversity impacts as required by national legislation.
5. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

Site and Surroundings

1. Yew Tree Farm lies on the southern side of Wetton approximately 300 metres from Ashbourne Lane. Adjacent to the Wetton Conservation Area, the site forms part of an 97-hectare working farm, of which the principle activity is cattle rearing (approximately 200 head).
2. The strip field subject of this application, lies around 130m to the west of the main farm complex and at the southern edge of the village and measures approximately 24m in length x 65m in width and lies relatively flat in the landscape.
3. The field boundary is enclosed by drystone walling with access to the field from the highway (School Road/Carr Lane). A public right of way runs through the field in a diagonal direction north to south, and a further footpath runs past the site to the south at around 100 metres at its closest point.
4. To the north west (opposite the field access) is a public car parking area with a public convenience building. With a traditional barn building lying close to the western boundary of the field.
5. There are a number of residential properties close to the field. Duck Cottage to the north on the opposite side of the highway (Carr lane) and two further detached dwellings 34 & 35 Carr Lane sited in close proximity to the north east of the field.
6. A building has been erected along the southern edge of the field within the last 12 months. Whilst temporary facilities buildings are permitted in support of the use of land as campsites for up to 60 days per year under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, they must be removed when the site is not in use for such purpose. The building erected is a permanent building and has not been removed when the site is not in use. It does not benefit from planning permission and is unauthorised.
7. The Wetton conservation area bounds the site to the north.

Proposal

8. The proposal is for the seasonal use of the field as a small-scale touring caravan and camping site, operating annually from 15th March to mid-November. The proposal comprises:
 - 12 serviced touring caravan pitches (electric hook-up and potable water, and grey water waste connections)
 - A number of non-serviced grass pitches for tents
 - A toilet and shower unit (removed from site during off season)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. **The application site is not well screened from views outside of the site, contrary to policy RT3. This lack of screening results in a development that would harm the landscape character of the locality, contrary to policies GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, L1, DMC3, and DMR1**
2. **The application is not accompanied by a completed BNG metric to demonstrate that the development could achieve a 10% gain in biodiversity, contrary to national requirements, and fails to demonstrate that ecological interests would otherwise be conserved or enhanced contrary to policies L2 and DMC11.**
3. **The development could give rise to adverse amenity impacts for nearby residential properties, conflicting with policies DMC3 and DMR1.**

Key Issues

9. The effect of the proposed development on the landscape character and special qualities of the National Park
10. The impacts of the development on the biodiversity of the site.
11. Impacts on nearby residential dwellings.

History

12. 26/0063 - Enforcement enquiry - regarding erection of facilities building associated with campsite – pending
13. PE\2025\ENQ\51674 - Planning enquiry - Change of use of field to a permanent camping and caravan site to include 19 x serviced grass pitches and 20 x grass pitches for tents. The Authority advised that whilst policies do support small seasonal caravan sites 'in principle', officers would not be able to support a planning application for a caravan site in this location, because of the visual, landscape and amenity impacts of the development.
14. 2025-2026 – Notifications received confirming dates of operation of 60 day permitted development campsites for each year.

Consultations

15. Staffordshire County Council (Highways): No objections subject to surfacing of access prior to first use.
16. Derbyshire Dales District Council (Planning): No response received to date.

17. Wetton Parish Council: Support the application. No grounds provided.

Representations

18. 7 letters of support have been received. Grounds for support are:

- Promotion of Wetton village
- Increased trade for other local businesses
- Reduction of wild camping
- Appropriate recreational use in this location

Main Policies

19. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, DS1, L1, L2, L3, RT3, CC1

20. Relevant Development Management Plan policies: DMC3, DMC5, DMC11, DMR1, DMT3

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

21. 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: 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 they carry out these purposes they also have the duty to; seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities in National Parks.
22. The NPPF is a material consideration and carries particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. Paragraph 189 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.
23. In the National Park, the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy (2011) and the Development Management Policies (DMP) (2019). The development plan provides a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. In this case, it is considered there are no significant conflicts between prevailing policies in the development plan and the NPPF.
24. Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states: 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. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks.
25. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

Assessment

Principle of development

26. Within the Authority's Development Plan, Policy DS1 allows for leisure and tourism development in open countryside outside of the National Park's named settlements. Policy RT3 relates to Caravans & Camping, setting out an approach which favours small touring camping and caravan sites, provided they are well screened.

27. Policy DMR1 states, that 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.
28. It is acknowledged that camping and caravan sites can help to support the local economy and provide diversification for existing businesses. Although no detailed supporting information has been provided about the benefits of the proposal to the farm business.
29. At 12 caravan pitches plus a number (unspecified) of tent pitches it is be reasonable to take the view, that this could constitute 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 RT3 requires sites to be well screened and Policy DMR1 stresses the need for camping and caravanning development to integrate well with and not dominate its surroundings.
30. In this case, due to the relatively flat and open character of the area, the field is not well screened from wider public views and therefore the proposed development would be highly visible in the landscape from public vantage points, contrary to policy RT3 & DMR1 in these respects, as well as other landscape conservation policies.

Landscape impacts

31. Landscape Policy L1 says that development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character, as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment and other valued characteristics.
32. The site lies in the 'Limestone Village Farmlands' character area as defined in the Authority's Landscape Strategy.
33. This is detailed as a gently undulating plateau of pastoral farmland, enclosed by drystone walls made from limestone, with a repeating pattern of narrow strip fields originating from medieval open fields with scattered boundary trees and tree groups around buildings.
34. This description generally reflects the land surrounding the enquiry site.
35. This is particularly relevant in respect of tree cover in the area. Whilst some sporadic trees are present, this is by definition an open landscape with little tree cover. In this instance, the proposed caravan site would be clearly visible in far reaching views from all directions, and would be a sridetn feature for those using nearby footpaths in particular.
36. Further, whilst the site is close to the edge of the settlement, a field of caravans would not be read as part of the village in any complimentary manner. The village is a historic settlement, comprising stone built houses, closely following a linear pattern along the roadside. The proposed development shares none of those characteristics and would appear incongruous in views towards both the village and surrounding countryside.
37. It is equally – if not more – at odds with the undeveloped nature of the surrounding fields. The siting of up to 12 caravans plus tents on the land would result in a site of very different appearance to the surrounding land. The vans or tents would not be reflective of the prevalent agricultural land use that encloses the site, and would result in harm to its rural and agricultural character.
38. Consequently, by virtue of the siting and layout of the proposed pitches in this exposed field setting, the proposed development would appear unduly intrusive, having an unacceptable adverse visual impact on the rural character and appearance of the

surrounding open landscape and the generally tranquil amenity of the village and wider area, harming the valued characteristics of the National Park.

39. Whilst we note that the applicant retains the right to operate a 60 campsite on the land under its permitted development rights (providing that any supporting facilities buildings are temporary and are removed from the land when the site is not in operation), this would impact the land for a much shorter and intermittent period of the year – up to 60 days rather than up to 245 days – having significantly lower impacts. We therefore afford this only limited weight in assessing the current proposals.
40. Moreover, the benefits in respect of promoting enjoyment of the National Park and supporting the farm business do not outweigh the landscape harm. The view must therefore be taken, that this is not a suitable site for a touring caravan site as highlighted above. The development would therefore be contrary to policies L1, RT3, DMR1, DMC3 and paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

Highways

41. The development would utilise an existing access on to the highway. The highway authority raise no objection to this subject to the access being hard surfaced ahead of the use commencing.
42. The site is not of such scale that vehicle movements would have a significantly detrimental impact on the local highway network.
43. The site includes ample space for the turning and manoeuvring of vehicles off the highway.
44. The footpath through the site would remain unimpeded.
45. Based on the above and material considerations, the application accords with DMT3 and NPPF paragraphs 115 and 116.

Ecology

46. The land affected by the proposed development exceeds 25m², and comprises grassland. As such, the development is subject to the requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) legislation. This requires all development to demonstrate a minimum of 10% uplift in biodiversity as a result of the development proposed, or through mitigating measures.
47. An applicant may claim temporary impacts as an exemption but the applicant would need to demonstrate that any loss in habitat condition or distinctiveness can be reversed within a two-year period. Given that in this instance the campsite would be in action on an annual basis with habitat therefore impacted through loss or degrading of condition, this would not constitute a temporary impact.
48. Even when impacts are temporary, the statutory Biodiversity Metric or Small Sites Metric is still required for temporary impacts to demonstrate that the impacted habitat can be restored to its baseline condition within the two-year time frame.
49. The application does not include a compelled BNG metric, and therefore it is contrary to the national requirements for such development and fails to demonstrate that the ecological interests of the site would be conserved or enhanced, contrary to policies L2 and DMC11.

Amenity

50. Policy DMC3 states that where developments are acceptable in principle, particular attention will be paid to the amenity, privacy and security of the development and other properties that the development affects.
51. Wetton is a quiet rural village, with a number of residential properties close to the site including Duck Cottage to the north on the opposite side of Carr lane and two further detached dwellings 34 & 35 Carr Lane, sited close to the north eastern boundary of the field.
52. Owing to the proposed use, the proposed periods of operation, and the close proximity of the development site to nearby residential properties, it is considered that noise and traffic movements could materially harm the living conditions of the occupiers of those dwellings. No assessment of these impacts has been submitted in support of the application. As such, without evidence to the contrary, it is considered likely that adverse amenity impacts would arise, conflicting with Policies DMR1 and DMC3 which seek amongst other things to safeguard residential amenity.

Conclusion

53. Whilst the Authority's policies do support small seasonal caravan sites 'in principle', for a seasonal caravan site in this location would give rise to adverse landscape and amenity impacts.
54. In addition, impacts on ecology have not been assessed or mitigated.
55. Material considerations do not outweigh these impacts or the arising policy conflicts, and the proposal is therefore contrary to policies GSP1, GSP3, L1, L2, RT3, DMC3, DMC11 and DMR1 and NPPF paragraph 189.
56. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

Human Rights

57. 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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