

PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Mulberry House

Application Ref: DM/26/0207

The application site currently contains three small holiday cabins previously used for short-term holiday accommodation and glamping purposes.

This application seeks planning permission for the change of use from C1 (holiday accommodation) to C3 (residential), through the consolidation of two approved glamping cabins into a single-storey three-bedroom dwelling, together with the retention of one cabin as ancillary accommodation in the form of a home gym solely for the use of the new dwelling.

The proposed change of use is sought because the existing holiday let/glamping business is no longer economically viable or sustainable in its current form.

The site has operated on a very small scale, with only three units available for holiday occupation. In recent years the business has experienced increasing difficulty in maintaining consistent occupancy levels and generating sufficient income to offset rising operational and maintenance costs.

Operational expenses associated with the cabins have increased substantially, including:

- electricity and utility costs;
- insurance;
- cleaning costs;
- laundry;
- replacement stock and furnishings;
- guest consumable products;
- ongoing maintenance and repairs; and
- general compliance costs associated with short-term holiday accommodation.

Electricity costs in particular have risen significantly in recent years. However, in order to remain competitive within the current holiday accommodation market and continue attracting bookings, nightly rental prices have had to remain relatively low or be reduced. This has resulted in diminishing profitability, with the business no longer being capable of generating a sustainable level of income.

A significant factor affecting viability has been the pattern of bookings. Demand has become heavily concentrated around short weekend stays, particularly Fridays and Saturdays, with limited midweek occupancy throughout much of the year. Consequently, the cabins frequently remain vacant during weekdays, resulting in prolonged periods of underutilisation whilst still requiring heating and ongoing maintenance, making it increasingly difficult to sustain a viable year-round business model.

In addition, the frequent turnover associated with short-stay guest accommodation has resulted in ongoing wear and tear to both the cabins and surrounding site. The level of maintenance, cleaning, repairs and replacement of fixtures, furnishings and external areas

required following guest occupation has increased considerably over time, further contributing to rising operational costs.

Key issues affecting the ongoing viability of the business include:

- increasing competition from larger and more modern holiday accommodation providers within the wider area;
- seasonal demand and reliance upon short weekend stays rather than consistent longer-duration occupancy;
- extended periods of low or no midweek occupancy;
- rising utility, insurance, maintenance and compliance costs;
- increased cleaning, repair and upkeep requirements associated with high guest turnover;
- significantly increased electricity costs;
- the need to maintain competitive pricing within the market;
- the limited scale of the operation, restricting the ability to achieve meaningful economies of scale; and
- reduced profitability such that the existing tourism use no longer provides a reliable or sustainable source of income.

Significant capital investment has been made in establishing and operating the holiday accommodation business over the past three years. Despite continued efforts to maintain and promote the business, increasing operational costs, changing market conditions and reduced consumer discretionary spending have materially affected the viability of the business.

At the same time, the level of competition within the short-stay and staycation sector has increased substantially, resulting in pressure to maintain competitive pricing at levels which are insufficient to offset the rising costs associated with operating and maintaining the site. Consequently, the existing use is no longer capable of providing a sustainable or commercially viable long-term business model.

Given the limited scale of the operation and prevailing market conditions, there is no realistic prospect of the existing tourism use becoming commercially viable in the foreseeable future.

Despite ongoing efforts to continue operating the site as holiday accommodation, including online advertising and social media platforms, the business has not proven capable of generating sufficient economic return to justify retention of the existing tourism use on a long-term basis.

The proposal therefore seeks to secure a more sustainable and viable long-term use for the site through the creation of a new dwelling utilising the existing developed footprint, whilst significantly reducing the overall intensity of activity associated with multiple transient holiday lets.

The proposal would not result in the loss of a significant tourism facility given the very limited scale of the existing operation. Rather, the development would secure the continued beneficial use and maintenance of the site through an appropriate and sustainable form of residential development and help with the much-needed housing shortage.

Overall, the proposal represents a proportionate and sustainable redevelopment of an existing developed site and provides a practical and viable long-term solution for land which is no longer capable of supporting a commercially sustainable tourism-based use.

Kind Regards

Mark Vickery

Applicant