



Steven Abbott Associates LLP
Chartered Town Planners

Planning Statement

Rimington Leisure Park Ltd

Change of use of land to form extensions to existing caravan site for the siting of a further 62 holiday caravans and associated engineering works, demolition of existing building, erection of extension to facilities building, creation of new children's play area, erection of storage building and retention of access track

Rimington Leisure Park, Rimington

November 2019



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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION	3
3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	6
4. MARKET NEED & ECONOMIC IMPACT	7
5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	9
6. ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSALS	10
7. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS	12

I. Introduction

- 1.1. This statement has been prepared to support a planning application by Rimington Leisure Park Ltd ('the Applicant') relating to Rimington Leisure Park, Rimington for the following:

"Change of use of land to form extensions to existing caravan site for the siting of a further 62 holiday caravans and associated engineering works, demolition of existing building, erection of extension to facilities building, creation of new children's play area, erection of storage building and retention of access track."

- 1.2. This Statement provides full details of the site and proposed, and also provides an assessment of the proposal against the adopted development plan and all other relevant material considerations.

Pre-Application Engagement

- 1.3. The current proposals have been subject to pre-application engagement with the local planning authority. Various meetings have been held and it is understood that in principle the local planning authority is supportive of the proposals, subject to site specific considerations.

Scope of submission

- 1.4. The application submission comprises the following plans and documents, which should be read in conjunction with this statement:

- Completed application forms;
- Location and site plans;
- Transport Statement;
- Ecological Appraisal;
- Bat Survey; and
- Landscape and Visual Assessment.

2. Site Location and Description

The Applicant

- 2.1. Rimington Leisure Park Ltd was acquired in early 2019 by Holgates. Holgates is a family owned and operated business that has been operating holiday parks for over 60 years. Their first park was established in Silverdale, Lancashire in 1956. They currently operate 8 holiday parks in Lancashire and Cumbria, including the current application site.

Site Location and Description

- 2.2. The site is located within the Ribble Valley, approximately 1 mile south of Gisburn and 2 miles east of Rimington.
- 2.3. The existing caravan park has a total of 120 static caravan pitches and 50 touring caravan pitches. Work is ongoing to develop an additional 30 pitches. There is currently planning consent for a total of 200 caravans on the site, with a maximum of 55 touring pitches. Full details of the planning history of the site is provide later in this statement.
- 2.4. In addition to the caravan pitches, there is a facilities building on the site which includes a small shop and bar, which is available to people staying on the site.
- 2.5. Access to the site is taken from Hardacre Lane. There are two access points on Hardacre Lane, one which is utilised by visitors to the site and a second which is primarily used when static caravans are being delivered to or removed from the site. The secondary access is not open to visitors.
- 2.6. Access to the site is controlled by a barrier, however there is visitor parking before the barrier and sufficient space to allow vehicles, including those towing caravans, to pull clear of the highway to wait for the barrier to open.
- 2.7. The site is not subject to any statutory environmental designations¹ and is located in Flood Zone 1² and therefore at low risk from flooding.

¹ Source: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

² Source: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

Planning History

- 2.8. The site has a substantial planning history, the applications most relevant to the current proposals are listed in **table 1**.

No.	App Ref.	Description	Decision
1	BO1538	Approved layout of land Hardacre Gate, Rimington as a holiday caravan site.	Approved 30/07/1970
4	3/1980/9044	Proposed residential caravan for occupation by park warden.	Approved 28/10/1980
5	3/1984/0470	Proposed conversion of disused machines store building into a games building with bar, bottle and general store and toilets.	Approved 23/10/1984
7	3/1989/0754	Replacement of septic tank	Approved 24/11/1989
8	3/1990/0414	Use of 12 static caravan pitches from 01 March to 31 January	Approved 24/06/1991
9	3/1999/0758	Proposed modification of condition to permit 33 static caravan pitches to be used from 1 March to 31 January each year	Approved 31/11/1999
10	3/2006/0932	Variation of condition to extend season to 10 months and 6 days.	Approved 07/02/2006
11	3/2010/1027	Variation of condition no. 1 (time/occupancy restrictions) of planning consent 3/2006/0932P, to read 'The caravans shall be used for the purpose of holiday accommodation only and not as a permanent residence'.	Approved 21/03/2011
12	3/2010/1026	Variation of condition no. 2 (time/occupancy restrictions) of planning consent	Approved 21/03/2011
13	3/2010/1025	Variation of condition no. 2 (time and occupancy restrictions) of planning consent 3/1990/0414P, to be replaced with a condition reading 'The caravans shall be used for the purpose of holiday accommodation only and not as a permanent residence'.	Approved 21/03/2011
14	3/2013/0059	Extension of existing caravan park to allow for creation of 38 timber lodges	Approved 30/09/2013

15	3/2013/0975	Request for variation of condition 4 of planning consent 3/2013/0059 to read "No more than 31 holiday lodges (or their equivalent) shall be stationed at any one time on the site as outlined in red on Drawing Number Lee/04B/DWG02 and no more than a total of 156 holiday lodges or holiday static caravans shall be stationed at any one time on total of the areas outlined in red and blue on Drawing Number Lee/04BDwg02. In addition to the permitted holiday lodges and holiday static caravans, touring caravans are permitted within the area outlined in blue subject to a restriction that the total number of units (lodges, static caravans and touring caravans) shall not at any one time exceed a maximum of 200 units."	Approved 03/03/2014
16	3/2014/0299	Discharge of conditions 6-external lighting, 7-compliance with ecological survey and evaluation, 8-landscaping and 9- materials of planning consent 3/2013/0059	Approved 06/06/2014
17	3/2015/0930	Proposed agricultural track	REFUSED 24/03/2016

- 2.9. The current position on the site is that there can be a maximum of 200 pitches on the (maximum 156 statics/lodges) as per planning permission 3/2013/0975.
- 2.10. All lodges and caravans can only be occupied as holiday accommodation.
- 2.11. There are conditions which restrict the use bar and other facilities can only be used by only be used of residents of the caravans.

3. Proposed Development

3.1. The proposed development includes the following elements:

- Change of use of two parcels of land to allow the siting of additional static caravans, and the engineering works associated with this change of use;
- Demolition of an existing storage building;
- Erection of an extension to facilities building to provide additional bar/restaurant space;
- Creation of a new children's play area;
- Erection of a storage building; and
- Retention of access track.

3.2. All of the development proposed relates to the primary use of the wider site as a holiday park.

3.3. The proposals include the siting of a total of 62 additional static caravans. This will increase the total number of caravans on the site to 262. The proposals do not include any additional touring caravan pitches.

3.4. The proposals also include an extension to the existing facilities building. As stated previously, the facilities building includes shop and bar facilities for visitors to the park, and office and storage space associated with the operation of the park.

3.5. The application also seeks the retention of a track which connects the site to Rimington Lane. The field access has been present for a considerable time and is required for access to the land for agricultural purposes. The applicant has laid a track through the field which is currently being used in connection with the ongoing construction on the site. In the longer term it is proposed that the track be retained for used in connection with the agricultural land and also as an emergency access for the holiday park. It should be noted that there is no intention for the track or access to be utilised by visitors to the site.

3.6. Full details of all the works proposed are set out on the submitted plans.

4. Market Need & Economic Impact

Market Need

- 4.1. The domestic holiday accommodation industry has been experiencing significant growth in recent years. The applicant is experiencing particularly high demand throughout all of the holiday parks which they manage.
- 4.2. Since the applicant purchased the site, they have undertaken a significant amount of work to impact the site and facilities. They are also currently developing a number of lodges on the site which benefited from planning consent at the time of purchase.
- 4.3. The applicant has not aggressively marketed the site, whilst the above works have been ongoing. However, in spite of this they have experience high demand for holiday accommodation.
- 4.4. The site offers an alternative to other sites which the applicant offers, which are primarily in more coastal areas.
- 4.5. It is expected that the already strong demand will increase once the applicant begins a more active marketing campaign. Particularly, when the lodge development is brought to the market.

Economic Impact

- 4.6. The proposed additional static caravan pitches will deliver a significant economic benefit to the local economy through increase visitor spend.
- 4.7. A recently published report³, “Pitching the Value – 2019 Economic Benefits Report: Holiday Parks and Campsites UK”, which was commissioned by the UK Caravan & Camping Alliance, provides details of visitor spend associated with caravan and holiday parks.
- 4.8. It identifies an average spend of £101 per day per pitch. This is broken down in to £55 on-site spend and £46 off-site.

³ <https://www.ukcca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SC6407-00-Holiday-Park-Econ-Impact-UK-Final-Report.pdf>

4.9. Based on these figures and assuming occupation of the additional pitches for 200 nights per year, the proposed development could generate £1.2 million per annum of spending in the local economy. This is clearly a significant economic benefit of the proposed development.

5. Planning Policy Context

5.1. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2. For the purposes of this application the most relevant development plan polices are contained in the Core Strategy:

- Key Statement DMG1 – General Considerations
- Key Statement DMG2 – Strategic Considerations
- Key Statement EN2 – Landscape
- Key Statement EN4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Key Statement EC3 – Visitor Economy
- Policy DMG1 – General Considerations
- Policy DME1 – Protecting Trees and Woodlands
- Policy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection
- Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility
- Policy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and Local Economy
- Policy DMB3 – Recreation and Tourism Development

5.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in planning decisions.

6. Assessment of the Proposals

Principle of Development

- 6.1. The development plan seeks to support business growth and the local economy, specifically in policy DMB1. Furthermore, policy DMB3 supports the principle of tourism development which extend the range of tourism and visitor facilities in the Borough.
- 6.2. The current application relates to an existing long-established tourism facility and the proposed extensions to the site are physically well related to the existing holiday accommodation on the site.
- 6.3. There is further support for the proposals in the NPPF. Paragraph 83 states that sustainable rural tourism and leisure development which respect the character of the countryside should be supported.
- 6.4. In view of the above, the principle of the proposed development is considered to accord with the development plan and NPPF. It is however necessary to consider whether there are any specific physical or technical constraints which impact the development.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 6.5. The application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Assessment which covers these matters in detail. In summary, the proposed development will not cause significant harm to the landscape character or cause visual harm, either in the locality or in the wider area.
- 6.6. The siting of additional static caravans, as proposed by this application, will not have a significant visual impact on the existing site or the surrounding area. Furthermore, it is intended existing tree cover on the site will be retained and additional tree planting and landscaping will be undertaken as part of the development.
- 6.7. The existing topography and landform of the application site and surrounding area allows the proposed development to assimilate into the landscape. Furthermore, when viewed from a distance or in close proximity, the proposed static caravans will clearly read as part of the existing caravan site.

Access and Highways

- 6.8. The application is supported by a Transport Statement which address matters relating to access and highways in details. In summary, the proposed development will not have a material traffic impact on the safe and efficient operation of the highway network.
- 6.9. Visitors to the proposed static caravan will utilise the existing site access, which can comfortably accommodate the proposed development.
- 6.10. It should be noted that the current application does not proposed an increase to the number of touring caravan pitches on the site.
- 6.11. The track to the north of the site which this application seeks to retain will not be used by visitors to the site. The access point onto the highway has been there for a considerable, the applicant has however laid a track to allow access during the construction of lodges already permitted on the site. Once construction is complete, the track would only be used to access the agricultural field in which it is located.

Ecology

- 6.12. The application is supported by an Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey, which address ecology matters in detail. In summary, the Ecological Appraisal that the sites to be developed are of limited ecological significance. It also noted the benefits of the retention of existing trees.
- 6.13. The Bat Survey relates to the storage building, which is to be demolished, and the facilities building, which is to be extended. The buildings are not utilised as bat roosts and therefore the development will not impact on bats. The report does make recommendations for how construction/demolition should be undertaken and for the installation of mitigation measure, all of which will be followed by the applicant.
- 6.14. The planting of additional local species of trees and plants, as part of the landscaping scheme for the development, will lead to a net gain in biodiversity on the site.

Drainage

- 6.15. Package treatment plants will be installed to serve the additional static caravan pitches. The location of the treatment plants is indicated on the submitted plans.

7. Summary & Conclusions

- 7.1. In summary, the principle of the proposed extension to the existing caravan site accords with the relevant policies of the development.
- 7.2. The benefits of the proposed development include:
- Acceptability in principle - the principle of tourist accommodation in this location is consistent with the relevant policies of the development plan and national policy;
 - Appropriateness of location - it is clear that there is demand and a need for additional tourist accommodation in the area, and the most appropriate location to deliver that accommodation is as an extension to an existing site;
 - Enhancement of rural economy - the proposals will have a significant positive impact on the rural economy, bringing an additional £1.2 million of spending into the local economy every year; and
 - Improved sustainability of an existing rural enterprise - the additional pitches and facilities will help to secure the future of the existing operations and to continue the sustainable growth of the enterprise.
- 7.3. As demonstrated in this Statement, the application proposals accord with the relevant policies of the development plan, and should therefore be approved with delay in accordance with the first bullet point in paragraph 11 of the NPPF.