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RETROSPECTIVE - Material Change of Use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 12 gypsy/traveller families, each with two caravans, including improvement of access, laying of hardstanding and installation of package sewage treatment plant

Ref: 24/00097/F - Land South Side Of, Widnell Lane, Piddington

I write further to the submission of the above - mentioned planning application which proposes a Material Change of Use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 12 no gypsy / traveler families, each with two caravans, including improvement of access, laying of hardstanding and installation of package sewage treatment plant.

It is noted that this application follows an earlier application for 6 families considered under planning application reference 17/01962/F and granted planning consent at appeal together with a later application 20/01122/F for 12 families which was refused planning consent and dismissed at appeal.

It is apparent the current proposal also includes additional land to the south of the previous (2017) application site to accommodate an additional 6 pitches on the site raising the total proposed to 12 pitches.

Noise and Vibration

The MoD has consistently expressed concerns about the potential effect of noise from its estate on the living conditions of future residents of the site. Notwithstanding the outcome of the appeal in relation to the previous application 17/01962/F these concerns remain extant and are likely to be exacerbated by the fact that the current application site includes land closer to Piddington Training area and within approximately 85m of the boundary.

MOD has a lawful use of Piddington training area for military purposes 24 hours a day 365 days a year with no restrictions other than training area standing orders which permit the use of training aids including blank ammunition, explosives and battle noise simulators. Training will vary according to operational need but the training area is used on an almost daily basis including weekends for Regular, Reserve and Cadet Forces.

MOD continues to optimise the size of its UK estate and as a retained site Bicester Garrison is likely to increase in intensity of use with a commensurate likely increase in the use of Piddington training area. As a result the effects of noise from Piddington training area are likely to increase as is the importance of the training area to defence.

It should be noted that MOD are exempt from action under the Environmental Protection Act for noise nuisance and in line with the 'agent of change' principle MOD will not accept responsibility for any future complaints regarding noise which may arise from activity within its estate.

Provision of Utilities

Whilst MOD water and power assets are present nearby it cannot be considered as a provider and MOD are not obligated to, or are in a position, to provide a water or other utilities connection.

Further development of the MoD estate area.

As referred to previously MOD is reducing its Estate, and as there is a significantly large estate area to the North of the application site known as 'A' Site which has an extant military use. It is a possibility that this site could be utilised for additional Military requirements and it would be inappropriate of the MoD not to point out the possibility of future military development or intensified use of this site and resultant unknown type of activity that could be undertaken on this or Piddington Training Area as a result

Should you have any queries regarding the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Matthew Ellis | BA (Hons) MA MRTPI | Senior Town Planner | Estates |
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