**PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**Full planning application for the replacement of 18no touring pitches with 18no static caravans and all associated works**

**at**

**Trotting Mare Caravan Park**

**Overton**

**Wrexham**

**LL13 0LE**

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 This statement has been prepared and submitted by Halls on behalf of Mr Millington. The application is for the replacement of 18no touring pitches to 18no static caravans and associated works.

1.2 This statement assists in identifying the context of the proposed application, to include an assessment of how the proposed development accords with the site context, alongside relevant national and local planning policies. This aims to set out other material considerations, to support the Council in their consideration of this application.

1.3 I trust the submitted details are sufficient to enable and support you in your consideration of this application. Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

## 2. Site Description and Context

2.1 The application site is edged red on the attached plan. The site is circa 0.37ha, consisting of the establishing caravan park site, existing touring pitches along with existing static caravans. The site lies just off the A528 in Knolton.

2.2 The Trotting Mare Caravan Park is an adults only park, open all year round and situated between the historic village of Overton-on-Dee (near Wrexham), and the Lakelands of Ellesmere (Shropshire). The grounds are uniquely located on the border joining North Wales and Shropshire in England upon the A528. This being the last and first gateway into and out of Wales.

2.3 The site provides a perfect base for holiday makers to explore both the Welsh and English countryside. The site benefits from an onsite public house along with fishing opportunities and several footpaths.

2.4 The proposed alterations to the existing site will have no impact on the current planting arrangement, nor will they alter the existing access or road layout. The pitches are already established, and no additional groundworks will be required.

2.5 A number of images are included at Appendix 1 below to assist in the site context.

## 3. Proposed Development

3.1 It is proposed to replace 18no touring pitches with 18no static caravans. The site layout will remain unchanged as the site already benefits from set out pitches with the required services along with substantial screening and planting.

3.2 The existing layout of the development takes into account the context of the surrounding natural and built environments and utilises to their best advantage to ensure visual amenity is maintained, in recognition of the site's rural location.

3.3 The application site benefits from a local footpath route running alongside the existing caravan park. The proposal will result in no change to the existing footpath or its use.

3.4 The scheme will enable the caravan park to become an economically viable operation in the long term, and will enable the owner to continue to operate, and invest in other environmental upgrades and improvements within the site. It will also serve to secure the future of the adjoining public house on the site, which has become an important local facility.

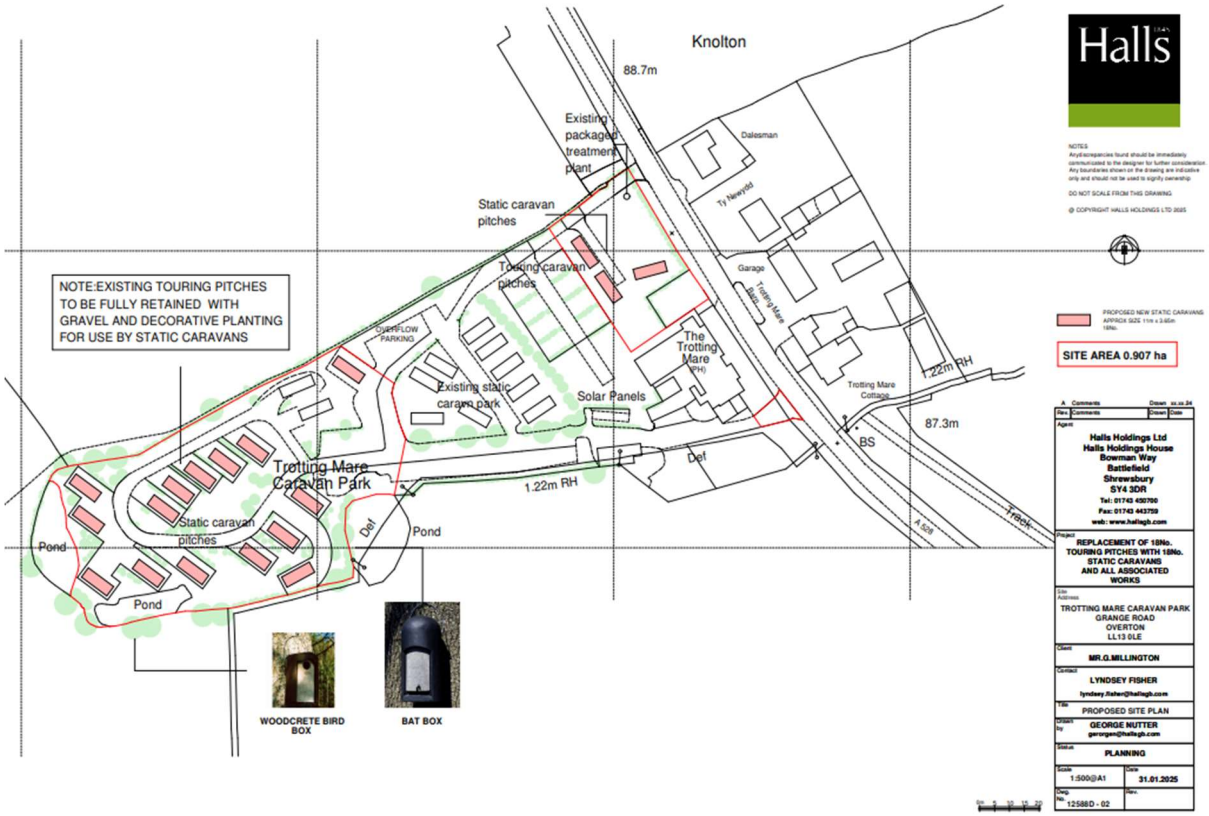
3.5 Over the years the applicants have seen a trend where many touring caravans are used by a single family and are normally towed back and forth, only being used only at peak times. Static caravans tend to be used by whole families where parents with children use them in peak times, while other family members use them for extended periods at quieter times.

3.6 With regards to Static caravans, modern static caravan units are manufactured to very high standards. To this effect many static caravans are manufactured to BS3632, with Willerby announcing in September 2022, that they have set their new "Green Standard" to apply to all new caravans from October 2022, this new standard is said to reduce the energy consumption of Holiday Homes by up to 28% compared to previous models

This new standard will mean Willerby's holiday homes:
- Are inherently more sustainable
- Consume less energy
- Are cheaper to run
- Will be warmer in winter and cooler in summer
- Will emit at least 250kg less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year. These enhancements of Static Caravans compared to touring caravans results in the minimum energy required in a move towards carbon zero rated accommodation

3.7 The proposed scheme will be served by the existing and approved package treatment plant, and drainage arrangements. The proposed development will replace existing touring pitches and will not result in an increase in the number of guests to the site.

3.8 Please see accompanying plans and sections below to support.




## 4 Planning Policy

4.1 Under section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### National Planning Policy

### Planning Policy Wales - Edition 12 – February 2024 (PPW)

4.2 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12 was published in February 2024. The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes toward the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

4.3 Sustainable Development is defined on Page 7 of PPW as follows: “the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the wellbeing goals”.

4.4 Paragraph 1.18 sets out that “Legislation secures a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations

indicate otherwise to ensure that social, economic, cultural and environmental issues are balanced and integrated".

4.5 The importance of good design in development proposals is highlighted on Paragraph 3.3 of PPW where it is stated that:
"Good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places. To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, and cultural aspects of the development, including how space is used, how buildings and the public realm support this use, as well as its construction, operation, management, and its relationship with the surrounding area".

4.6 Chapter 5 of PPW considers how to achieve 'Productive and Enterprising Places' and sets out the importance of tourism to the Welsh economy stating at Section. 5.5;

4.7 "The planning system encourages tourism where it contributes to economic development, conservation, rural diversification, urban regeneration and social inclusion, while recognising the needs of visitors and those of local communities. The planning system can also assist in enhancing the sense of place of an area which has intrinsic value and interest for tourism. In addition to supporting the continued success of existing tourist areas, appropriate tourism-related development in new destinations is encouraged. In some places however there may be a need to limit new development to avoid damage to the environment or the amenity of residents and visitors."

4.8 At Para. 5.5.3, PPW recognises that tourism is especially important in rural areas:

4.9 "In rural areas, tourism-related development is an essential element in providing for a healthy and diverse economy. In addition to more traditional forms of rural tourism, planning authorities should plan positively for active, green and cultural tourism where they are appropriate. Development should be sympathetic in nature and scale to the local environment."

**Wrexham Local Development Plan 2 (2013 to 2028)**

4.10 <u>Policy SP8: Economic Growth, Employment and Enterprise</u>

"In recognition of the contribution farm diversification and small-scale tourism/business projects can make to the economy in rural areas, the Plan contains Policy EM4 (employment development outside settlement limits) and EM5 (visitor accommodation outside settlement limits), to support, in principle the re-use of buildings in rural areas, small scale rural tourism and business development, subject to specific criteria".

4.11 This policy looks to support new development which can positively contribute to the local economy by providing new employment opportunities and maintaining and enhancing the county's tourism, culture and leisure offer. The Trotting Mare Caravan Park already employs

one full time and two part time staff, the proposed development will ensure these jobs are retained.

4.12 Policy EM5: Visitor Accommodation Outside Settlement Limits

"iv. Exceptionally new development that forms an integral part of an established and viable tourism or recreation facility provided that:

a) The visitor accommodation development is clearly subsidiary in scale to the tourist/rural recreation site; and

b) The development is of a high standard of design and does not represent a significant or harmful intrusion into the rural landscape."

4.13 "Tourist accommodation development in the open countryside that supports an existing tourist facility, attraction or asset but is also sympathetic to the natural environment and rural landscape will be encouraged."

4.14 "Touring caravan sites, glamping and camping will also generally be supported provided they are acceptably located and screened and provide adequate access and servicing."

## 5 Principle of Development

5.1 Both local and national planning policy supports development in relation to existing tourism assets in the open countryside where the proposal is compatible in terms of location, siting, design and scale and well-integrated into the landscape so that it would not detract from the overall character and appearance of the area and in particular where it complements an existing tourist development or asset without causing unacceptable adverse harm to the enjoyment of that development or assets.

5.2 Tourism is an important component of the rural economy and can help to provide new jobs and it is therefore desirable to support appropriate tourism related developments in principle, whilst sustaining the outstanding natural beauty. Tourist development is encouraged because of its contribution to the economy in terms of visitor spending, supporting local business and employment generation.

5.3 In a recent planning appeal decision, which was allowed for a similar scheme, the Planning Inspector stated; "I acknowledge that the proposal to place static caravans on a year-round basis would alter the permanence and use of that part of the appeal site. However, the degree of change would not be significant given the existing use and limited views to and from that area of the site. Furthermore, the replacement static caravans in this area would be seen in context of adjacent static caravans to the south".

5.4 The current application site lies adjacent to existing static caravan sites as part of the existing Trotting Mare Caravan Park business, the site currently benefits from planning permission for static caravans and the touring pitches with no seasonal restriction. Due to the above and to the proposed landscaping scheme it is not considered that the proposal

will have a negative impact on the locality and will improve the visual appearance of the site. In the context of the existing site arrangements supporting an established existing business, together with supportive policy context, the principle of development is established and regarded acceptable in principle.

## 6 Design and amenity considerations

6.1 Sustainable development policies within the Local Plan Strategy development design encourages innovative and creative design solutions that are appropriate to the local context.

6.2 The lodges occupying the proposed pitches are limited to 3.05m in accordance with the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act. Touring caravans, which are permitted on the site, vary in height by the larger units are up to 2.7m in height. Therefore, the height differential between the existing and proposed caravans, taking the worst-case scenario for both, is limited to circa 300mm. Therefore, in terms of height alone, the proposal would not result in a significant change.

6.3 Full plans have been provided to enable full consideration, which raise no material issues in relation to design nor amenity.

## 7 Highways and Access matters

7.1 No proposed changes to the highways arrangements approved under previous applications. The existing access benefits from existing safe visibility arrangements in both directions.

7.2 The proposal will create a betterment on the existing highways movements as vehicles to and from the site will be a singular car rather that the existing arrangement of cars towing large caravans.

7.3 The existing internal roads and pitches will remain as they are to include the landscaping. The site benefits from large turning areas with a one-way system, static caravans have been delivered to the site previously with no issues in relation to highways.

7.4 Each pitch has allocated parking areas adjacent to the caravan to ensure the whole site is accessible at all times.

7.5 Due to the nature of touring caravans, many visitors travel by private car, while towing their caravan behind them increasing their carbon footprint, with static caravans being sited permanently there is no need for towing.

## 8 Noise and Amenity Considerations

8.1 It is considered that occupiers would continue to have an open and attractive outlook and intervening features would obscure most views. As such, it is not considered that the amenities of occupiers of nearby residential properties would be detrimentally affected in terms of outlook. There is existing extensive planting along the road along with bund/buffer

areas within and surrounding the site. These create a visually enrichening view for residents and visitors to The Trotting Mare Caravan Park.

8.2 In respect of noise, there is physical separation and intervening features as described above which mitigate any impacts and generally, tourist accommodation uses are not incompatible with the use of surrounding residential properties. The proposed development would not generate any additional noise as there will be no additional persons on site or additional traffic. Any noise from traffic would not be materially different from those using the local highway network

8.3 Overall, considering the proposals of static caravans replacing touring caravans, it is considered the amenities enjoyed by the occupants of neighbouring residential properties would continue to be ensured and safeguarded in accordance with local policy.

## 9 Ecology and Landscape

9.1 This application is supported by a Green Infrastructure Statement. This statement confirms the proposal will have no impact on the site's green infrastructure and the erection of a bird and bat box will ensure the proposal will create an ecological enhancement.

9.2 Due to the existing screening of the site and the depth of the valley, the proposed development continue to safeguard the key features of the landscape.

## 10 Conclusions

10.1 The application is for the replacement of 18no touring pitches with 18no static caravans. Following visitor feedback along with market research the applications have found there is high demand for static caravans on the site compared to the existing touring pitches. The site already benefits form a mix of touring and static pitches

10.2 The proposal will not require any construction or development as they site is already laid out, screened and set out to accommodate the static caravans

10.3 The proposed development will produce a biodiversity and landscape enhancement due to the substantial planting that is proposed, there will be no effect on public rights of way, highways or flooding. The application is supported by a Green Infrastructure Statement.

10.4 This appraisal has demonstrated that potential impact of the proposed development is limited. There will be no impact on landscape character and visual impact will be minimal due to the existing extensive planting.

10.5 As the proposal is in full compliance with the adopted polices within the Local Plan and National planning polices and given there are no barriers to the proposed development, Wrexham Council are kindly invited to support and approve this application.

**Appendix 1** – Site photos

Existing touring pitches proposed to site a static caravan



Existing static caravans on site, screen with existing planting




Existing touring caravans on the site



Existing screening within the site

