

REPORT AND ASSESSMENT

FOR

JAMES AND ALKA HUGHES-HALLETT

IN RESPECT OF

**LEISURE FACILITIES AT THOULSTONE PARK
CHAPMANSLADE
WILTSHIRE**

Prepared by

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and
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14 September 2018

Reference: CYEO/C/133

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14 September 2018

Our Ref: RH/rb/CYEO/C/133
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For James and Alka Hughes-Hallett

Dear Sirs

PROPERTY: THOULSTONE PARK, CHAPMANSLADE, WILTSHIRE

1. INSTRUCTIONS

We refer to your instructions dated 31st August 2018 to carry out an assessment of the impact the proposed leisure elements of Thoulstone Park, referred to under planning application reference 18/05086/FUL, is likely to have on existing local facilities, more specifically those located in Frome, Westbury and Warminster.

In line with our agreed scope of work, we write to advise you as to our opinion of the likely impact the following are likely to make on the existing local market:

- The self-catering holiday accommodation
- The restaurant
- The swimming pool
- The gym
- The spa treatment rooms
- The sustainable golf course

2. RELIANCE UPON INFORMATION PROVIDED

In undertaking our report and assessment we have relied upon information supplied by our client and our client's professional advisors. We have also relied upon information obtained from the local authority websites, the 2011 Census, from commercial media and other agents active in the local area.

We confirm that the authors have the relevant experience, knowledge, skills and understanding to undertake the assessment competently. The assessment has been undertaken by Ryan Holmes AssocRICS and Stephen Richards Bsc (Hons) MRICS. The co-authors' experience in the leisure industry and commercial property market collectively spans over thirty years, operating predominantly in south-west England.

As a firm Humberts has been specialising in the sale of leisure properties with holiday letting accommodation for over 20 years and has a dedicated leisure department within their commercial division.

The firm's expertise extends from holiday letting complexes, lodge parks and caravan sites to complete holiday villages. Properties dealt with by Humberts include holiday flats which have been converted from former seaside hotels through to farms which have diversified and converted their outbuildings into self-contained holiday letting cottages and specialist holiday developments. Many of the developments include additional leisure facilities such as indoor swimming pools, café, restaurant or tearoom facilities, games and sports facilities.

3. OUTLINE OF SUBJECT LEISURE ELEMENTS

Location

Thoulstone Park is located approximately ½ mile east of the village of Chapmanslade and approximately 1 ½ miles west of Upton Scudamore. Nearby settlements include Frome, Westbury, and Warminster.

The scale of the development described below is appropriate to the overall development of the site.

Leisure Elements

- A total of 28 five-star self-catering holiday accommodation units comprising 16 two-bedroom and 12 three-bedroom cottages and apartments distributed over 8 blocks to the west of the Market Yard buildings.
- A café/restaurant (334 sq m) and a farm shop comprising retail space net sales area of 347 sq m (subject of a separate retail impact study), both located within the Market Yard buildings.

- Small scale health spa facilities comprising 5 treatment rooms measuring approximately 12.3 sq m each and a reception area, all located within the Community Leisure building. These facilities are to be operated on a combination of being open to the public with a preferential guest usage timetable described in more detail below.
- A small, relatively shallow indoor community swimming pool measuring 20 m x 6 m x 0.9m deep and a gym measuring approximately 104 sq m, with associated changing room, shower and sanitary facilities located within the Leisure Building to the east of the Community Leisure building. Similar to the spa, these facilities are to be operated on a combination of being open to the public with a preferential guest usage timetable.
- A Crofters style sustainable 10-hole golf course with a small starters building located to the north and west of the holiday accommodation units. These facilities are to be open to the general public on a pay and play basis.

4. EXISTING LOCAL FACILITIES

As the purpose of this report is to ascertain the likely impact on existing leisure facilities, in particular those that service the local centres of Warminster, Westbury and Frome, we have referred to the detail contained in the Mendip Town Centre Study, Volume 1 (Final Report) and Volume 2: Retail Goods Expenditure, Market Shares and Capacity Estimates (Final Report), both published in September 2010, as well as data from the 2011 Census and local website searches.

Frome

Frome is the largest of the three towns with a population of 26,203 (Frome Facts: 2011 Census Data, Somerset County Council).

The town has a leisure centre operated by Fusion Lifestyle that offers multiple facilities including three exercise studios, gym, a six-lane, 25 metre swimming pool, a smaller teaching pool, a gym with cardiovascular machines, resistance machines, separate free weights area, stretching area, a sports hall, tennis court and large area with outdoor all-weather pitches. Sporting activities at the leisure centre cover squash, badminton, basketball, tennis and football. There are at least seven smaller additional gym and studio locations within Frome, however the facilities of these are limited to exercise rooms with training machines and/or fitness studios operated on membership schemes.

Warminster

Warminster has a resident population of 24,454 (2011 Census).

The town has a leisure centre operated by Places Leisure that offers multiple facilities including a gym with exercise equipment, a four-lane, 25 metre swimming pool, fitness studio, sports hall and squash courts. There are four smaller additional gym and studio locations within Warminster, however the facilities of these are also limited to exercise rooms with training machines and/or fitness studios operated on membership schemes.

Westbury

Westbury has a resident population of 19,581 according to the 2011 Census.

Leighton Recreation Centre in the town, as with Warminster, is operated by Places Leisure and similarly offers multiple facilities including a gym with exercise equipment, fitness studio, sports hall, function room, football pitches, tennis courts and squash courts. There are another four smaller additional gym and studio locations within the town, however the facilities of these are limited to exercise rooms with training machines and/or fitness studios operated on membership schemes.

Self-catering accommodation

Similar five star self catering developments to Thoulstone Park falling within the area that serves the three towns is limited to Center Parcs at Longleat, south of Warminster (which has 805 lodges/apartments currently operates at a reported year-round 98.8% occupancy [Source: CentreParcs Interim Results FY18 Investor Presentation]) and Holt Farm Estate. There are further smaller-scale and independent one and two-bedroom holiday units offering five star self-catering accommodation, but these are without additional on site recreation and leisure facilities. The independent facilities are therefore less likely to appeal to family groups and more suited to single generation, mature or young holiday makers.

Golf courses

Nearby Warminster, the White Horse Country Park offers fishing, golf, driving range facilities and a bowls club. Additional golf facilities are located at Orchardleigh to the north, West Wiltshire Golf Club at Warminster and Westbury Golf Club. All of the local golf facilities offer 18 hole courses, with green fees ranging from £22 to £40 per round and are run based on the traditional golf club membership models.

Spa facilities

There are 5 separate spa facilities in the area, including a large 15 room facility at Longleat, and although there are in excess of 18 further beauty therapy and nail bar businesses within the three towns these do not offer a wide range of treatments or cater for the luxury health spa and treatment market.

Restaurants

There are around twenty broadly comparable independent restaurants serving the local area and the majority of these are located within the subject towns, however we have noted that less than 10 per cent of these restaurants advertise using exclusively sourced local produce and well over 50 per cent of the restaurants cater for a speciality national cuisine (i.e. Indian, Chinese, Thai, Italian etc.). Those restaurants ranked in the top ten within the locality, according to over 3,500 consumer reviews published by Google and Trip Advisor, show a significant diversity of quality. There are just 11 local restaurants with ratings of 4.5 and above, it is noted that just three local restaurants feature in the 2018 Michelin Guide and just one local restaurant was awarded a two-rosette rating by the AA Best Restaurants guide.

Local facility use in context

a) Restaurants and Cafes

The Mendip Town Centres Study states that 63 per cent of those people surveyed claimed to spend money in restaurants and cafes. The household survey within the report reveals that visits to restaurants and cafes are fairly localised, with many residents favouring their nearest local centre.

b) Family Entertainment

The Mendip Town Centres Study identified that 70 per cent of the local population do not use family entertainment centres such as ten pin bowling alleys, skating rinks and activity parks etc. It also comments that given that there are few such facilities within the local area, the results of the survey are unsurprising. It also identified that for those that do visit family entertainment centres, the pattern is very dispersed with destinations such as Bristol, Yeovil, Bath, Taunton and Longwell Green further afield all competing for the local market share.

c) Health and Fitness

The Mendip Town Centres Study identified that 70 per cent of the local population do not use health and fitness facilities, however of the 30 per cent that do partake in such activities, the pattern of use and spend is fairly localised, with people visiting facilities nearest to their residence and convenience being a chief driver in choice of facility.

5. SUBJECT FACILITIES – TARGET MARKET

The Design and Access Statement lodged under the planning application Ref 18/05086/FUL sets out a number of reasons why the proposed scheme would be more appropriate than the proposed hotel, spa and leisure facilities which had previously gained outline planning consent. We refer to our understanding of the draft proposals and the information contained within the documentation lodged in respect of the same application below.

It is understood that the leisure components of the scheme will benefit from support not only from those who stay in the holiday accommodation facilities but will also rely on local support and from visitors to the local area. This combination is an important part in creating a sustainable operation that supports year round employment and provides year round benefit to local suppliers and customers.

Self-catering Holiday Accommodation

Leaving the merits of the design and layout of the subject scheme aside, the living accommodation and facilities within self-catering units will clearly provide a better option for affluent families seeking holiday accommodation when compared to the 54 bedroom hotel model. The units offer independent self catering accommodation better suited to family units and the two and three bedroom, five-star rated holiday accommodation units are therefore designed to provide luxury, family-friendly accommodation for affluent families within the domestic rural holiday market. It is proven that self catering guests provide a greater positive impact on local economies.

The Restaurant

The intention of the restaurant is to provide an organic, sustainable and eco friendly facility to cater for guests staying on site, local residents and visitors to the area by using fresh local ingredients, some of which will be produced on site and the remainder sourced from local suppliers. It is likely that the prices within the restaurant will reflect the quality of the ingredients and service and therefore we consider the target market for the restaurant will directly appeal to families who are resident on site and those who plan to visit site to use the other facilities on offer, such as the gym, spa .

Heath Spa

The small scale health spa facilities will provide treatment facilities, primarily for guests staying in the holiday accommodation and although it is acknowledged that there is likely to be some local clientele as well, during peak holiday season, given the limited space occupied by the spa, it is likely that the spa will service almost exclusively the residents on site. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, these facilities are to be operated on a combination of being open to the public with a preferential guest usage timetable during peak periods.

Indoor Swimming Pool and Gym

The shallow indoor swimming pool and small gym will provide recreational swimming and exercise facilities primarily for residents staying within the holiday accommodation and although it is acknowledged that in respect of the swimming facilities there is likely to be some local patronage as well, during peak holiday season, given the relatively small size of the swimming pool guests staying in the holiday accommodation will be given preference at certain times.

Crofters Style Golf Course

The golf course will be operated on a pay and play basis, thereby making it available to both the members of the general public and residents of the scheme. It is intended to provide a less formal atmosphere to play golf than a traditional golf club, thereby making it an ideal recreational facility for families and occasional golfers.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Projections published within the reports referred to in this report anticipate expenditure by people within the Mendip area to grow to £366.7m by 2021 in respect of restaurant and café use, with a retention of 41.9% of that expenditure within the region itself. Local expenditure on sports and recreational activities is expected to grow to £41.95m by 2021.

A trend of expenditure leakage to larger centres such as Bath, Bristol, Taunton and Yeovil is a common theme throughout the Mendip Town Centres Study and it is clear that the provision of additional facilities, particularly those offering services and facilities catering for the luxury holiday market, of which there are few local options, will result in the attraction of additional expenditure to the local area as a whole. As there are few local options offering luxury self-catering accommodation for families, the effect on businesses within Westbury, Warminster and Frome is anticipated to be minor. It is clear that with the provision of additional holiday accommodation targeted at the affluent family market, the attraction of affluent consumers will be of benefit by increasing sales opportunities for local suppliers of services and goods that are not available at the park. The 28 families per week during peak periods will often stay for up to a week and during that week and will spend time and money in local shops, restaurants, with service providers and with activity providers. Natural Retreats' guests are encouraged to explore the region and the positive economic impact will be felt over a wider area. In previous instances Natural Retreats have demonstrated that they have made a net positive contribution to local suppliers and business therefore dismissing the issue of possible displacement.

The provision of the leisure facilities will also have a positive effect on local employment opportunities with additional employment at Thoulstone being made available to the local population.

As it is the intention of the restaurant is to provide an organic, sustainable and eco friendly facility to cater for residents and visitors to the site by using fresh local ingredients, the offering is noticeably different from the majority of existing local facilities and will therefore have a negligible impact on the three subject towns.

Given the limited size of the health spa facilities, they are anticipated to service almost exclusively the residents on site and therefore the impact on local facilities within the three subject towns is negligible.

The gym and swimming pool facilities are not likely to attract existing users of local facilities due to the fact that most users choose their facilities based on convenience and location and given the facilities proposed are relatively small scale.

The golf course is intended to provide a less formal atmosphere to play golf than a traditional golf club, thereby making it an ideal recreational facility for families and occasional golfers. The existing local facilities are all based on more formal models centred around membership of the respective golf club, and the proposed facilities will cater for a less formal market of occasional, recreational and beginner golfers who often avoid membership-based clubs due to the cost and perceived formality of such institutions. The golf course is therefore very unlikely to have a negative impact on the existing local facilities.

Our report comprised our opinions given all the facts, circumstances and market conditions known at the date of this report.

Yours faithfully



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For and on behalf of Humberts