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HOTEL GROUP REVEALS PLAN FOR HELIPAD AT TOWN SITE

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Wealthy tourists could soon be flying to Padstow after a landmark hotel has lodged a bid to create a helipad.

The planning application has been submitted by the Richardson hotel group which owns the Metropole Hotel in Station Road. It is a revised bid after previous plans were withdrawn last summer to gather further information about potential noise disturbance.

The plan is to change part of the gardens in the hotel grounds for a helicopter to land and take off.

If granted permission it will initially be used for company MD Keith Richardson's personal use, who is expecting to make a maximum of two trips a week.

The visits would be between 8am and one hour before sunset and would have a take-off and landing of about four minutes.

However, if successful he hopes to eventually offer the service to potential hotel guests.

Mr Richardson said: "By offering this service we would be able to attract new clients to the hotel and to Padstow.

"More and more people are enquiring about flying to Cornwall on their private planes and helicopters and we have to consider it for our development plans.

"It could help the tourist trade and boost Cornwall's profile. We are currently working alongside Rick Stein to bring more visitors to the table. Working together we can provide a better service."

Mr Richardson has owned the Metropole for five years, during which time he has spent over £1m renovating the property and installing eight new bedrooms.

He said: "The hotel had not been painted for about 50 years. We are investing in it all the time and the helipad is just another way of moving things forward. The more we invest the more jobs we are able to create all year round.

The 58-bedroom hotel currently employs between 60 and 70 staff and was awarded a four star rating last year.

Mr Richardson said: "By helping to increase the number of visitors and a range of clientele we are also benefiting other local businesses, restaurants, shops and tourist facilities."

Last year Mr Richardson successfully gained planning permission for the Falmouth Hotel, one of the seven he owns. The previous helipad application was not supported by Padstow Town Council. Councillors were concerned the proposed site overlooked the main road and car park which could cause health and safety concerns.

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