

Application for Determination

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| Parish | Burgh St Peter/Wheatacre Parish Council |
| Reference | BA/2013/0310/FUL Target date 25 November 2013 |
| Location | Waveney Inn and River Centre, Staithe Road, Burgh St Peter, Beccles |
| Proposal | Proposed six camping pods |
| Applicant | Waveney River Centre (2003) Ltd. |
| Recommendation | Approve subject to conditions (part retrospective) |
| Reason for referral to Committee | Applicant is a Member of the Navigation Committee |

1 Description of Site and Proposals

- 1.1 The application site forms part of the Waveney Inn and River Centre complex at Burgh St Peter. This is a predominantly tourism based site providing a boatyard, mooring, holiday accommodation, camping and caravan pitches, a public house and associated facilities.
- 1.2 The moorings are located on the river frontage and in two adjacent basins, with camping (tent) pitches and a car park to the immediate west on low ground. The ground rises to the west towards Church Lane and 17 touring caravan pitches line the higher ground along the northwest and northeast site boundaries. Between the tent and caravan pitches lies a large building which provides a swimming pool and cafe to site users and a shower block sits at the bottom of the slope adjacent to the car park.
- 1.3 Either side of the main entrance from Church Lane stand a large boatshed and the public house, as well as outbuildings which have approval to be replaced with bed and breakfast accommodation (see Site History). Further to the southwest there is an extensive area of static caravans and lodges.
- 1.4 The application proposes the installation of six camping pods in an area along the northwest boundary between the swimming pool building, main site entrance and boatshed.
- 1.5 Each pod measures 3.3 metres by 4.3 metres in footprint and sits under a curved roof with a ridge approximately 3.4 metres above ground level. The

Pods are clad in timber and have a double door opening on the front elevation and a small window in the rear elevation. Internally these provide a double bunk bed, two single beds, heating, lighting and a television. Occupants would use the existing shower and toilet facilities on site and no cooking facilities are provided in the pods. Parking would be provided within the existing car park.

- 1.6 The six pods are proposed to be sited around the perimeter of the area to the northwest of the boatshed and southwest of the swimming pool. This area currently provides three touring caravan pitches which would be lost as a result of the proposal. This area is grassed with small, immature areas of planting. The boundary to Church Lane is marked by a high, mature hedge.
- 1.7 The pods are produced on site using traditional boat building techniques. It should be noted that two pods have already been installed on site so the application is part retrospective.

2 Site History

In 1997 a Certificate of Lawful Use was issued for use of land for standing of touring caravans and pitching of tents (reference 97/0093).

In 2006 planning permission was issued for eight new static units and associated works. This is subject to a Section 106 agreement which includes a restriction on the number of touring caravan pitches to 17 and does not allow more than 17 touring caravans to be stationed on the land at any one time (reference 06/0479).

Planning permission was granted in 2010 for the demolition of outbuildings to the rear of the public house and replacement with five units of bed and breakfast accommodation (BA/2010/0392/FUL). This has not yet been implemented.

3 Consultation

Broads Society – No response.

Parish Council - We consider the application should be approved. The pods are a useful addition to the facilities on site. If permission is granted we suggest the following conditions of approval should be considered: the number of touring caravans must be reduced to 14.

District Member – No response.

Highways Authority – The Highway Authority have previously raised concerns in relation to the suitability of the highway access/network in relation to the proposals outlined within those applications, and indeed have made a recommendation of refusal of planning permission on these grounds. The reduction of the touring pitches is welcome in that it will result in a reduction of

touring caravans on this section of the highway network, and although it would be preferable if the off-set in touring pitches were equal to or more than the proposed traffic movements, any reduction in the number of caravans is a positive move. It is noted that the pods may also be attractive to hikers, cyclists and river users, and in this respect at the worst case the proposals may lead to a marginal increase in the overall traffic movements to the site. Furthermore, the Highway Authority have managed through the provisions of earlier planning conditions on the site to secure passing spaces on the adjacent network and there have also been improvements to the brown tourist signing for the site in recent years, the latter of which helps direct customers along the appropriate access route. Therefore on balance the proposals are unlikely to have a significant effect on the surrounding highway network, and through the removal of touring caravans from this part of the network provide a positive contribution in terms of the highway network, especially given the Highway Authority's previous comments in this respect. Therefore, in highway terms only, I have no objections to the proposals

4 Policies

- 4.1 The following Policies have been assessed for consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and have been found to be consistent and can therefore be afforded full weight in the consideration and determination of this application.

Adopted Core Strategy (2007)

[Core Strategy \(Adopted Sept 2007\).pdf](#)

CS1 – Landscape Protection and Enhancement
CS9 – Sustainable Tourism
CS11 – Sustainable Tourism
CS12 – Sustainable Tourism

Adopted Development Management Policies (2011)

[DMP DPD - Adoption version.pdf](#)

DP2 – Landscape and Trees
DP4 – Design
DP11 – Access on Land

- 4.2 The following Policies have been assessed for consistency with the NPPF and have found to lack full consistency with the NPPF and therefore those aspects of the NPPF may need to be given some weight in the consideration and determination of this application.

[NPPF](#)

Adopted Development Management Policies (2011)

DP14 – General Location of Sustainable Tourism and Recreation
Development
DP15 – Holiday Accommodation – New Provision and Retention
DP28 – Amenity

5 Assessment

- 5.1 In terms of assessment it is first necessary to consider the principle of the proposal and, if this is acceptable, to consider the design, materials and siting and impact on landscape, amenity and highways.
- 5.2 In respect of rural tourism, the National Planning Policy Framework (at paragraph 28) states local planning authorities should: “...*support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations...*”.
- 5.3 The application proposes new holiday accommodation at an existing tourist centre and would form an integral part of the existing operation. This is considered an appropriate location and, in principle, the proposal is considered acceptable in accordance with Development Management Policies DP14 and DP15, Core Strategy Policies CS9, CS11 and CS12 and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.4 The pods offer ‘glamping’ accommodation and provide a new form accommodation on this site at an intermediate price point – between camping and a static unit. This largely weatherproof and heated accommodation also offers a longer season than the tent pitches. As the pods are pre-fabricated and movable, they are considered to comply with the statutory definition of a caravan. However, their characteristics and impacts are more akin to static caravans, rather than touring caravans, particularly given their year round presence on site.
- 5.5 Occupants of the pods would use the existing facilities on site and the applicant has advised that there is sufficient capacity to meet the extra demand this proposal would generate.
- 5.6 In accordance with Policy DP15, it is considered necessary to restrict the use of the pods to short-stay rented accommodation only and in line with standard conditions used by other local planning authorities it is considered necessary to condition that the pods shall not be replaced with caravans or other structures, unless otherwise agreed.
- 5.7 The pods pay reference to the Broads boat building tradition in their design, construction and materials and are relatively small scale. In terms of appearance, they are preferable to touring or static caravans and their design is considered acceptable. Although a layout plan has been submitted, it is understood that the applicant does not wish to be restricted to a particular layout and is seeking permission for the siting of six pods within the identified site area. Given the mobile nature of the pods construction and their shared characteristics with caravans, this is not considered unreasonable. It is also the case that an alternative layout is

unlikely to have a significantly different impact on the character and appearance of the area, so the proposed flexibility is acceptable.

- 5.8 In terms of siting, the pods would sit on the highest land on the site and be visible from the river between the boatshed and swimming pool building. There would, however, be a distance of approximately 150 metres between the river and pods within which there are moorings, camping pitches, a playground and the car park with large buildings to each side. They would therefore be seen in the context of the existing development and replace three existing touring caravan pitches. The pods would be seen against the existing boundary hedge along Church Lane, which is approximately 2.5-3 metres high, and individually they would assimilate into this background more easily than the existing touring caravans. It is, however, considered necessary for a landscaping scheme to be provided in order to reinforce the existing backdrop of the hedge and to provide some segregation to the pods in views from the river. Subject to a condition requiring agreement of a landscaping scheme, the proposal is considered acceptable in this respect.
- 5.9 With regard to amenity, the proposal would increase the number of units on site and thus potential occupants. Given the scale of the existing development on the site and small increase in numbers resulting from the proposal, it is not considered that any unacceptable impacts on amenity would result.
- 5.10 Access to the site is along narrow, single track roads and previous development proposals here have raised concerns about whether the highway network can accommodate any additional traffic to the site. Although the proposal would result in an increase in the numbers of units, it would reduce the number of touring caravans visiting the site. The applicant also advises that this form of accommodation is more likely to be used by those arriving by foot, cycle or canoe.
- 5.11 The Highways Authority welcomes the reduction in the number of touring pitches and has advised that although it would be preferable for the off-set in touring pitches were equal to or more than the proposed traffic movements, any reduction in the number of caravans is a positive move. It is, however, noted that the proposal may lead to a marginal increase in the overall traffic movements to the site. The Highways Authority are mindful that passing places have been secured on previous consents here and that additional signage has helped direct customers along the appropriate access route. On balance, the Highways Authority consider the proposal would be unlikely to have any significant adverse effect on the highway network and have no objection to the proposal. They are also content that the proposed parking arrangements are satisfactory.
- 5.12 In order to retain control over the number of units on site in the interests of highway safety and amenity, it is considered necessary to set the maximum number of pods to six and touring caravans to 14 in a condition on any permission. Enforcing the proposed condition on this permission, if

issued, would effectively supersede the provision of the Section 106 agreement attached to permission 06/0479 which sets the maximum number of touring caravans at 17.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The application site is considered to be an appropriate location for additional tourist accommodation and the proposed pods increase the range of accommodation offered here. It is considered that the site has sufficient capacity to accommodate the increase in units and that this can be achieved without detriment to amenity or the highway network. The pods are considered to be of an acceptable design, scale, form and materials but given their siting on the valley edge, a landscaping scheme is considered necessary.

7 Recommendation

7.1 Approve subject to conditions:

- (i) Standard time limit
- (ii) In accordance with approved plans – six pods within red line site area
- (iii) Landscaping scheme
- (iv) Short stay rented accommodation only
- (v) Approved pod design only, any replacements or alterations to be agreed
- (vi) Maximum six pods and 14 touring caravan pitches on site at anytime

8 Reason for recommendation

8.1 The proposal is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policies DP2, DP4, DP11, DP14, DP15 and DP28 of the adopted Development Management Policies DPD (2011), Policies CS1, CS9, CS11 and CS12 of the adopted Core Strategy (2007) and also the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) which is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

List of Appendices: APPENDIX 1 –Location Plan

Background papers: Application File BA/2-13/0310/FUL

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Date of Report: 24 October 2013

APPENDIX 1

BA/2013/0310/FUL - Waveney Inn And River Centre, Staithe Road, Burgh St Peter
Proposed six camping pods

