

## **PLANNING JUSTIFICATION INCORPORATING BUSINESS PLAN STRATEGY**

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**SITE AT : THREE RIVERS CARAVAN PARK.**

**CONVERSION OF EXISTING TOILET BLOCK TO  
5 NO. HOLIDAY UNITS**

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**FOR: Mr R. Tapsell.**

**OUR REF: TAP-01**

**DATE: June 2018**

## INTRODUCTION

1. This Report is produced in support of a planning application submitted to Ribble Valley Borough Council for conversion of this existing toilet block for 5 permanent holiday cottages. The existing building is of permanent stone and tiled roof construction. They will have shared car parking to the front. The site of the 5 permanent cottages is within the Three Rivers Caravan Park, a long standing holiday park that has been used in the past for both static and touring caravans as well as tents. This toilet block was used in connection with the touring caravan and tent use but as these no longer take place at the site, the toilet block has become redundant to the needs of the site.
2. In brief, the site has the benefit of long standing use with a large part of the static caravans having become residentially occupied over the years. The site has also changed ownership recently and as such will be reinvested in by the new owners to maximise and make viable the tourism use of the site.
3. This report therefore is aimed at addressing that matter from a planning perspective. It is not intended as a detailed financial appraisal of the business.

## BACKGROUND

4. In brief, this is that the main part of the caravan park, comprising the static units, had a replacement permission granted in 1977 with no restrictions on use or numbers (application 3/77/0818 refers). This area was extended towards the road in 1979 (application 3/79/0248 refers), again with no restrictive conditions. Thus this whole area can be used residentially as there are no planning controls over the unit type or occupancy. The site licence for this area of statics is 273 units.
5. The touring caravan part of the site to the north was the subject of lawful use approvals in 1998 and 2005 which granted that area Certificates of Lawfulness for touring caravans all year round (applications 3/1998/0044 & 3/2005/0937 refer). The latter of the applications imposed a condition restricting the number of touring caravans to 50, although this was never adhered to, the number of touring pitches at the site being 100 with 50 of those being hard standing spaces.
6. In 2015, planning permission was granted for use of the touring caravan part of the site to be used for statics, conditioned to be restricted in number to 56 and for holiday use only

(application 3/2015/0977 refers).

## THE ORIGINAL BUSINESS MODEL

7. When the site was developing in the 1970's, the site business model would have been that:
  - The statics be sold;
  - The statics become 'owner occupied' as holiday homes or residential;
  - The home owners pay a service charge.
  - The site owner's income be supplemented by touring lets;
8. However, for various reasons this model only succeeded in part. This business model has high front end costs although the advantage of obtaining single large payment on sale is attractive and so the previous site owners opted for that route. However, once sold and with no other 'tie ins', the site did not generate income for investment and the touring caravan side of the business suffered over the years with many poor customer reviews.
9. Attached at document 1 are extracts from the site's former touring let adverts.
10. Thus, the decision was taken to abandon the touring caravan part of the site and to change this for static holiday caravans. This was enabled partly due to a change in the ownership of the site. With that change in business model, other site assets would also be released for development, such as this now no longer needed toilet and shower block.
11. The current market for the type of holiday maker in this area, tend to be mostly '*independent explorers*' who take multiple trips with family or friends seeking value for money and '*connoisseur searchers*'<sup>1</sup> who take regular leisure breaks at home and overseas, are older and seek quality<sup>1</sup>. This lends itself to static caravan development rather than tourers.
11. Given that the touring caravan part of the business has proven to be out of line with the tourism profile of this locality and the remainder of the site being mostly long established for residential use, a rethink of the future business model of the site has been necessary.

<sup>1</sup>. Lancashire visitor economy strategy 2015.

## **THE MARKET TO BE SERVED BY THIS SITE**

**12.** The characteristics of the types of visitors for the market served by the self catering holiday industry in the locality of the site are as follows:

- Families with children aged 7-14;
- Over 30 that travel with friends;
- Couples;
- Couples with friends;
- Groups looking for fun or entertainment.

**13** These groups show the following holiday characteristics:

- Short breaks;
- Multiple breaks;
- Monies spent on accommodation;
- Trips planned in advance;
- High expectations looking for quality and authentic experiences;
- Strong motivation to visit particular sites;
- Take trips around special occasions

**14** It is those connoisseur and independent explorers that is the main market for self catering holiday lets in this area. That profile of visitor has not fitted with the original site owner's intentions to provide for touring caravan pitches. It is clear from the sitereviews that the site needed to refocus itself and orientate itself towards the short term let visitor economy.

## **THE FUTURE BUSINESS MODEL**

**15.** These proposals with a move towards permanent structures for holiday let have several longer term advantages over caravan accommodation. The 'switch' allows a different business model for the site to be developed, increasing the potential for both short term revenue and long term returns.

16. The original business model for touring and sale of statics was a model used on many sites in the UK as the home holiday market developed . Financial remodelling has however made financing of touring sites more difficult. Whilst small operators still continue with sales on their own managed sites, the same model does not apply to a large site of this size, where expectations are higher and therefore costs are higher.
17. The proposed conversion will however result in permanent holiday cottage construction that allows the following advantages :
- Temporary let pending any sale;
  - Retention of value;
  - Optional range of finance available;
  - Reduction of risk of capital investment;
  - Less vulnerability to market fluctuations.
18. The initial conversion costs of these buildings may be higher than those of the original chalet construction with potential reduction of the sale price differential. However, this is made up for by the longevity of the investment and the potential for relatively low cost refurbishment, modernisation and upgrading over the lifetime of the building.
19. The long term investment in the buildings is justified by the potential good level of return in the holiday rental market sector. An estimated construction cost of the block is £180,000. An expected good return to value would be 10-12%. An annual letting return of £18-21600 for the 5 units would achieve the 10% return. This requires each unit to achieve £3600-4320 per annum. Many holiday lets of this nature in this area return between 6-8,000 per annum (for 1 bed) and given a proper management regime, this could be achieved at this site, particularly as the permanent build structures will allow a potentially longer season.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

20. The initial development of this site occurred in differing market conditions to those of today and over time under the previous owners, the site had become in need of investment. A change in strategy is now required and the proposed permanent construction units would be better suited to sale or rent for the holiday market, easing funding and enabling the site to meet its target market.

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## Three Rivers Park Camp Site in Lancashire

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Touring caravans. We have two fields which will take upto 100 tourers with 50 hard standing spaces available including electric hook-up facilities, a well stocked shop, toilet block and laundrette. We are open all year round for touring caravans so come and join us for the New Year celebrations.

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### Reviews of Three Rivers Park Camp Site

We stayed here for August bank holiday. What can I say. I booked this site because it specifically said it was a "quiet" site. Well it was far from it. Friday night was horrendous. We had loads of people screaming, shouting, swearing and then it sounded like a fight broke out. Management didn't do anything. This went on until 4.15 a.m. Saturday sounded a bit quieter but it was torrential rain so it blocked the noise out and Sunday night we had enough and left early. So if you want a quiet site DO NOT GO HERE!!!!

★★★★☆ *sandra (29th Aug 2011)*

Beautiful location but rather disappointed with the management of this site. Main bins had

### Campsite details

★★★★☆ 2 reviews

Address:  
Eaves Hall Lane, Clitheroe, BB7 3JG

Telephone:  
[01200 423523](tel:01200423523)

Website:  
[Click to visit](#)

Email:  
[Click to email](mailto:planning@avalontp.co.uk)

Pitches:  
**100**

Season:  
**1st March - 31st October**

### Campsite features

Tourers

### Reviews under previous site ownership 2011.

Directors - Alan Kinder, Dip.T.P (Leeds). MRTPI & Val Kendall

2, Reedley Business Centre, Redman Road, Burnley, Lancashire, BB10 2TY

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