



The countryside charity
North and East Yorkshire

PO Box 189
York
YO7 9BL

www.cpreney.org.uk

Tel: 07983 088120
Email: info@cpreney.org.uk

Branch Chair
Mrs Jan Arger

Authority: North York Moors National Park Authority

Type of consultation: Planning Consultation

Full details of application/consultation: NYM/2022/0634 – Variation of conditions 1 (material amendment), 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 11 of planning approval NYM/2018/0681/FL to allow the temporary use of Ladycross Caravan Park as an accommodation park for Anglo American workers for the duration of the shaft sinking stages of the Woodsmith Project (estimated to be up to five years). The proposal comprises the regularisation of the 'as-built' layout to the south west of the site, temporary siting of two person cabins on each of the 189 pitches with associated infrastructure, provision of a temporary welfare facility across six lodges, canopy to existing toilet block for use as bus drop off/pick up area, cycle store and bin store together with retention of four privately owned lodges and private house for continued use by caravan site operator

At land: Lady Cross Plantation Caravan Park, Egton, YO21 1UA

Type of response: Comment

Date of Submission: 21st October 2022

All responses or queries relating to this submission should be directed to the Secretary for the Trustees at the contact details shown above on this frontispiece.

All CPRE North and East Yorkshire comments are prepared by the charity using professional planners whose research and recommendations form the basis of this response in line with national CPRE policies.

External planning consultant used in this response:



KVA Planning Consultancy
Katie Atkinson, BA (Hons), Dip TP, MA
MRTPI
www.kvaplaning.co.uk

Comment

CPRE North and East Yorkshire ('CPRENEY') welcomes the opportunity to comment on this s73 application to vary several conditions to allow the temporary use of Ladycross Caravan Park as an accommodation Park for Anglo American workers during the shaft sinking stages of the Woodsmith Project (circa 5 years). The proposal comprises the regularisation of the as built layout to the southwest of the site, temporary siting of two-person cabins on each of the 189 pitches with associated infrastructure, provision of a temporary welfare facility across six lodges, canopy to existing toilet block for use as a drop off/pick up area, cycle store and bin store with the retention of 4 privately owned lodges and a private house for the caravan site operator. The application was submitted to North York Moors National Park Authority ('the NPA') on behalf of Anglo-American Woodsmith Ltd ('the applicant') by Lichfields.

Having had the opportunity to consider the documents submitted on behalf of the applicant, CPRENEY neither support nor object to the proposals per se, however, do have some comments to make which they hope will be taken into account in the determination process.

The site has a relatively complex planning history with numerous applications seeking to regularise the overall site. In 2011 (NYM/2011/0111/FL) permission was granted to reconfigure the caravan park to a number of conditions including: Condition 4 - restricting the use of the permitted caravans and timber lodges for 'holiday purposes only'; Condition 5 - preventing the occupation of the permitted caravans and lodges between 15 January and 1 March; and, Condition 6 - stating that the site shall not be used for more than 10 static caravans, with the remaining numbers made up of 42 timber lodges, 124 touring/seasonal caravans, 9 motor homes and 5 camping pods.

Since then, there have been three subsequent amendments to the original planning permission (NYM/2012/0785/FL/FL; NYM2016/0297/FL and NYM/2018/0681/FL) which, alongside securing design and layout variations, also removed the seasonal occupational restriction (Condition 5), thus allowing the caravan park to operate year-round. At present this is the operational basis of the site. Most recently, an undetermined proposal (at the time of writing) has been lodged with the NPA seeking to reorganize the northern section of the caravan park and extend into an area of woodland owned by the landowner and caravan park operator (NYM/2022/0568), although it is noted that this is being dealt with by another case officer at the NPA.

The proposal seeks specifically to vary conditions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 11 of planning permission NYM/2018/0681/FL and proposes an additional condition 12 to be inserted into the permission.

Condition 12 sets out the temporary use of the site for a period of '*no more than five years from the date of first occupation for such purposes as notified in writing to the Local Planning Authority, or until (INSERT DATE FIVE YEARS AND SIX MONTHS FROM DATE OF CONSENT) whichever is the sooner.*' The rest of the condition sets out that the temporary workers accommodation will comply with a number of detailed drawings and then states clearly that '*at the expiration of the period authorised by this permission for occupation of the site for temporary worker accommodation, and unless otherwise formally agreed in the writing, the Caravan Park shall be fully reinstated to a condition to allow resumption of the approved tourism and recreation use in Pg 13/14 25646191v3 accordance with plan ref. SD-10.04 rev. C and a timetable to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.*'

The proposed variations of conditions 1-5 of the original application all consist of the insertion of the line '*Except as temporarily authorised under condition 12*' at the start of each condition. Condition 7 is a complete replacement setting out '*External lighting shall be installed on site in accordance with plan ref. SD-10.08 rev. C. The lighting shall be installed in accordance with the details so approved and shall be maintained in that condition for the duration of occupation of the site for the permitted temporary and permanent uses.*'

However, as indicated by the highlighted section above, CPRENEY notes that this is not in accordance with the proposed lighting plan set out in condition 12 which refers to drawing ref SD-10.08 rev D. This should be clarified by the applicant.

The background to the proposal is understood, in terms of the proposed allocation for a workers accommodation park situated adjacent to the Whitby Business Park and Park and Ride facility and understand the predicament the company must be in at present.

It is understood that the proposal seeks to utilise the existing footprint of the holiday park, insert climate friendly build options (solar panels to the roof space of each lodge) and not extend the red line boundary of the site – which is a benefit of the scheme as no further impact on the landscape would be felt, given the site mainly already exists (should the extension to the outstanding permission be approved).

The NPA has two statutory purposes: to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and, to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public. In addition, there is a statutory duty for the NPA to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities. CPRENEY understand that at present, the company rely on numerous tourist bed providers across the National Park for workers to reside in during shift cycles. However, whilst the proposal may bring a number of these ‘beds’ back into tourist usage, will the reduction of pitches and removal of existing lodges at the Ladycross Caravan Park not simply be a like for like swap? Although, acknowledging some are yet to be built out, are these existing and permitted beds not counted by the NPA as tourist accommodation provision? A further concern is the kitchen and welfare facilities, whilst understandably required to be provided on such a site, will the economic benefits to nearby communities currently housing workers not be impacted, particularly during winter months out of traditional tourist season? As the country emerges from the global pandemic and staycations are still readily sought after, the loss of this sizeable caravan park to the communities in the National Park could be heavily felt, especially for a 5year period.

The NPA Local Plan was adopted in July 2020 and Strategic Policy J deals specifically with tourism and recreation. It seeks to encourage appropriate tourism development within the NP that is sensitively located and will not detract from the special qualities of the NP. Policy UE1 recognises that existing tourism businesses in the open countryside may wish to expand but requires any new development to be subservient in scale of the existing development. It also clearly sets out that the proposal must comply with Policy UE2 - camping, glamping, caravans, and cabins which seeks to protect the landscape character of the NP by supporting small scale development proposals which are screened by existing topography, buildings or adequate well-established vegetation within the applicant’s control. Further, the policy specifically sets out that proposals for *‘conversion of existing camping or caravanning sites to statics will not be permitted. Exceptions will be considered where the proposal will reduce the visual impact of the site in the wider landscape.’* As such – the NPA is not actively seeking new or additional large caravan/lodge sites.

Furthermore, Policy UE3 states that development that would lead to the loss of an existing tourism facility will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the business is no longer viable or that the new use would result in a significant improvement to the immediate environment or highway safety which outweighs the loss of tourism use. The planning application provides no evidence to demonstrate that the Caravan Park is not viable as a successful business. Ladycross Caravan Park certainly appears to be a viable business, with a number of planning applications submitted in recent years to expand the Caravan Park including the current undetermined proposal which will allow a total of 189 pitches - which is a substantial scale in the National Park that generates significant tourism expenditure within the local economy and whilst the proposed usage is for a temporary period, (there are no guarantees there will not be further delays to the mine project beyond 5 years and the time could indeed be extended) CPRENEY have concerns regarding the loss of

tourism expenditure to the local economy and whether existing businesses will manage without it.

The applicant alludes to an agreement with the landowner regarding leasing the site if the project detrimentally impacts the business. No evidence of this detrimental impact has been presented in the planning documents indeed the outstanding application (NYM/2022/0568) sets out in the Design and Access Statement at Point 9.05 (conclusions) that *'we therefore consider that the development should be supported as it meets policy and due to the unique special reasons and significant material benefits proposed not only to the holiday product but also to the rural local economy and employment'*. The outstanding application to reconfigure and extend the holiday park is all premises on the income brought into an area by such holiday parks and the contribution they make to local and national GDP. As such, there is no hint that the Park is suffering as a result of the Woodsmith Mine project. Ordinarily, the NPA seeks to achieve a minimum of 29 houses per annum across the National Park – even on a temporary basis, a worker's village of this size would be contrary to the settlement hierarchy which is presumably why the company originally proposed to utilise land for this usage in Whitby outside the designated landscape. CPRENEY are, therefore, of the opinion that this proposal should not be determined until such time that evidence of alternative options has been submitted to the NPA, including evidence that utilising brownfield sites within the Scarborough District has been considered.

Finally, CPRENEY acknowledge the need for rural businesses to adapt to current uncertainties and challenging times, however, the special qualities of the designated landscape are required to be preserved and protected, thus take precedence when necessary. Furthermore, the NPA has a duty to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities – which includes the impact of economic losses as a result of losing a significantly sized holiday park, able to open 12 months of the year, for a period of 5 years.

CPRENEY reserves the right to comment further should any additional information be submitted in support of the proposal.

At this stage we neither object nor support the proposals but consider further information necessary prior to determination in the interests of preserving the special qualities of the National Park.