

Our ref.: MW/AeroCamp

17th December 2025

Planning Services
Wiltshire Council
Monkton Park
Monkton Hill
Chippenham
Wiltshire
SN15 1ER

Chartered Town Planners
30 The Causeway
Chippenham
Wiltshire
SN15 3DB

Telephone: (01249) 444975
Email: Willisplan@aol.com

Dear Sir,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Blackberries Camping Park, Farleigh Rise, Monkton Farleigh,
Wiltshire, BA15 2DY

1. We are instructed by Mr J. Nicholson of Aero Camp Limited to prepare and submit this full planning application for the erection of ancillary buildings and the installation of low-level lighting at the above site.

2. Please find enclosed in support of this application;

- the completed planning application forms
- the location plan as existing, plan no. JN-JH-01
- the block plan as proposed, plan no. JN-JH-02
- floor plans and elevations of the buildings as existing, plan no. JN-JH-03
- floor plans and elevations of the buildings as proposed, plan no. JN-JH-04
- details of low-level lighting to be installed on the pathway within the site
- a Design and Access/Planning Statement (this letter)
- the appropriate application fee of £1,176.

3. Aero Camp Limited have recently purchased this site and intend to upgrade some of the facilities, and also to place glamping pods on some of the existing pitches. This application involves four related proposals as set out below;

- the replacement of the clubhouse on the same footprint, after the demolition of the existing clubhouse building
- the replacement of the reception building after the demolition of the existing reception building
- the erection of a sauna after the demolition of the existing toilet/washroom/pot wash building
- the installation of low-level lighting around the pathway within the site.

4. To be clear, the applicants also intend to site 'glamping pods' on a small number of the pitches as previously approved. Each of these pods fall within the definition of a caravan within the Caravan Sites and Control of

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Development legislation, and on that basis we are satisfied that these are permitted by virtue of the existing planning permissions for the use of the planning unit and do not require further planning permission from the Council. The 2016 planning permission expressly permits the siting of tents, pods or caravans on the site. I would make two further points in this respect. First, because of the topography of the site and the extensive tree and shrub coverage, the pods will not be visible from outside of the site. Second, by replacing a small number of the touring caravan /tent/motorhome pitches with glamping pods, there will be a reduction in the movement of caravans and motorhomes travelling to and from the site. This is likely to have a positive impact in terms of the use of the local highway network.

5. The application site of approx. 2.0ha is an established small-scale camp site consisting of 30 touring caravan/tent/pod/motorhome pitches located in the open countryside and accessed off Farleigh Rise. Ancillary to the site are a number of small buildings including a clubhouse, toilets, washing and shelter facilities; an area for storage of ancillary materials and a small reception building. The application area is a former MoD site and has areas of hard standing throughout.

6. The application site is located with the Bristol and Bath Green Belt and the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB). The nearest residential properties to the camping site are located to the north, over 100 metres distant. The site is bordered by areas of wood and open fields.

Relevant Planning History

7. The following planning permissions are relevant to the determination of this application;

W/13/00050/FUL – Change of use to small camping facility, conversion of existing building to toilet/shower facilities and erection of stable block and associated works – Approved

16/01161/FUL – Additional 5 pitches at Blackberries Camping Park; new reception building; small disabled toilet/shower attached to existing facilities – Approved

18/09137/FUL - Retention of additional touring and camping pitches, retention of existing site facility building and storage container and new pot washing facilities - Approved.

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Principle of development

8. The principle of the use of the site for tourist accommodation for 10 pitches and associated facilities was established by the granting of permission W/13/00050/FUL in 2013, the permission for a further 5 pitches (16/01161/FUL), and for an additional 15 pitches (a total of 30 pitches) and associated development was approved (18/09137/FUL) on 8th May 2019. The principle of development for use of the site for camping and leisure use has therefore been established. The site will continue to operate with the benefit of these three planning permissions.

Impact on the Green Belt

9. Paragraph 142 of the Framework states; *'The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'*

10. Paragraph 153 of the Framework states *'When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.'*

11. Paragraph 154 goes on to state a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions include, amongst others, the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport or outdoor recreation as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

12. The proposed development is considered outdoor recreation and as such it is considered an exception to policy restricting development in the Green Belt. However, in accordance with paragraph 153 of the Framework it has to be determined whether the development would preserve the open character of the Green Belt.

13. The replacement of three existing - lawful - modest buildings. The total floorspace of these buildings measures approx. 91 sq. metres. The three buildings are located in the centre of the site and not visible outside of the site. The replacement structures are not significantly higher than the existing structures to be removed. Due to their limited size and

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footprint, it is considered the scheme would not result in any harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Similarly, the low-level lighting around the pathway within the site has no impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Impact on character of the area/Cotswolds National Landscape

14. Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy states development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character and any negative impacts must be mitigated through sensible design and landscape measures. In particular, development proposals must demonstrate that the local distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings have been conserved and where possible enhanced.

15. Core Policy 57 requires a high standard of design in all new developments and that development respond positively to the existing landscape. The site is bounded by mature well-established hedgerows and trees on all boundaries. The replacement buildings are relatively small in size and height and are timber clad. The site itself is heavily screened by existing trees from views from the highway while views through the site are also restricted by existing trees and shrubs. The design of the units and proposed timber cladding are considered to be appropriate, recessive and broadly acceptable.

16. Due to the replacement buildings being heavily screened from the public realm, it is considered the development would have no adverse impact on the character of the area or character of the National Landscape. The proposed development therefore complies with Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and advice contained in the Framework.

Impact on neighbour amenity

17. Core Policy 57 'Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping' of the WCS states development should have regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses and the impact on the amenities of existing occupants, including the consideration of noise or odour related pollution. The site is located over 100 metres from the nearest residential properties fronting Farleigh Rise to the north. Due to this separation distance it is considered noise and other disturbances generated by users of the site would not be harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring residents. The proposed development therefore complies with Core Policy 57 of the WCS.

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Highways safety/parking

18. The replacement buildings and the siting of glamping pods on some of the pitches would not generate a greater number of vehicle journeys and there would be no intensification of use of the adjacent roads. Indeed, taking some of the caravans and motorhomes off the local highway network is likely to result in a slight reduction in highway movements.

Ecology

19. Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework require that the local planning authority ensures protection of important habitats and species in relation to development and seeks enhancement for the benefit of biodiversity through the planning system.

20. There was no objection to the original 2013 scheme for the change of use of the site to camping facility (W/13/00050/FUL) from Natural England. The main concern of the council's ecologist was the impact of the scheme on the WW2 pill box on the site where there was evidence of use by bats and light spillage affecting bats. The additional 5 pitches, new reception building and small disabled toilet/shower approved under application 16/01161/FUL also received no objection from the council's ecologist, subject to conditions. The pill box has been fenced off and it is considered the replacement buildings are a sufficient distance from the pill box to cause no harm to potential roosting bats.

21. A badger sett is located along the southern boundary of the site in close proximity to pitches 27-30. As such a badger survey and assessment was carried out by the previous owners in connection with the 2018 planning application. This report concluded no harm has been caused to the badgers due to their close proximity to the pitches (subject to a number of conditions, which were previously imposed and continue to apply).

22. A small artificial pond is located in the centre of the site which has been fenced off. The site is an existing camping site and it is considered the replacement buildings, glamping pods (which are not part of this application) and the low level lighting around the existing pathways will have no significant impact on reptiles or nesting birds in the area. The proposed development therefore complies with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. As the development simply involves replacing three existing buildings on the same footprint, there is no loss of habitat and therefore no requirement for Biological Net Gain.

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Drainage issues

23. The former MOD site has the benefit of an extensive mains drainage system across the site and this will be used for the replacement buildings and the proposed glamping pods.

Conclusion (Planning Balance)

24. The proposal to replace three modest buildings and to install low-level lighting around the footpath within the site as described herein would not cause any significant harm to the character of the area or openness of the Green Belt or the Cotswolds National Landscape. There would be no significant harm to the amenities of adjacent residents or pedestrian or highway safety in the immediate area. The site has the benefit of an extensive mains drainage system.

25. Wiltshire Council recognises that tourism is an important part of the rural economy. Wiltshire's visitor economy generates significant revenues for the county, creating jobs and supporting not only accommodation providers and tourist attractions but also cultural venues, events, local transport, retailers, restaurants, and local food producers.

26. The development is an expansion of an established, successful economic activity that attracts visitors into the area and which will make use of local facilities that help to support the rural community. Further to the economic benefits of the scheme there are social benefits in terms of providing improved recreational facilities and environmental benefits in terms of the management of local landscape and ecology.

27. It is therefore considered that the proposed development fully accords with both national and local planning policy guidance and should therefore be approved, subject, if necessary to conditions (bearing in mind that the conditions attached to the 2013, 2016 and 2019 planning permission continue to apply where applicable). We would appreciate the opportunity to review any planning conditions before the decision is issued.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marc D. Willis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marc D. Willis BTP MRTPI FBIAC