

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**Committee:** East Area

**Ward:** Derwent

**Date:** 8 January 2009

**Parish:** Dunnington Parish Council

**Reference:** 08/02506/FUL

**Application at:** Ashfield Holiday Cottages & Touring Caravan Park Hagg Lane  
Dunnington York YO19 5PE

**For:** Change of use of field adjacent to existing caravan park to accommodate an additional 24 pitches, conversion of part of garage to shower and toilet block

**By:** Mrs Jenny Lewis

**Application Type:** Full Application

**Target Date:** 15 January 2009

### 1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 It is proposed to extend an existing touring caravan site into a field south of the existing site to accommodate an additional 24 touring caravans. The dimensions of the field are approx. 68m x 58m. The existing site to the north is of a similar size and also has some self-catering holiday cottages within it, as well as a shower and toilet block. The extended site area would utilise these facilities. Part of the application is also to convert part of the existing garage into further toilet and shower accommodation.

1.2 Access to the site is via Hagg Lane, which itself is off Common Road opposite the Costcutter Headquarters building.

1.3 Planning permission was initially granted for the existing operational caravan site by Selby District Council in 1987. A condition was appended restricting this to a total of 30 caravans. This was subsequently amended to a maximum of 40 in a permission granted in 1989.

### 2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

City Boundary : York City Boundary 0001

DC Area Teams : East Area (1) 0003

2.2 Policies:

CYGB1

Development within the Green Belt

CYV5

Caravan and camping sites

CYV1  
Criteria for visitor related devt

CYGP4A  
Sustainability

CYGP1  
Design

### **3.0 CONSULTATIONS**

#### INTERNAL.

##### 3.1 Highway Network Management

In the past the application site has been used for occasional specific events but this would regularise a more year round use. Hagg Lane is a single track road with passing places although the entrance to the site is approx. 270m from its junction with Common Road. However this junction is wide enough to allow for the simultaneous passage of cars with caravans. Officers are not aware of any particular problems or incidents arising from the use of this road to serve the site and therefore raise no objections. Recommend additional cycle storage to promote cycle use.

##### 3.2 Environmental Protection Unit.

#### EXTERNAL

##### 3.3 Dunnington Parish Council.

No objections except the opening to be limited to 9 months. All remaining trees and hedgerows should be kept to a maximum height of 2 metres.

##### 3.4 Ouse and Derwent IDB

Applicant states that surface water from the site will be disposed of into Hagg Lane Drain via a sustainable drainage system but gives no details of how this is to be achieved. It is important to that this proposed method of surface water drainage does not cause any detriment to adjacent properties. Further details on this method of drainage have been submitted by the applicant and forwarded onto the IDB. Further comments are awaited.

##### 3.5 York Natural Environment Panel.

The proposal represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt and there are no extenuating circumstances for its approval. The change would result in the loss of an open country field forever. If consent is given then the plot numbers should be below the threshold allowed in the Green Belt. Advocate permeable surfaces and enhancement of existing hedgerows / planting.

##### 3.6 Neighbours and third parties.

The neighbours to the south of the application site at Fifth Milestone Cottages were consulted by letter and a site notice was placed on Hagg Lane. No objections received.

## **4.0 APPRAISAL**

### **4.1 KEY ISSUES.**

- Impact on the Green Belt.
- Neighbour amenity.
- Sustainability.

Impact on the Green Belt.

4.2 The application site lies within the Green Belt. Paragraph 3.12 of Planning Policy Guidance Note (Green Belts) (PPG2) states that engineering and other operations and any material changes in use of land constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless it maintains openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. Policy GB1 of the City of York Draft Local Plan largely reflects this national guidance. Policy V5 of the Local plan refers specifically to camping and caravan sites and states that planning permission for new (or extensions to existing) caravan sites will be granted provided (amongst other things), the number of pitches does not exceed 20, there are no statics, the site should be associated with an existing settlement and there is no adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt.

4.3 The application site is currently an open field immediately south of the existing caravan area. This existing site currently accommodates approx. 30 caravans. The plans accompanying this application shows a layout for a further approx. 24 pitches which overall would result in potentially over 50 pitches across the two sites. Criteria a) of Policy V5 states that the number of pitches should not exceed 20. Therefore the total number proposed is significantly over this limit and is clearly contrary to this part of the policy.

4.4 Criteria f) of the same policy states that such developments should not have any 'adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt'. The proposed site, whilst acknowledging that it is closely associated to the existing caravan site in terms of location, will appear visually distinct inasmuch that it is almost doubling the overall size and would be extending the developed area southwards into a currently undeveloped green field. It would not be seen in the context or against the backdrop of the existing site, instead it would be viewed as a significant extension.

4.5 The application site is bordered by a mature hedgerow and some individual trees on its eastern and western boundaries although this is more fragmented and limited on its southern boundary. This boundary is with land owned by Milestone Cottages and from these houses the development would appear to be close and highly visible. Despite the presence of this boundary hedging, officers consider that the site will also be visible from Hagg Lane (as the present one is), and there will be glimpses from the A1079 to the south. Touring caravans are generally white in colour and this

is in contrast to the more natural green and brown tones of the surrounding countryside and so they would stand out more against this backdrop. There is also a central interior service road proposed and this will also connect up with the service road around and within the existing site. Although at ground level, this road and the all weather hardstandings on which the caravans would stand further alter the character of the land and begin to urbanise it. This would undermine the character and appearance of the countryside. Policy V1 of the Draft Local Plan further states that in considering applications for visitor related development, proposals should not adversely impact on the countryside setting of the city. Officers consider that this application would further result in harm to this setting.

4.6 Given the number of caravans proposed and the concentration of them, officers consider that the proposal would be likely to significantly reduce the openness of this land and the Green Belt. Therefore it is considered that the proposal constitutes inappropriate development, which by definition is harmful to the Green Belt. PPG2 indicates that such development should only be approved in very special circumstances and none has been put forward by the applicant.

Neighbour amenity.

4.7 The nearest residential property are those at Fifth Milestone Cottages to the south of the application site. The submitted site plan shows caravans along the full length of the boundary with this property and whilst the house itself is approx. 60 metres to the south, these caravans will present a visually dominant development very close to the boundary with this curtilage, especially where currently the land in question is flat and open. Whilst the right to a view is not in itself a material planning consideration, the land on which the new caravans are proposed currently represents a visually buffer between the two sites and this development will seriously undermine this. Officers consider it is unreasonable to expect this sort of relationship between touring caravans and third party land and therefore conclude the proposal represents material harm to the visual amenity that can be expected to be enjoyed by these neighbours.

Sustainability.

4.8 Criterion 'e' of Policy V5 of the Draft Local Plan states that sites should be readily accessible by public transport. The purpose of this is to reduce the reliance on the private car, particularly once the visitor has arrived at the site. It is acknowledged that the site already has planning permission for a caravan site but that was an historic permission and this application should be considered against existing policy bearing in mind that the proposal would result in a significant expansion of the existing site.

4.9 The recently published Good Practice Guide for Tourism indicates that touring caravan sites are by definition car dependent and it is accepted that the majority of visitors would travel to such sites by private vehicle. However, once on site, officers consider that it should be as sustainable as possible, with readily available public transport at least into York City centre. The number 10 bus runs along Common Road, the junction with Hagg Lane being approx. 270 metres west of the entrance to the application site. This bus runs every 30 minutes during the day and every 60

minutes in the evening, therefore offering a reasonably frequent and reliable service every day, so in this respect the nearest village is sustainable. However, the key issue to consider is whether it is convenient for users of the site to access this service. In order to get to the bus stop, customers would have to walk nearly 300 metres down an unlit, single track country road and officers consider it is unreasonable to expect or encourage people to do this. Therefore, notwithstanding the availability of a reasonably good public transport service running through Dunnington village, the location of the site means that it is unreasonable and unrealistic to expect this to be used, thus encouraging users of the site to make journeys by private car, contrary to the aims of sustainable development. This is considered contrary to Policies GP4a and V5 of the Draft Local Plan. A recent appeal relating to an extension to Beechwood Grange Caravan Club site on Malton Road was dismissed for a similar reason.

Other issues.

#### 4.10 Drainage.

The Internal Drainage Board raised concerns about the discharge of surface water into the nearby Hagg Lane drain. Further information has been received from the applicant over this method of discharge and further comments are awaited.

#### 4.11 Highway safety.

Notwithstanding Hagg Lane being a single track lane, there are a number of passing places along its length up to the site entrance. The junction with Common Road is not considered to be dangerous and therefore no objections are raised on the grounds of highway safety.

4.12 The second part of the application is for the part conversion of the existing garage to additional shower and toilet facilities in order to cater for the additional number of visitors. There are no external alterations proposed to the building and the building is no longer required in connection with domestic parking by the owner of the site who has recently moved into a newly built house. Officers raise no objections to this aspect of the application.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Officers consider that the proposal would be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt and therefore constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Maintaining openness is the key principle of PPG2. Officers do not consider that this harm is outweighed by any other considerations and there are no very special circumstances put forward which justify the proposal. It is also considered contrary to criteria a) of Policy V5 of the Draft Local Plan which states that such sites should be limited to a maximum of 20 pitches - in total on this site there would be approx. 50.

5.2 The extension is also considered harmful to the visual amenity afforded to the occupiers of the nearest houses to the south of the application site at Fifth Milestone Cottages and places reliance on the use of the private car, contrary to the principles of sustainability.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATION:** Refuse

1 The proposals would significantly enlarge the area currently occupied by caravans, thereby further encroaching into an open area of Green Belt. The development is considered to represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt as the size, scale and location of the proposed caravan park extension, together with the activities associated with it, would harm the openness of the Green Belt. This is considered contrary to national planning guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (Green Belts) and Policies GB1, V5(a,d and f) and V1(f) of the City of York Draft Local Plan.

2 The proposals would enlarge the area currently occupied by caravans, thereby encroaching into the open countryside to the detriment of visual amenity and the attractive rural character of the area. This is considered contrary to policies GP1(a, b, c, e), V5 and V1 (f) of the City of York Draft Local Plan.

3 It is considered that the proposed development would harm the visual amenity and outlook from the rear of the Fifth Milestone Cottages to the south of the application site. This is by virtue of the new development encroaching into the field closest to these properties, and the proposed layout, which shows caravans positioned along the southern boundary of the site, presenting a visually dominant development when viewed from the rear of these properties. This is considered contrary to Policies V1 (e) and GP1 (b, i) of the City of York Draft Local Plan.

4 The site is not considered convenient for the use of public transport due to its isolated location down a country lane away from the nearest bus route. The proposals would therefore be likely increase the number of vehicular journeys undertaken by visitors to the site by private car, to the detriment of sustainable transport and development policies. This is considered contrary to Policies GP4a, V5 (e) and V1 (b) of the City of York Draft Local Plan.

### **Contact details:**

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