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CHARTERED TOWN PLANNERS
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Development Management
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
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OX 15 4AA

24 July 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: PROPOSED GYPSY CARAVAN SITE
MAIN STREET, CROPREDY, OXFORDSHIRE OX17 1UU**

Please find enclosed completed planning application forms, plans, and requisite fee in respect of the above-mentioned proposal.

USE, SCALE AND LAYOUT

This application is for the change of use of land to use as a Gypsy caravan site to provide 4 pitches with a total of 8 caravans, of which no more than 4 would be mobile homes. The proposed development would also include the laying of additional hard-standing. The layout of the proposed caravan site would be as shown on the submitted site layout plan.

The application site is located to the south of Main Street. The site currently contains several existing stable and storage buildings, as does the neighbouring site to the west. There are substantial existing hedgerows along the northern (roadside) and eastern boundaries. The site is currently in use as a paddock for the grazing of horses and, hens and geese are also kept on the land.

ACCESS

Access would be via an existing access from Main Street along the northern boundary of the site. Details of this are shown on the submitted site layout plan. There is a wide grass verge along the southern side of Main Street providing excellent visibility for drivers wishing to exit the site. Adequate space would be provided on-site for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles to ensure that vehicles can enter and leave in a forward gear.

POLICY BACKGROUND

Policy BSC 6 of the Cherwell Local Plan (2011 - 2031) states, with regard to gypsy and traveller sites, that locations outside of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt will be considered. In this case, the application site is not located within either the Cotswolds AONB or the Green Belt.

The following criteria is to be applied to identify suitable sites:

1) *Within 3 km road distance of the built-up limits of Banbury, Bicester or a category A village.*

The application site is located 0.9 km by road from the centre of Cropredy, a category A village.

2) *Within 3 km road distance of a category B village and within reasonable walking distance of a regular bus service to Banbury or Bicester, or to a category A village.*

The application site is located 0.8 km by road from the centre of Great Bourton, a category B village. Bus stops serving the 502 bus route to Banbury are also located at Cropredy 0.3 km away from the site by road, and at Great Bourton 0.6 km away.

In further assessing the suitability of the site the following criteria must also be applied:

a) *Access to GP and other health services*

A GP surgery is located nearby in Cropredy. In addition to this a hospital and further health services are located in Banbury, the centre of which is less than 6 km away and easily accessed from the proposed site by public transport or private car.

b) *Access to schools*

The site is within walking distance of the primary school in Cropredy.

c) *Avoiding areas at risk of flooding*

The proposed site is designated as Flood Zone 1 and is therefore not at risk from flooding.

d) *Access to the highway network*

The proposed site has safe access onto Main Street and, is only a short distance from Southam Road which leads into Banbury.

e) *The potential for noise and other disturbance*

There would be no discernible reason as to why the application would present any unreasonable levels of noise or other disturbance. Traffic movements to and from the site would not be disproportionate in scale to the use of the road.

f) *The potential for harm to the historic and natural environment*

The site does not adjoin any conservation area or listed building and does not impact on the setting of any heritage asset. With regard to harm to the natural environment, PPTS does not seek to prevent the development of gypsy sites in rural or semi-rural areas. The in-principle acceptability of gypsy sites in rural and semi-rural locations has a number of inevitable consequences. Traveller sites have a number of characteristic features which, depending on the particular setting, can be atypical in the countryside, such as: caravans, hardstandings, utility buildings, residential paraphernalia and lighting. As a result, some degree of visual impact must be accepted and, if an adequate supply of gypsy sites is to be provided, some degree of visual harm must be acceptable.

The test for countryside harm must be whether the development causes unacceptable harm which cannot be made acceptable with additional landscaping. In this regard, paragraph 24 of Policy H makes clear that soft landscaping can positively enhance the environment, whereas sites should not be enclosed with so much hard landscaping that the impression is given that the site and its occupants are deliberately isolated from the rest of the community.

This infers that, firstly, sites do not have to be adequately screened from the outset; secondly, that gypsy sites do not have to be hidden from view; and thirdly, that sites can be assimilated into their surroundings to a

sufficient degree using indigenous species.

In this case, the site is extremely well screened from public view by the existing boundary hedgerows, particularly alongside Main Street. Any remaining views of the proposed development would be glimpsed views through the site access where, the proposed development would be seen in the context of the existing buildings on both the site and, the adjoining land to the west. Further to this, additional planting would be carried out along the southern and western boundaries of the development site. As such, the proposed development would not be prominently located or obtrusive in the landscape and, can be satisfactorily assimilated into its rural surroundings.

g) The ability to provide a satisfactory living environment

Adequate washing, cooking and toilet facilities would be provided within the proposed caravans. Access to utilities such as water and electricity are already available on the site. Foul waste disposal would be provided by means of a package sewage treatment plant. The pitches would be sufficiently spaced out as to provide private amenity areas to each pitch but also, a grassed area has been maintained within the site to provide a play area.

h) The need to make efficient and effective use of the land

The proposed development would utilize previously developed land, which already contains non-agricultural buildings and fixed-surface infrastructure.

i) Deliverability, including whether utilities can be provided

As previously stated, utilities such as water and electricity are already available on the proposed site.

j) The existing level of local provision

The Council has not allocated any land for gypsy and traveller sites in a Development Plan. Further to this, the Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (June 2017) identifies a need for the provision of 7 permanent pitches for the period 2017 - 2022. However, the report also acknowledges that need could potentially increase by up to 20 pitches when taking in to account unknown house holds. This leaves a theoretical shortfall of 27 pitches.

k) The availability of alternatives to applicants

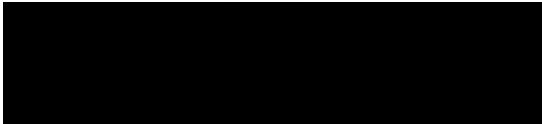
As you will be aware, the sites at Bloxham and Station Approach have closed and the sites at Farnborough Lane are currently full.

CONCLUSIONS

Having compared the proposed development against the Council's criteria set out in Policy BSC 6 of the Cherwell Local Plan, I consider that the proposal fully complies with your policy and, therefore, planning permission should be granted, in accordance with the development plan, without delay. There are no other material considerations relevant to this proposal which would outweigh the presumption in favour of the development plan.

For the above reasons, I trust that you will feel able to support my client's planning application, and I look forward to receiving the Council's decision in due course. If there are any aspects of the application which Officers consider could be improved upon, please do not hesitate to discuss these with me.

Yours faithfully,



Samuel Brown

Associate

Philip Brown Associates