PROPOSED CAR PARK: CANNON HALL FARM

Background information:

Since 1989 Cannon Hall Farm has been at the forefront of tourism in Barnsley leading the field in job creation, winning a host of awards and providing the perfect family day out for millions of customers. The farm features an Adventure Playground, Gift Shop, Farm Shop, Delicatessen and Tearoom selling home produced food. Now with recession looming we must invest for the future to improve the visitor experience and ensure that the hard work of the past two decades is not left to founder on the rocks of the economic downturn.

Over the last few years it has become increasingly obvious that the award winning parking plan laid out in 1998 was no longer adequate to cope with the demand placed on it at busy times such as school breaks and bank holidays. On several occasions during the last few years traffic has backed up to the A635 road causing major disruption. It has become obvious to us that investment in the infrastructure at Cannon Hall Farm is needed to move traffic off the road more efficiently. The existing areas of grass are adequate in dry periods but there has been a significant trend of increased visitors during the winter and early spring when parking in fields is not an option. If we are to continue to grow visitor numbers (and full time jobs) all year round we must-in partnership with the planning department-find a solution which addresses the problems which have been magnified during a summer of poor weather. At busy times the car park at Cannon Hall Park is soon full and attendants move all the traffic to the farm car park. At times like this we need more hard standing parking available to prevent long delays on the road and cars getting stuck in muddy fields.

We are very aware of our responsibility to make sure that any development is handled in an environmentally sensitive fashion. The plan enclosed provides increased parking within a framework which is designed to minimize the impact on the landscape and fit in with previous development.

Our Farm Shop is coming under pressure from a credit crunch induced reduction in expendable income and we have to ensure that lack of car parking does not become a reason not to visit. Places where the public can buy beef, pork and lamb direct from the producer are still few and far between and we are proud of our record in being one of the first farms to offer this service in the area. Cannon Hall Farm is almost unique in the access to the animals it provides for visitors and while the supermarkets claim that certain welfare standards are adhered to, customers can simply walk around the farmyard for reassurance that the animals are well cared for.

The farm is a major educational attraction with over 35,000 children visiting with schools each year and dates in May, June and July booked up many months ahead.

Our successful attraction has shown consistent growth and job creation and now employs in excess of 150 full and part time workers during the summer and over 100 in the winter. Since the last car park development we have added over 120 full and part time jobs to the local economy however we are just as vulnerable to the forthcoming recession as any business. We cannot be complacent in our efforts to tackle the economic downturn through investment in infrastructure and improved marketing of the business.

We hope you will look favourably on the scheme enclosed and agree with us that this represents the best option to provide an improved visitor experience and safeguard jobs.

Roger Nicholson,
Richard Nicholson,
Robert Nicholson,
David Nicholson,

Directors: Cannon Hall Farm Ltd.

An example of extreme parking difficulties was May day bank holiday 2008

This is at a time of year when you would expect grass parking to be no problem but within the increasing tendency being for warmer wetter springs and summers this is not always the case.

The efficient parking of cars at our site only works well if we can move them of the road quickly & efficiently, if this is not the case then the traffic can be backed up to the A635 in a matter of minutes causing gridlock and car abandonment regardless of double yellow lines.

As you can see from the photographs this is an extreme but not altogether uncommon event where road safety and customer satisfaction are compromised. We believe that our scheme will help significantly because our proposed car park extension is on land that is not often fit to park cars on due to its poor drainage therefore giving us vital extra spaces.

We also believe that this provision of sensitively designed car parking is preferable to the existing grass parking (see sheet with dates on) as it will be, once the planting has matured, more discreet and rich in animal, birds, insects and flora providing wonderful habitats for all the above. A walk around our existing car park planted about 10 years ago will confirm this.

As you can see from the photographs and the field maps we actually parked cars in 3 fields that we do not normally go near, this resulted in damage to the land and poor customer satisfaction due to long walks, boggy ground, ruined shoes etc.

It is very hard to compete against lottery funded attractions with ample parking close by when having to make do with these facilities.

When we first built the car park 10 years ago it was sufficient for our needs but now even a reasonable Saturday in November can require grass parking, add to this the increase number of winter events that are being organised by Cannon Hall Museum and their reduction in overflow capacity then the pressure is awful on days when all relevant factors go against us i.e. nice day immediately after heavy rain or a wet spell and we are forced to turn customers away which is not something any business can afford to do.

I hope that you will agree with us that this proposal, which is far more discreet than the current grass parking which takes place on a very regular basis on field number 23 on the map enclosed, will greatly enhance the site and when mature will give the external appearance of a wood but through good design will give us benefits through customer satisfaction and much reduced grass parking.

At a time when the towns economy is hanging by a thread the fact that 70% of our revenue comes from outside the borough we believe is important and added to the inward investment, we also like to think that we portray a positive face to Barnsley which helps to counteract a sometimes negative media image.

At Cannon Hall Farm we currently employ 160 full & part time people and if we are to retain and build on our status as a serious contributor to Barnsleys economy then we think that this scheme is a very sensitive way of achieving these objectives.

Car parking dates

These dates are all days when grass parking took place. 10 years ago when the grass parking was only needed for occasional use i.e. Bank Holidays and odd Sundays now as you can see from this information it has become almost common place. We believe that it would be far more desirable to use a sympathetically designed car park with safe pedestrian routes to the farm than the existing arrangement which is an excessive use of a grass field which can comprise both safety, customer satisfaction and given a less aesthetically pleasing solution.

02.01.08	01.03.08	06.04.08	18.05.08	18.06.08	14.07.08
04.01.08	02.03.08	08.04.08	22.05.08	19.06.08	15.07.08
05.01.08	08.03.08	09.04.08	23.05.08	20.06.08	16.07.08
06.01.08	09.03.08	10.04.08	24.05.08	21.06.08	19.07.08
12.01.08	15.03.08	12.04.08	25.05.08	22.06.08	20.07.08
13.01.08	16.03.08	13.04.08	26.05.08	23.06.08	21.07.08
19.01.08	19.03.08	15.04.08	29.05.08	24.06.08	22.07.08
20.01.08	20.03.08	19.04.08	30.05.08	25.06.08	23.07.08
27.01.08	21.03.08	20.04.08	31.05.08	26.06.08	24.07.08
02.02.08	22.03.08	24.04.08	02.06.08	27.06.08	25.07.08
03.02.08	23.03.08	26.04.08	04.06.08	28.06.08	26.07.08
09.02.08	24.03.08	27.04.08	05.06.08	29.06.08	27.07.08
10.02.08	25.03.08	01.05.08	06.06.08	30.06.08	28.07.08
11.02.08	26.03.08	02.05.08	07.06.08	01.07.08	29.07.08
12.02.08	27.03.08	03.05.08	08.06.08	02.07.08	30.07.08
13.02.08	28.03.08	04.05.08	09.06.08	03.07.08	31.07.08
14.02.08	29.03.08	05.05.08	10.06.08	04.07.08	01.08.08
15.02.08	30.03.08	06.05.08	11.06.08	06.07.08	02.08.08
17.02.08	31.03.08	07.05.08	12.06.08	07.07.08	03.08.08
18.02.08	01.04.08	08.05.08	13.06.08	08.07.08	04.08.08
19.02.08	02.04.08	10.05.08	14.06.08	09.07.08	05.08.08
21.02.08	03.04.08	11.05.08	15.06.08	10.07.08	06.08.08
23.02.08	04.04.08	14.05.08	16.06.08	12.07.08	07.08.08
24.02.08	05.04.08	17.05.08	17.06.08	13.07.08	08.08.08

09.08.08	01.09.08	15.11.08
10.08.08	02.09.08	16.11.08
11.08.08	06.09.08	
13.08.08	07.09.08	
14.08.08	13.09.08	
15.08.08	14.09.08	
16.08.08	20.09.08	
17.08.08	21.09.08	
18.08.08	27.09.08	
19.08.08	28.09.08	
20.08.08	04.10.08	
21.08.08	05.10.08	
22.08.08	11.10.08	
23.08.08	12.10.08	
24.08.08	18.10.08	
25.08.08	19.10.08	
26.08.08	26.10.08	
27.08.08	27.10.08	
28.08.08	28.10.08	
29.08.08	29.10.08	
30.08.08	31.10.08	
31.08.08	01.11.08	