



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Change of Use of existing camping site and dis-used stone
quarry to mixed caravan and camping site to include
Pods, tents, mobile caravans together with
2 no. toilet / shower blocks, bio disc sewage treatment plant
and new vehicular access

at
Quarryfield Camping
Rode Street
Tarpoley

The Site and Location

The application site is located off Rode Street (A51) in close proximity to the traffic Tarporley Roundabout and main road into Tarporley. The site is a disused quarry which fronts onto the A51 highway. Part of the application site has planning permission (planning ref: 4/33768 - copy attached) for a camping site for not more than 20 tents. The site is still licensed and lies within open countryside which contains tree and hedge screening from the A51 and nearby properties to the South. The site is rectangular in shape and has a vertical sandstone rock face dividing the site. The quarry face is set back from the A51 forming a lower flat plateau to the fore between the road and rock face. Located to the western boundary is an existing vehicular access which then slopes up to the area above the rock face on the northern boundary. This upper area is a flat grassed field of some 0.52 hectares. The field loops back round to the A51 where there is a further second field with gated access off the A51 previously used for maintenance. In all the application site is some 0.97 hectares.

The site benefits from a public footpath along the A51 and Bus Stop directly outside the entrance which provides a regular bus service between Chester, Tarvin, Tarporley, Nantwich and Crewe.

Details of Proposal

The camping site with its associated welfare facilities has recently been purchased by my client with its existing planning permission granted for a twenty tent camp site. It is currently well fenced, with secured gate entrance from the main road. The site is freehold and serviced by water, electricity and drainage to an existing septic tank.

The site has not been in use recently, in particular since the coronavirus pandemic and during the change of ownership.

The application site has in part been a well-established campsite in excess of 10 years. The site is listed Nationally within many campsite directories with glowing reviews relative to its previous management and location near to the Local Service Centres of Tarporley and Tarvin. It is recognised for the sites easy access to the following attractions:-

- The Sandstone Trail
- Oulton Park
- Chester Racecourse
- Joderell Bank Telescope
- Chester Zoo
- Cheshire Oaks Outlet Centre
- Cotebrook Shire Horse Centre
- Cheshire Farm Ice Cream
- Okells Garden Centre and Café
- Local Farm Shops
- Tarporley and Tarvin
- Chester Roman City and surrounding areas
- Restaurants
- St Helens Church
- Beeston Castle

It is my client's intention to invest in the land by improving the current on site facilities. This will include bringing the park up to a more modern standard to facilitate tents, pods and touring caravans all with designated parking. The facility would include 2 no permanent buildings of low level construction primarily to facilitate showers and toilets for its visitors. At the time of the previous planning approval a major contention has been the existing vehicular access off the A51. The proposal is to mitigate this by installing a totally new access with turning facilities and visibility splays in accordance with Manual for Streets 2. A 'ghost island' and signage is included within the design to direct traffic leaving the site 'left only' towards the Tarporley Island. Adequate on-site parking is proposed and two electric car charging points are located near to reception.

In all it is proposed 27 pitches in total, a further 7 pitches over the current planning approval. This will form a mixture of 7 no. pods, 10 tents and 10 touring caravans / caravanettes. Two new toilet blocks will replace the original facilities. Detail plans of the proposal support the planning application. The application will also include bin store, fire points and cycle racks.

The site will be controlled by a site warden's office and main reception located within the toilet / shower block building at the site entrance.

Landscaping

The site is well established with its major feature a sandstone quarry face of some 7m in height screening the lower level of the site. There are a number of well-established trees and hedges both on its boundaries and also at the top of the quarry face providing substantial screening from the A51 and the surrounding area. The proposal will have minimal visual impact and it is considered following its previous established use a Landscape and Visual Impact Report would be pointless in this case however, a brief summary is included within this statement.

Landscape and Visual

Although a full report has not been carried out in this case, account has been taken of the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition 2013 (GLVIA3). Consideration has therefore been given to the construction and operational phases and a site description from a landscape and visual impact prospective follows.

The site forms part of an arable landscape with fields to the north, west and east. The site was previously a sandstone quarry which included the land to the South now divided by the A51 trunk road serving Nantwich and Chester.

Following the closure of the quarry the site was re-established to grazing fields, however of poor quality. The site currently has a split use, the camping site and general grazing / recreational land for occupants to include parking for vehicles. Additional hedge and tree planting was provided following approval of the campsite which is now well-established. However, additional planting is proposed within the current planning application. The area is characterised by a field pattern bounded by hedgerows and trees giving rise to moderately dense landscape with few distant views. There are no adjoining landscape designations and although the application site contributes to the rural outlook in a general way it is not recognised as having any

particular landscape importance. The application site and the immediate surrounding countryside therefore has a landscape value at local level only.

Direct effects on landscape components relate to the grazing field above and to the east of the quarry face. An area when not in use which will be retained as open grassland meadow. When in use the vehicle track will be 'grasscrete' i.e. reinforced plastic mesh which provides hardstanding, yet lets grass grow through, maintaining the meadow visual appearance (see photo's below).



The site will therefore have a seasonal change in appearance from grazing meadow to touring park with a small amount of permanent development i.e. timber clad toilet / shower amenities, that replace the derelict buildings which exist. From the majority of locations, the proposed development will be largely hidden from view. Possible views from residential properties to the south of the A51 were also considered but are well screened from trees / hedging on both sides of the A51 and variance in levels of the landscape. Additional hedging and tree planting will enhance screening of the site. Additional measures are also proposed including managing hedgerows and planting within the site and in particular indigenous species and keeping re-grading of the land to a minimum.

Ecology

Camlad Ecology have been commissioned to carry out and determine the baseline ecological condition of the site, the presence of protected species and to evaluate any potential impacts which the scheme may have. They will also take into account any mitigation and enhancement needed as part of the proposed planning application. A 5m ecological buffer zone is to be included at the base of the quarry face with anti-intruder fencing to its peripheral (see plan).

A Phase 1 Habitat Survey will follow under separate cover to accompany my clients submission.

General

The grassland habitat is of low botanical interest and has little potential to support protected species. The trees and hedges are likely to support nesting birds but little disturbance will be caused to these habitats. There maybe some temporary disturbance during construction works, however the hedges and trees will be unaffected and full consideration will be given to nesting periods.

Traffic and Transport

The site is accessed off the A51 trunk road of national speed limit 60 mph. A new vehicle entrance is proposed which is approximately 330 metres from the Tarporley Roundabout and complies with current design standards in terms of layout, construction and visibility provisions.

Visibility extends beyond 215m in each direction for emerging drivers to the near edge of the carriageway at 2.4m set back. The visibility to the left extends towards the Tarporley Roundabout and a ghost island has been incorporated at the site junction to direct traffic exiting the site to the nearby roundabout to improve highway safety with a view to accommodating caravans and the additional vehicles leaving the site. The

A51 is a single carriageway route with normal 7.3m width. A footpath of some 900mm in width abuts the front boundary wall of the site.

The majority of daily activity is outside the peak times 0800 to 0900 hrs and 1700 to 1800 hrs which minimises impacts on traffic congestion levels. The period of peak activity is between 1000 and 1100 hrs outside peak demand times. With the proposed addition of 7 no. pitches compared to the previous planning of twenty, together with the new vehicular access, it is therefore anticipated that there would be little variation within the range of expected day to day vehicle movement at the junction. The quantum of additional development when assessed at local level is not significant in context of the range of day to day seasonal variations within the highway network and it is therefore considered will not result in significant detrimental impact based on highway and transport grounds. A bus stop is located near to the site entrance which provides an alternative mode of transport should it be required.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 where the probability of fluvial flooding in any one year is considered, to be less than 0.1%. In terms of flood vulnerability as much of the site is to remain open the total hydrological plan area is of minimal vulnerability and the fluvial flood risk is therefore considered very low.

Surface water run-off to and from the site is considered to pose a very low degree of flood risk as proven from the previous owners past experience. In general, any emerging groundwater drains away naturally. However, it is intended to provide additional surface water receptors to the proposed toilet / shower blocks and the new drive entrance.

In general, the site is very low risk in flooding as the amount of run-off received will not change except, as a result of climate change. Subject to a planning approval, soakaway tests will be carried out in support of any appropriate surface water drainage system as an overflow to temporary storm water storage in accordance with BRE365.

EIA

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (EIA) Reg 2017 Schedule 2 – permanent camp sites and caravan sites – the threshold is the area of the development i.e. exceeds 1 hectare. The development does not fall into the above mentioned categories owing to the site area being 0.97 hectares.

Policies

The Councils following policies are relevant to the proposal:-

Policy DM10

Proposals for caravan and camping sites for tourism use will only be supported where they are in line with Local Plan (Part One) policies ECON3 and STRAT 9 and Local Plan (Part Two) policy DM9, and meet all of the following relevant criteria;

1. There is good accessibility via major roads and public transport;
2. It is not visually intrusive or unacceptably harm the landscape;
3. The layout is designed to incorporate existing landscape features and provide open areas, screening and landscape buffers;
4. Any permanent ancillary buildings are of a small scale and should blend into the surrounding landscape in terms of their siting, design and the materials used;
5. The site should not detract from the amenities of the surrounding area or any nearby residential property;
6. The site is capable of being connected to existing utility services; and
7. The site is capable of providing appropriate facilities for users of the site

11.31 Local Plan (Part One) policy ECON 3 states that proposals for touring recreational caravan and camping sites in the countryside should be small in scale to limit impact on landscape and utilise or be well related to existing rural buildings, subject to Local Plan (Part One) policy STRAT 9. Local Plan (Part Two) policy **DM9** on visitor accommodation and other relevant development plan policies. The policy

includes, but is not restricted to, touring caravan and camping sites, static caravans, chalets (or other forms of static accommodation such as pods, yurts and tepees) for tourism use. This is to ensure that new visitor accommodation is provided in the most sustainable locations where they are accessible by sustainable modes of transport and have access to services and facilities. Camping and caravan sites are considered as tourism development not outdoor recreation in line with Local Plan (Part One) policy ECON3. Therefore, proposals in the Green Belt will have to meet the requirements of Local Plan (Part One) policy STRAT 9.

11.32 Static caravans and chalet developments have the potential for significant harm to the landscape as they are permanent structures, unlike camping (tents) and touring caravans. A considerable number of static recreational caravan sites already exist within the borough; it is not considered necessary to develop further sites or to extend the period of occupation of current sites. Proposals for new static caravan or chalet developments, the extension of existing sites or the increase in density of sites will not be supported unless there is evidence of unmet need in line with Local Plan (Part One) ECON 3.

11.33 This policy provides criteria to ensure that sites are suitably located in the borough, with regard to main transport routes to limit the number of cars with caravans that travel on the minor rural roads, in the interests of highway safety and to minimise the need to travel whilst the site is in use.

11.34 Local Plan (Part One) policy ENV 2 requires that development proposals should protect and where possible enhance landscape character and local distinctiveness. Where development proposals are suitably located, additional criteria is provided in this policy to ensure that the landscape characteristics are recognised and incorporated into the design of new developments. Appropriate facilities can be defined as a utility block (toilets, showers and drinking water supply). These facilities and ancillary buildings should be of a scale appropriate to the level of camping and caravanning provided on the site.

11.35 In addition to obtaining planning permission new caravan sites must be licensed under Part 1 of the Caravan Sites and Development Act 1960. Additional restrictions or conditions may be placed on the caravan site under the licence and periods of occupancy may be restricted.

Conclusion

This is a planning application to give a variety of opportunities for Caravan and Camping encouraging tourists to visit Cheshire to enhance the tourism industry of the area. The site will also have provision for the disabled. The site is a small site but will assist the National need for sites following the Coronavirus pandemic and the restrictions to travelling abroad.

The site conforms to the NPPF tourism policies and the Councils Policy ECON 3 and Local Plan Policy STRAT 9.

The site has immediate access to the transport network for short distance travel to local interests.