

**Extension of existing Gypsy and traveller site to provide
an additional caravan pitch with day room and stables**

**CHURCH FARM, HOUND ROAD, NETLEY ABBEY,
SOUTHAMPTON, SO31 5FS**

DESIGN, PLANNING AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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Client: Mr D Cooper

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Design, Access and Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr D Cooper in respect of the proposal to extend an existing Gypsy and traveller site to provide an additional caravan pitch with day room and stables at Church Farm, Hound Road, Netley Abbey, Southampton, SO31 5FS

The site at Church Farm is an established Gypsy and traveller site occupied by the applicant and his son.

An LDC application granted in October 2018 confirmed that the use of land as a gypsy caravan site for the stationing of 1 caravan for residential purposes was lawful (application ref: LDC/18/83784).

This was followed by an application for the provision of a day room and store to replace existing, which was granted in Feb 2019 (application ref: F/18/84653).

Mr Cooper's son is of age where he will soon need his own pitch.

He has identified the small parcel of land which contains a former agricultural building next to his existing pitch, which is sufficient size and well related to his own plot.

Access would be through the existing pitch so there will remain a close relationship between the two pitches.

This statement will show that the proposal is justified under local planning policies in that:

- It meets a need for an additional gypsy and traveller pitch
- The site is within reasonable distance of schools, medical services, shops and other facilities
- it makes appropriate provision for access and parking
- it would not have an unacceptable impact on the character or appearance of the countryside or the local gap
- no neighbouring properties would be adversely affected.

2.0 **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The site comprises a small parcel of land situated at the southern end of Church Farm, accessed via a track off Hound Road.



Map of site

The Church Farm site is home to 3 separate gypsy pitches occupied by the same extended family for over 20 years, which are acknowledged as being tolerated sites in the 2017 GTAA.

The applicant secured a lawful development certificate for his own pitch in October 2018 (ref: LDC/18/83784).

The applicant's existing site lies at the southern end of the farm complex and includes an old farm building and its associated curtilage.

The proposed site comprises the land of the farm building

To the south is a further fenced area, subject to a withdrawn application. To the west is the extended cemetery.

The disused agricultural field to the west is currently the subject of a planning application for 'Extension to existing parish cemetery including internal roadway and footpaths' (application ref: F/20/87685). See below.



The nearest properties are in Hound Road Gardens over 130m away to the west. Most of the properties are screened by existing trees and hedging. A footpath runs from Hound Road, along the edge of the properties in Hound Road Gardens and across the field to the west of the site, where the proposed cemetery extension is located.

St Marys Church and Hound Manor are listed buildings.

The site lies within Flood Zone 1, where there is a low probability of flooding.

The land is situated beyond the urban edge in countryside designated as Local Gap, although is not subject to any special landscape designations nor is it a valued landscape (as defined in the NPPF).

The site is situated a short distance from the settlements of Netley and Hamble (1 and 1.5 miles respectively) where there are a range of local shops and services. The Tesco Extra at Bursledon is also situated nearby (1.5 miles).

There is a pavement outside the site and along Hound Way with street lighting providing pedestrian access to Netley.

There are bus stops on Hound Way outside the entrance to the site, providing regular bus services to Netley, Hamble, Eastleigh and Southampton.

Netley and Hamble train stations are also a short distance nearby.

2.0 **PLANNING HISTORY**

Planning Ref:	Description:	Decision / Date
LDC/18/83784	Use of the site at Church Farm, Hound Lane as a gypsy caravan site for the stationing of 1 caravan for residential purpose	Permitted: Oct 2018
F/18/84653	Provision of a day room and store to replace existing	Permitted: Feb 2019
F/20/87928	Change of use from agricultural land to add 1no. additional static caravan for gypsy and traveller accommodation with day room and stables.	Withdrawn

In terms of the recent withdrawn application the policy response was that the proposal met two of the criteria in relation to policy 87.H namely proximity to service and parking and layout. However it was considered to have an unacceptable impact on the countryside due to the expansion further south into the countryside (settlement gap)

3.0 **PROPOSAL**

This proposal seeks planning permission to extend an existing Gypsy and traveller site to provide an additional pitch for the applicant's son.



The application has been amended from the previously withdrawn application to change the location of the proposed mobile home to the site of the former agricultural building. This is located between the existing site and the extension to the cemetery.

The applicant's son is nearly 17 years old and currently lives with him on the applicant's pitch. However, he will be needing his own pitch very shortly and it will take the applicant a while to save up the funds to develop the new pitch.

The proposal includes the removal of the former agricultural building, the siting of a static mobile home, the construction of a day room and stables and space for the siting of a touring caravan.

The panel fence surrounding the site would be retained to provide security and privacy, as well as screening.

Access would be via the applicants existing pitch.

The site has electric and water.

There is an existing septic tank that was installed by the applicant approx. 15 years ago when a toilet was installed in the agricultural building. As the applicant's son already lives within him on the applicant pitch, there would be no net increase in drainage across the two pitches.

The proposed landscaping for the proposed cemetery extension involves additional hedgerow and tree planting along the south and west boundaries of the proposed site (i.e. the eastern boundary of the cemetery field). This will provide screening. However, the applicant would be happy to provide any additional landscaping along these boundaries that might be required.

Gypsy status

The applicant and his family are Romany gypsies.

He grew up on the Kaneshill traveller site in Botley Road, Southampton.

As a young man he travelled around for work, pea and potato picking in the West Country and fruit picking in Kent (Maidstone and Sittingbourne). He would also do tree work and various other manual work as well.

His father was a horse trader and therefore travelled as a family to the annual gypsy fairs in Appleby, Stow, etc, which they still travel to every year.

He moved onto the Church Farm site approximately 25 years ago to bring up his children, some of whom now live in the London area. He now lives alone with his son.

Whilst living on the Church Farm site he has worked doing property maintenance and groundworks, although suffers with arthritis in the spine so increasingly relies on other people to do the work. He is due to have surgery on both of his shoulders.

He often travels for work, spending a few months a year away from the site. He also still travels to the horse fairs.

4.0 **POLICY**

Development Plan

The Development Plan comprises:

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036)

The local plan was adopted in April 2022

Strategic policy S6, Protection of settlement gaps

1. Development within a Settlement Gap as set out in the policies map will be permitted provided that:

- a. it would not undermine the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements; and
- b. it would not have an urbanising effect detrimental to:
 - i. The character of the countryside; or
 - ii. The separate identity of the adjoining settlements.

The site is within the Hamble, Netley and Bursledon settlement gap.

Paragraph 5.127 (Residential development in the countryside) states:

In order to limit the urbanising impact of development on the rural character of the countryside, and for reasons of sustainability, the Borough Council seeks to limit residential development in the countryside to the following:

- i. Residential extensions and replacement dwellings (see policy DM28)
- ii. Limited residential conversions (see policy DM19);
- iii. Rural workers dwellings (see policy DM29); and
- iv. Gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople's accommodation (see policy DM31).

This is reflected in Strategic Policy S7, New development in the countryside

Policy S8, Protection of countryside gaps

In countryside gaps, development which physically or visually diminishes the gap, or has an urbanising effect detrimental to the openness of the gap, the character of the countryside or the separate identity of the adjoining settlements will not be permitted. Proposals for development within gaps will also be assessed against other relevant policies but will be resisted where this approach is not met.

Strategic policy S8, Historic Environment

The Borough Council will continue to conserve and/or enhance the Boroughs heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. This includes all heritage assets including listed buildings and structures, Conservation Areas as designated on the policies map, landscapes and archaeology.

Policy DM1, General criteria for new development

Provides general development control criteria for assessing new applications. (Similar to the previous policy 59.BE)

Policy DM13, General development criteria - transport

All new development must have safe and convenient access to the highway network and make provision for access to, and by, other transport modes including public transport and cycle and pedestrian routes as appropriate.

Policy DM14, Parking

New residential development will be required to provide off-highway parking which is adequate in terms of highway safety/traffic management. Provision will take account of the adopted Eastleigh Borough Council's Residential Parking Standards SPD which sets out minimum requirements for parking provision.

Policy DM31, Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople

The Council will meet the need for additional Gypsy and Travellers pitches and plots for Travelling Showpeople as identified in the Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTTSAA).

Paragraph 5.141 states

The GTTSAA identifies the current provision in Eastleigh Borough. There are 29 pitches on 17 Gypsy and Traveller sites and an additional four plots on two Travelling Showpeople yards. By 2036 there is a confirmed need for four permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches and three permanent plots (from Travelling Showpeople households living elsewhere in Hampshire but with a connection to Eastleigh). The GTTSAA estimated one additional Gypsy and Traveller pitch and two further Travelling Showpeople plots are likely to be needed to address unconfirmed need. This need is unconfirmed at this stage as sites were surveyed but interviews were not able to be completed.

Sites are allocated for additional pitches and plots in policies BU4 and BU5 to meet this need. Applications received for additional sites will be assessed against the criteria in policy DM33. These include whether there is an identified need which the proposal helps to meet. This may reflect newly arising need and those needs which are currently unconfirmed.

Development for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, including transit sites, will be permitted where:

- i. There is an identified need for the pitch or plot provision which the proposal helps to meet;
- ii. The site is able to accommodate both residential use and where necessary the range of economic activities and vehicles associated with residents' mobile lifestyles without unacceptable impact on local amenities, road safety, heritage, landscape or biodiversity interests;
- iii. The site has safe and convenient access to existing and proposed services and facilities to serve the residents, including education, health facilities and shops;
- iv. The site has or can be viably provided with utility services; and
- v. The site has vehicular access to and from the strategic road network adequate to accommodate mobile residential units and any vehicles/ machinery associated with residents' working activities

National Planning Policy Framework

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives – economic, social and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives)

The social objective includes ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Planning Policy for Travellers Sites

The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.

Sites are acceptable in semi-rural and rural settings, although local planning authorities should ensure that the scale of such sites does not dominate the nearest settled community.

When assessing gypsy applications, local planning authorities should have regard to

- a) the existing level of local provision and need for sites
- b) the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants
- c) other personal circumstances of the applicant

Local Planning Authorities are advised to strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that are away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan.

If a local authority cannot demonstrate an up to date five year supply of deliverable sites, this should be a significant material consideration in any subsequent planning decision.

Eastleigh Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2017)

An accommodation assessment carried out by ORS on behalf of EBC in 2017 identified a need for:

- 5 additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households that meet the planning definition;
- up to 4 additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households that may meet the planning definition; and
- 6 additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households who do not meet the planning definition

The emerging EBLP 2016-2036 proposes to allocate 4 new gypsy sites to meet the confirmed need identified in the GTAA.

Applications for additional sites, including newly arising need and those needs which are currently unconfirmed will be assessed against the criteria in policy DM33.

It is evident from the GTAA that no interviews took place with the occupants on the 3 gypsy and traveller sites on the Church Farm site. The needs of these occupants were not therefore taken into account when the GTAA was produced.

5.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Section 36(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications to be approved in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan is therefore the starting point for assessing the application, i.e. the new local plan which is afforded full weight.

Principle of development

Having regard to the previously withdrawn application the policy comments were that the proposal complied with 2 out of 3 criteria in Policy 87.H as follows:

1. The proposal is within a reasonable distance of schools, medical services, shops and other facilities;
2. makes appropriate provision for access and parking; and

The one criteria not complied with was: -

3. would not have an unacceptable impact on the character or appearance of the countryside.

The new policy DM31 now has 5 site based criteria however the impact of the countryside has been removed and is covered by policy S7, development in countryside and policy S8, development in settlement gaps.

It is argued that the 5 site based criteria are the same as in policy 87.H and therefore having regard to the policy officer comments then the proposal must comply with policy DM31

- The additional pitch is required to provide the applicants sons with his own pitch and therefore meets an identified need;
- The site is able to accommodate the proposed residential use, works vehicle and touring caravan without unacceptable impact on local amenities, road safety, heritage, landscape or biodiversity interests;
- The site has safe and convenient access to existing and proposed services and facilities to serve the residents, including education, health facilities and shops;
- The site can be viably provided with utility services; and
- The site has vehicular access to and from the strategic road network adequate to accommodate mobile residential units and any vehicles/ machinery associated with residents' working activities

and as such it constitutes acceptable development in countryside under Policy S7 (criterion iv).

The PPTS permits gypsy and traveller sites in semi-rural and rural locations.

It would not involve new traveller site development in open countryside away from existing settlements as:

- the site is situated close to the settlement of Netley (and Hamble)
- the proposal involves an extension to an established gypsy and traveller site; and
- is well related to the existing group of buildings and other traveller related development on the Church Farm site.

Local / Countryside Gap

The key difference between this application and the previous one is the change of location to the site of the former agricultural barn. The site is well defined and is well related to the existing group of buildings and existing traveller development on the Church Farm site.

The roofs of the static caravan and day room would be visible / glimpsed within the countryside, however, they would be viewed within the context of the existing lawful traveller development and against the back drop of trees to the south of the church.

The land is already fenced, which will provide screening, as well as privacy (and security). Additional screening can be provided if required. Along the southern edge of the site.

It is argued that this proposal is materially different to the previous refused application as the proposal includes the removal of an existing large barn and the replacement with the caravan and day room. As such there would be little if any visual impact.

In addition as the proposed site is to the side it would not result in either fragmentation or an expansion into the settlement gap. The proposal would therefore comply with policy S6 in that: -

- a. it would not undermine the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements; and*
- b. it would not have an urbanising effect detrimental to:*
 - i. The character of the countryside; or*
 - ii. The separate identity of the adjoining settlements.*

Impact on heritage assets

St Marys Church and Hound Manor are not within view and are sufficient distance away (130m and 175m respectively) not to adversely affected.

The settings of these buildings would not therefore be harmed or adversely affected.

Impact on amenity of neighbouring properties

The nearest properties are in Hound Road Gardens, which are at least 130m away. Most of the properties are screened from view by trees and hedging.

There would be no material increase in activity on the site as the applicant's son already lives with him on the existing plot.

The proposal would not therefore unduly interfere, disturb or conflict with adjoining or nearby uses in accordance with Policy DM1

Traffic / Access / Highways

There would be no net increase in people living across the two pitches. Traffic generation would therefore be no different to the existing level.

Access into the Church Farm is via a large pull-in in front of St Marys Church, which has good visibility onto Hound Road.

There is sufficient space for parking on the proposed site.

The proposal therefore complies with Policy DM13 and DM14.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The proposal is for an additional caravan pitch which would meet the needs of the applicant's son.

It closely relates to the applicant's existing pitch and would be very similar in terms of its size and layout. The site is already enclosed and is well defined and is well related to the existing development on the Church Farm site.

It is well located to access local services and public transport, would not have an adverse impact on the countryside or local gap and would not affect neighbours.

It therefore accords with the development plan and national planning policy and should be granted planning permission.