



3204: Planning Statement
KMFH-SA-XX-XX-RP-A-0001

- (1) Certificate of Lawfulness sought for the conversion of an 'Agricultural Barn' building to Dwelling / Holiday Let.**
- (2) Retrospective Full Planning Permission for change of use of 'Agricultural Barn' building to become 'Storage' (B8 use class) and change of use to the existing Menage to provide 'Open Air Storage' (B8 use class).**
- (3) Extension of existing 'Certificated site' to become Campsite for 11 Caravans and the siting of 4 No. of 'Shepherd Huts' style Camping Pods with Services.**

Rev	Description	Date
P0.1	Internal proof-reading and check by EO.	07-05-21
P0.2	Minor client led revisions. MH.	10-05-21
P0.3	Appendix B inserted by BJ.	14-05-21
P0.4	Vardo Caravan removed from the proposals.	23-07-21

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1.0 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Mr Bruce Johnson of Smytheman Architectural in support of a 'Lawful Development' (existing use) application and two applications for 'Full Planning Permission' submitted to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (hereafter referred to as SMDC).

This is commissioned on behalf of the applicant Mr. M Hall, who lives and works at the site; 'Knypersley Mill Farm'. Mr Hall's primary occupation is the breeding and rearing of special UK native cattle breeds for re-sale purposes, specifically 'Hereford Cattle'.

In addition to this, Mr Hall has 'diversified' the other activities that take place at Knypersley Mill Farm. Part of the land is used as a Camping and Caravanning site under the 'Camping and Caravan Club' certified site scheme. This allows up to 5 Caravans and 10 Tents to be located on the site without the need for formal planning consent.

The purpose of this document is to regularise developments that have occurred on the site and to propose the intensification of an existing established use, albeit by a modest amount. Parts of the applications are in response to the recommendations of the SMDC 'Enforcement Officer' Mr A Thomas.

The document intends to demonstrate the site's current use, the surrounding context, considering the effects of the proposals on the wider community from a planning policy perspective. This document should be read in conjunction with the following drawings:

Existing & Proposed Drawings by 'Smytheman Architectural'

- KMFH-SA-01-XX-DR-A-0101_RevP0.2_01_Certificate_of_Lawfulness_Location_Plan
- KMFH-SA-02-XX-DR-A-0102_RevP0.2_02_Retrospective_Application_Location_Plan
- KMFH-SA-03-XX-DR-A-0103_RevP0.1_03_Proposal_(Part_Retrospective)_Location
- KMFH-SA-01-XX-DR-A-0104_RevP0.2_01_Certificate_of_Lawfulness_Site_Plan
- KMFH-SA-02-XX-DR-A-0105_RevP0.2_02_Retrospective_Application_Site_Plan
- KMFH-SA-03-XX-DR-A-0106_RevP0.1_03_Proposal_(Part_Retrospective)_Site
- KMFH-SA-XX-XX-DR-A-0201_RevP0.2_01_Certificate_of_Lawfulness_Existing_Plan
- KMFH-SA-XX-XX-DR-A-0202_RevP0.2_02_Retrospective_Application_Existing_Plan

2.0 Location & Site

National Grid Reference: **SJ 89625 54705**
Easting: **389625**
Northing: **354705**

The applicant is the sole owner of all land at Knypersley Mill Farm and the agricultural land in the blue edged boundary line on [Figure 1](#). This equates to 142,695m² / 35.26 Acres. There are no 'agricultural tenants'.

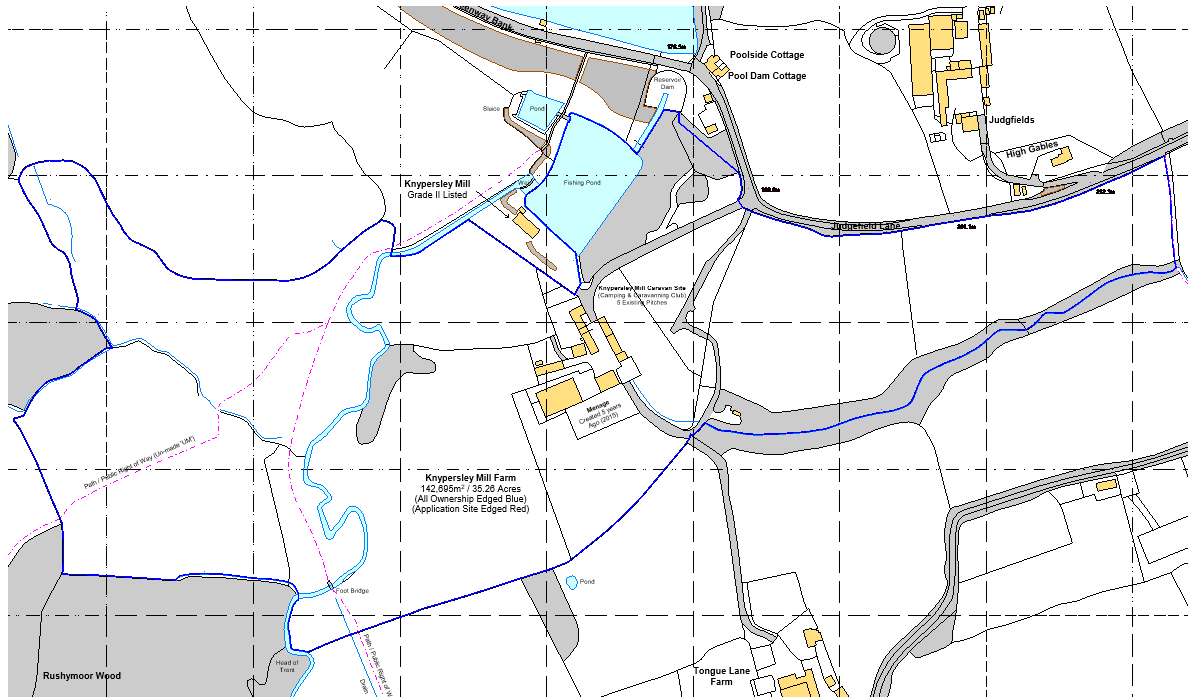


Figure 1: Extract from Land Registry / Ordnance Survey with all land owned by the applicant edged Blue. Prepared by Smytheman Architectural.

Knypersley Mill Farm is an active farmstead in the Staffordshire Moorlands greenbelt. The site comprises the main farmhouse to the North ('E' on [Figure 2](#)) a traditional two storey dwelling believed to date from the early 19th century (C19) with stone facades, traditional farmhouse proportion, stone quoins, corbelled kneelers, stone parapets, and two chimneys. The roof is pitched with Staffordshire-blue clay tiles.

The principal elevation (North) of Knypersley Mill Farm is approximately 60m from the Grade II listed Knypersley Mill building, which is now a private dwelling of separate ownership. The Mill is believed to date from 1827 according to the listing description by Historic England.

Knypersley Mill Farm is not mentioned within the listed building description, nor is the farmstead a curtilage listed structure, however, by virtue of proximity, within 400m, certain Agricultural permitted development rights would be revoked under Part 6 of the Town & Country Planning (GDPO) Order 2015. This does not apply to changes of use which would still be possible subject to Prior Approval being sought.

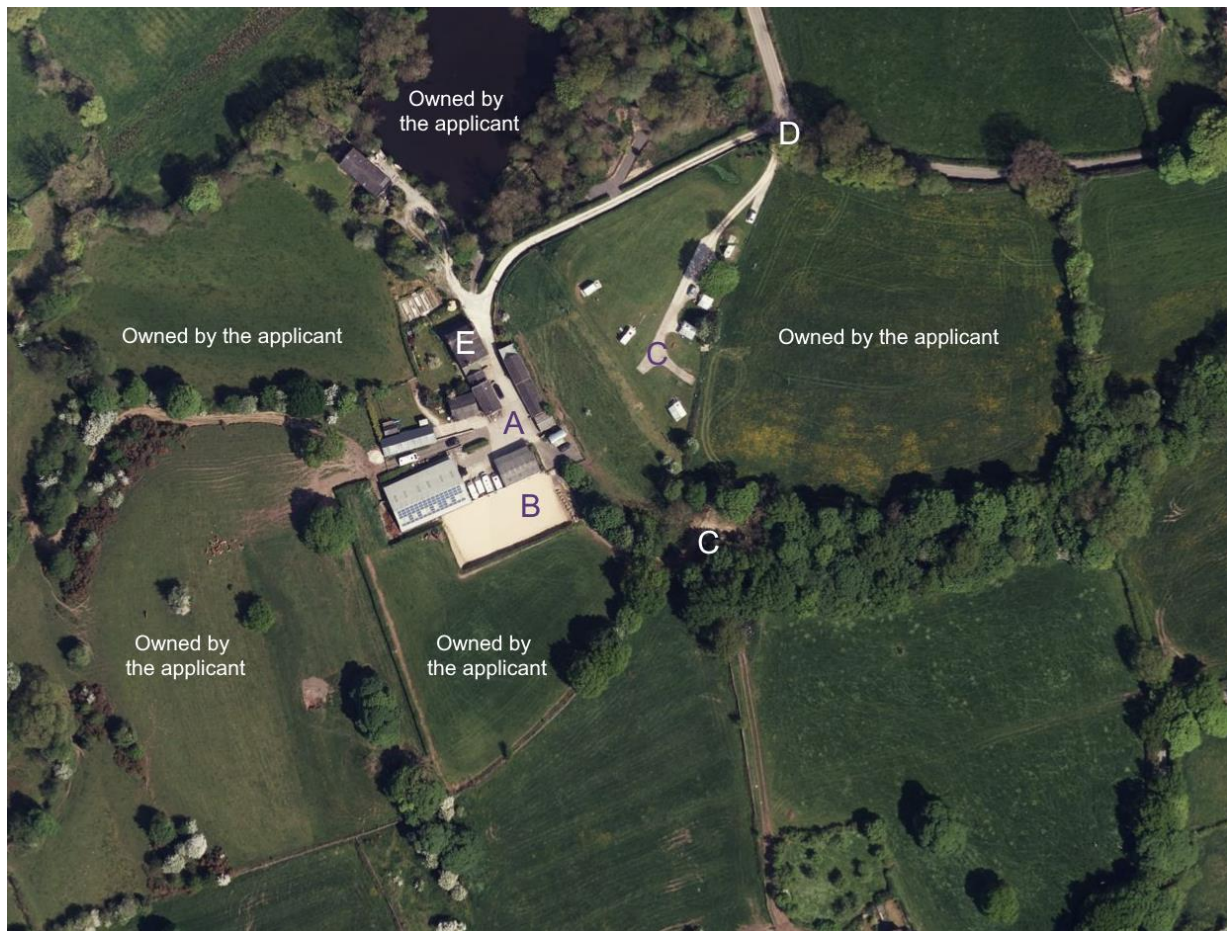


Figure 2: Aerial view of the site from the SMDC Interactive Map. Assessment by Smytheman Architectural: A- Agricultural Barn to become Dwelling with short stay 'Holiday Let' use retrospectively). B- Agricultural Barn and Existing Menage area to become B8 use retrospectively. C- Existing 'Certified Site' Campsite to be increased in size. D- Existing access track from the Highway. E- Existing Dwelling at Knypersley Mill Farm.

The main farmhouse building has a large two storey out-rigger to the rear which joins into a range of historic stone buildings today. These were not always joined and were believed to have been 'agricultural barns' based on the low scale, pitch-hole fenestration, and the site's historic use, likely used for the drying / storage of crops, specifically Corn, with a direct link to the adjacent Mill.

To the opposite side of the farm courtyard, there is a range of brick buildings, these are also historic, believed to be late C19, and feature pitched clay tile roofs. These are currently used as agricultural barns. There are also modern steel framed structures with concrete block infill to the South of the farmstead. One of which is building 'B' on [Figure 2](#).

The applicant breeds and rears special UK native cattle for re-sale purposes. Using the modern steel framed building to the South-West of the farmstead as the primary 'Cow House' and the surrounding land for grazing.

Earliest OS series mapping for the site appears to support the assumption of the early C19 origins of the site. The below OS Series drawn in 1899 dates from 1876-78 survey.

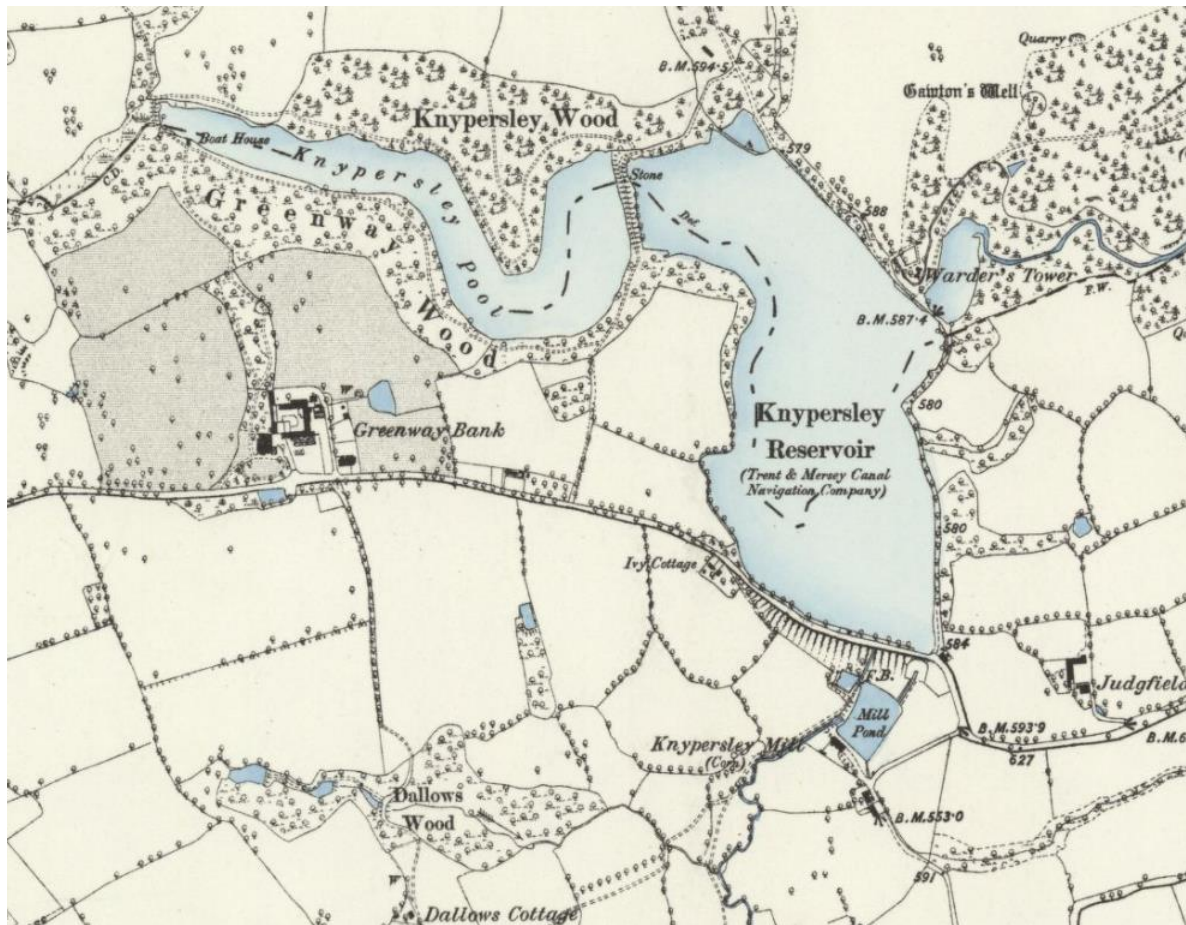


Figure 3: Extract from the 1st OS County Series Survey Map in 1876-78. Confirms the origin of Knypersley Mill, the existence of the farm house and stone barn and suggests that the farming product was Corn.

Figure 4 appears to demonstrate that the Farmhouse and Agricultural Barn was separated.

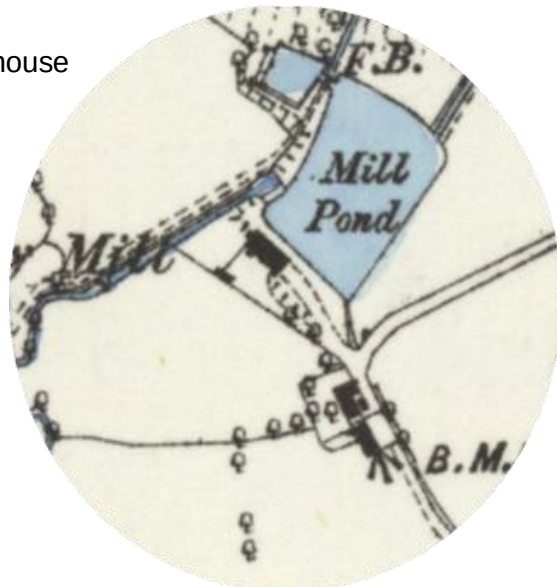


Figure 4: Above extract at larger scale



Figure 5: Extract from the 1899 Edition of the OS Series dates the construction of the eastern brick barn range mentioned to be late C19 above.

The above historic maps are useful in demonstrating the historic plan form of the farm and how the site developed, however, there are no clues from the mapping or the building exterior (date stone etc.) to provide clear evidence of the construction date.

Historic England resources provide descriptions for all statutory listed buildings. The nearby Knypersley Mill is Grade II, it is highly likely that the 'Mill' and 'Farm' were built at the same or similar periods, see listed building description overleaf:

Location

Statutory Address: Knypersley Mill, Judgefield Lane

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Staffordshire

District: Staffordshire Moorlands (District Authority)

Parish: Brown Edge

National Grid Reference: SJ 89586 54765

Details

This list entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 15 January 2021 to reformat the text to current standards

SJ 85 SE 3/23

BROWN EDGE C.P. Knypersley JUDGEFIELD LANE. Knypersley Mill

II Mill, now converted to a dwelling. Dated 1827. Red sandstone ashlar; raised strings at upper floor, cill levels; rusticated dressings; tiled roof; verge parapets on corbelled kneelers. Lower front of three storeys (mill pond side single storey) and four windows; C20 casements in segmental-headed openings, paired to left (inset to centre on ground floor) and widely-spaced to right, the top floor windows have had their cills lowered; two entrances under right-hand windows, segmental-headed and with boarded doors; a plaque over left-hand door is inscribed "ERECTED/1827". All working gear removed from interior

Listing NGR: SJ8958654765

Figure 6: Listed building description for Knypersley Mill from Historic England



Figure 7: Knypersley Mill. Photo taken between 1999-2008 by Heritage Lottery Fund Project. Copyright IoE Mr Ian Taberner. Source Historic England Archive

As can be seen in the above photos, there are similarities between the Grade II listed building and some of the farmstead buildings. Both buildings feature the 'verge parapets on corbelled kneelers', however, the Mill has greater levels of architectural detail than the 'agricultural barn' affected by the 'Proposal 01' described in the later stages of the application, although the farmhouse has its own unique qualities.

It is fortunate that the Mill received a datestone clearly demonstrating the building origin to be 1827. This is assumed to be the construction date of the farmstead also.

3.0 Planning History

In 2013, Prior Approval was sought for a 'Steel portal framed agricultural building for storing machinery implements and feed.' This application was 'Withdrawn', the planning reference for this was **SMD2013/0836**.

In 2014, Full Planning was granted for a 'General purpose agricultural building'. This was approved under **SMD/2013/1153**. This building is the modern steel frame building to the south west of the farmstead. It has an overall area of 418m².

The building is essential to the daily running of the farm and the purpose of the building is for the storage of hay, fodder and farm implements and the containment of the animals during periods of adverse weather in accordance with the requirements of DEFRA.

No other planning history is available for the site.

4.0 Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise.

In Staffordshire Moorlands, 'The Local Plan' was adopted on 9th September 2020 and sets out the council's vision and strategy for the District until 2033.

National guidance in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) underpin the general strategy for development with which all development plans must be in broad conformity.

The following policies are relevant to the proposals and these will be appraised in the following sections of this report:

Local Plan

The Local Plan sets out how SMDC would like to see the District develop by 2033. Section 5 sets out Spatial Aims and Spatial Objectives.

- Spatial Aim SA1 has the aspiration to create *“distinctive, sustainable, self-supporting settlements”*.
- SA3 aims to encourage *“a strong, prosperous and diverse economy”*.
- Spatial Objective SO1 aspires *“To make provision for the overall land-use requirements for the District, consistent with national policy and evidence.”*
- SO3 looks to *“To develop and diversify in a sustainable manner the District’s economy and meet local employment needs in the towns and villages.”*
- SO7 looks to *“To protect, provide and enhance the tourism, cultural, sport and recreation and leisure opportunities for the District’s residents and visitors.”*
- SO8 looks to *“To promote local distinctiveness by means of good design and the conservation, protection and enhancement of historic, environmental and cultural assets throughout the District.”*
- SO9 looks to *“To conserve and improve the character and distinctiveness of the countryside and its landscape, heritage, biodiversity and geological resources.”*

These Spatial Aims and Objectives are elaborated on with further planning policies in the Local Plan:

To support Spatial Objective 1, Policy SS1 expects “the use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands”... policy supports opportunities “for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers”. Policy expects “development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations.”

Policy SS6 also relates to SO1 objectives, this is the ‘Biddulph Area Strategy’ (Knypersley’s nearest town – note Knypersley is not listed as a larger village or smaller village). Policy SS6 looks to “opportunities for new enterprises and businesses by promoting further development” and “strengthen its role as a visitor destination”.

Policy SS10 relates to ‘Other Rural Areas Strategy’, this is more relevant to the application site which is ultimately green belt, outside of the development boundaries. *“These areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside.”* Policy looks to sustain the rural economy by:

- *Enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified.*
- *Supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises.*

Policy SS10 supports opportunities to enhance tourist opportunities by:

- *Supporting sustainable tourism developments and measures in the Churnet Valley in accordance with Policy SS 11 and the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD;*
- *Allowing for small-scale tourism developments in other areas (in accordance with policy E 4)*

Knypersley is outside the Churnet Valley boundary area and therefore the second statement applies (see Policy E4 below).

SO3 and SO7 relate to the ‘Economy & Employment’ and Policy E1 states *“Schemes involving the re-use of rural buildings for commercial enterprise, including tourism uses, will be considered favourably where the proposed use does not harm the building’s character and/or the character of its surroundings.”*

Policy E4 relates to ‘Tourism and Cultural Development’, the proposals are not for new tourism, rather the increase in tourism scale by a modest degree. E4 will *“support the provision and expansion of tourist, visitor and cultural facilities in the rural areas where needs are not met by existing facilities”* provided that it is an *“appropriate quality, scale and character compatible with the local area, protect the residential amenity of the area.”*

Policy C3 relates to 'Green Infrastructure', the council will support proposals which *"contribute to the diversification of the local economy and tourist development through the enhancement of existing, and provision of new facilities."*

Policy DC3 relates to 'Landscape and Settlement Setting', this policy will resist *"development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character or the setting of a settlement or important views"*.

As per the earlier objectives of SO1, this local level policy aims to accord with that at national level.

National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)

"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". (NPPF. Paragraph 7)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) key message is that the *"presumption in favour of sustainable development"* is considered to be *"the golden thread running through both plan-making and decision making"* which should be applied by local planning authorities when assessing and determining planning applications.

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives:

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

(NPPF. Paragraph 8)

The relevant sections of the NPPF would be:

- Section 6: Building a strong, competitive economy.
- Section 13: Protecting Green belt land.
- Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Section 6

Paragraph 83 of the NPPF relates to “Supporting a prosperous rural economy”. This planning policy supports and enables:

- *The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas.*
- *The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.*
- *Sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.*

Section 13

Section 13 of the NPPF relates to greenbelt policy and rural development. Relevant NPPF policies are as follows:

The protection of greenbelt is of the highest priority, Paragraph 133 states ‘*The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.*’

Paragraph 145 relates to ‘Proposals affecting the Green Belt’. Generally, the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt although a recognised exception is:

- *the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt*

Paragraph 146 recognises that “*Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.*” Examples of this are:

- *The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.*
- *Material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds).*

Section 16

Section 16 of the NPPF relates to Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. The historic environment is a finite resource and Paragraph 185 rightly accounts for *“the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation”*.

Whilst the proposals do not directly affect a listed building or lie within the curtilage of a listed building, they are within 400m of the site. As such, conservation policy will be considered and the affect of the proposals (if any will be discussed in Section 5.0). As a result, the proposals are thought to cause ‘less than substantial harm’.

Paragraph 196 states: *“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”*

Paragraph 197 relates to non-designated heritage assets, in SMDC these might be ‘locally listed’ buildings or perhaps historic agricultural buildings and farmsteads.

Policy states *“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”*

5.0 Analysis of the Proposals

There are three facets to the proposals. The applications are as follows:

- (01) Certificate of Lawfulness sought for the conversion of an 'Agricultural Barn' building to Dwelling / Holiday Let.
- (02) Retrospective Full Planning Permission for change of use of 'Agricultural Barn' building to become 'Storage' (B8 use class) and change of use to the existing Menage to provide 'Open Air Storage' (B8 use class).
- (03) Extension of existing 'Certificated site' to become Campsite for 11 Caravans and the siting of 4 No. of 'Shepherd Huts' style Camping Pods with Services.

These proposals will be analysed against policy in the following paragraphs:

Proposal 01 – Holiday Let

In 2015, the existing historic 'Agricultural Barn' was converted to a dwelling. This incorporated a first floor living area and ground floor sauna and therapy type area. Work was completed by 12-07-2016 (more than 4 years ago) and the building was 'let out' as short-stay Holiday accommodation, the first use on record being the 29-10-2016 although this may have happened prior (without record).



Figure 8: Principal Elevation photograph by Smytheman Architectural

Given that a 'Lawful Development (Existing Use)' application is submitted with suitable grounds for the certificate to be granted, which are:

- The building works (for instance, building or engineering works) were substantially completed more than four years before the date of this application.
- The use as a single dwelling house began more than four years before the date of this application.

With evidence submitted to support this; the application should be **approved** without any further justification.

However, it is the agent / author's opinion that the conversion of a 'substantial' rural building like this is supported by Paragraph 146 of the NPPF.

Additionally, the site has an existing 'camping and caravanning' use on the adjacent 'certificated site, with this in mind the change of use to 'Holiday Let' since 2016 (more than 4 years ago) is in accordance with SMDC's Local Plan Policies SS10, E1, E4, and C3 being an improvement in tourism facilities on a modest scale that does not have an adverse effect on the countryside.

Finally, the historic nature of this building has been mentioned throughout this statement, the 'Agricultural Barn' is an attractive building that takes some influences from the nearby listed Knypersley Mill. Originally this barn would have been constructed for the storage and drying of corn. This is no longer a product farmed by the applicant whose primary business is the breeding of cattle. The original barn was not fit for this purpose, and modern steel framed buildings have been constructed. This was essential to allow Mr Hall to fulfil his needs as a business which is in accordance with Paragraph 7 of the NPPF.

Given that the 'Agricultural Barn' no longer served a viable use this new use is preferable and is in accordance with Paragraph 196 of the NPPF.

A final point to consider is that by today's policies this type of proposal might be considered acceptable with a Class Q Prior Approval application. As this type of change-of-use falls under General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended).

For the reasons above **application SMD/2021/0308 should be approved.**

Proposal 02 – ‘Modern Agricultural Barn’ to become ‘B8 Storage’ and Existing Menage to become ‘Open Air Storage’



Figure 9: Existing Modern Storage ‘Barn’ in centre of view. Former Menage to rear now used to store Caravans within the Retrospective Proposals.

The existing ‘Modern Storage Barn’ is a steel framed structure that uses masonry block walls up to 2.3m height and corrugated cladding thereafter for the walls and roof. It features 3 bays with Roller Shutters. The building benefits from being slightly sunken into the ground as the architectural drawings show (Figure 10); this reduces the buildings effect on the wider site. Additionally, the building is within a ‘ribbon of development’ in the farm courtyard.

Since 2015, the ‘Agricultural Barn’ has been used as Caravan Storage for a range of modern and historic trailers / vehicles owned by the applicant. This has been without any harm on amenity, the openness of the greenbelt or the wider area.

By current policies, this type of proposal might be considered acceptable as a Class R Prior Approval application (Barn Conversion). Class R is found within Schedule 2, Part 3 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO), which allows for change of use from an agricultural building (and land within its curtilage) in England to a flexible commercial use, of which B8 Storage falls under. However, given that no prior consent was applied for, full planning is now sought retrospectively.

The existing Menage to the rear of the 'Storage' building / former 'Agricultural Barn' was completed in 2016, five years previously. The works to create this menage involved some minor engineering, cutting into the ground, on the hillside to create a lowered level area for equestrian activity. This is a good example of countryside leisure and was 'a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house' (farmhouse).

Conversations with Mr. Andrew Thomas, Enforcement Officer at SMDC reveal the following stance on the Menage:

"Other development such as the menage, jetties on the millpond, the platform for the zip wire, the new access to the orchard and repairs to the millpond embankment are considered to be either immune from enforcement action or permitted as either repair and maintenance or permitted development."

However, the proposals now entail the 'change of use' to this land to B8 Open Air Storage, as result, full planning is now sought retrospectively.

Policy Consideration

From a policy perspective, both proposals are supported by Local Plan policy SS10. The applicant must be allowed 'the limited expansion' of their business.

The camping and caravanning club site is an existing business and tourist facility at the farm, and the storage of Caravans for members of the public, on the former menage, provides a valuable secure service, whilst being a good example of how farmsteads are evolving to meet their modern-day consumer demand. Policy SS10 supports *'the diversification of existing farm enterprises.'*

Paragraph 83 of the NPPF reinforces this supporting *"sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas"* and *"diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses."*

The siting of 20 caravans externally on the existing Menage does have some slightly negative traits. In comparison to the site remaining an open area for equestrian use, the parking of vehicles has a minor negative effect on the aesthetics of the site when viewed aerially, however, aerial views do not provide an accurate perspective of the effect of the site.

Local Plan Policy DC3 states *"development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character or the setting of a settlement or important views"* will be resisted.

Regarding DC3, the proposals for 20 caravans stored in an existing sunken site would not constitute "prominent intrusion". The proposals are "the provision of appropriate facilities" and they "preserve the openness of the greenbelt", therefore NPPF Paragraph 145 gives the proposal support.



Figure 10: East Elevation by Smytheman Architectural. Note land level is cut through the access track 1200mm from the building East Elevation.

As was previously mentioned, both the existing 'Agricultural Barn' and the site of the former Menage are both either partially, or fully set into the landscape.

This means that whilst they may appear to be intrusive from an aerial perspective, they do not affect the 'openness of the greenbelt', they are also set within a 'ribbon of development' within a historic farmstead that dates from the early 19th century.

When viewed from an elevated 'human perspective' as per 'Figure 11' overleaf the proposals are imperceptible and their effect on the greenbelt is benign. Whilst the economic sustainability for the farm and the enhanced tourism facilities provides strong favour to the 'planning balance' of the proposals.



Figure 11: The proposed site for 'Open Air Storage' is sunken into the ground. This means that the storage of 20 vehicles does not affect the openness of the greenbelt. This is in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 145.

For the reasons rehearsed in the previous page's **application SMD/2021/0307** should be **approved**.

Proposal 03 - Extension of existing 'Certificated site' to become Campsite for 11 Caravans and the siting of 4 No. of 'Shepherd Huts' style with Services.

The Campsite

Knypersley Mill Farm is a 'certificated site' under the Camping and Caravanning Club. Certificated Sites are permitted to accommodate up to 5 caravans or motorhomes, and 10 tents for a maximum of 28 consecutive days at any one time.

In accordance with NPPF Paragraph 83 and Local Plan Policy E4 and C3 the applicant is looking to intensify the volume and duration of these activities. This intensification remains modest and a total of 11 Caravans are proposed, with four additional freestanding 'Shepherd Huts' meaning the total number of guests would be 15 parties.

When considering that the application site is 12,128m², a figure just under 3 acres, this uplift in occupancy is modest. This fulfils the aims of Policy SS10 and E4 of the SMDC Local Plan.

The existing caravan site has a separate access track that exists and 'Electric hook-ups', the grass area used for camping has recently been extended with the support of nearby neighbour Mr. Holdcroft from Judgefield Farm who was consulted by Mr. Hall (the applicant).

With an overall area of the camping fields of approximately 4850m² (0.485 hectares) the proposal of 11 pitches is low intensification, this is equivalent to 22 pitches per hectare. This is in accordance with Policy E4 and helps to preserve the openness of the greenbelt site. The campsite is also far enough separated from the historic buildings that there is no affect on the setting or significance of the buildings, as are the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF.

The Freestanding Shepherds Huts

The siting of 4 serviced 'Shepherd Huts' around the application site is again the slight intensification of an existing use on the site. These structures are semi-permanent, whilst they are on a trailer axle with wheels for towing it is the intent of the applicant that they remain in-situ permanently.

The structures are raised off the ground by 600mm with a raised timber deck that can also be removed if desired, however, despite the slightly elevated floor level, they remain modest structures. They feature a curved roof of low height and a compact footprint of approximately 13m². Space standards would never permit these structures to become permanent dwellings, rather they are 'short stay' camping pods as a 'diversification' away from farming and a slight intensification of the campsite.

Policy supports the tourism and rural economic benefits that come with this proposal.

For the reasons rehearsed above **application SMD/2021/0335 should be approved.**



Figure 12: An existing Shepherd Hut and raised timber deck / platform.

During Enforcement Visits, Mr Thomas noted there was a single 'Vardo' style Caravan proposed alongside the fishing lake. This was located on an area of existing MOT Type 1 hardstanding; this caravan has now been sold and is no longer part of the proposals.

The hardstanding remains entirely necessary. This is due to significant levels of debris washed from the embankments and highway. To combat this, the applicant has created a 'Silt Trap' catchment pit to prevent a negative impact on the fishing pond. This requires clearing on a bi-annual basis using a '3.5 Tonne Digger' and 'Dumper' to remove the significant levels of spoil, this is an essential activity. Allowing this equipment access to this lower area of the site (where the water naturally drains to) was the reason for the installation of this existing hardstanding.

SMDC Officer; Ben Hurst has discussed this hardstanding with the applicant, and it has suggested that this can be retained without enforcement.

6.0 Conclusion

To conclude, the proposals strengthen the rural economy by allowing the 'diversification' of the farmsteads activities to provide a public tourist facility. This will have a small positive effect on tourism and visitor numbers to Knypersley, Biddulph, and the wider district of Staffordshire Moorlands.

Whilst doing this, the proposals accord with greenbelt planning policy, 'preserving openness', providing essential rural facilities, and re-using buildings of 'substantial' construction methods as opposed to creating a new development.

This 'short stay' camping activity as a 'diversification' away from farming has a slight intensification of structures on the landscape but poses several economic and tourism benefits. This is in accordance with Spatial Objective 07 in addition to several policies. (SS1, SS10, E4, C3).

Finally, the proposals are respectful of built heritage, they do not affect the setting of a nearby listed building and they re-use a non-viable former Corn Store / Barn dating from circa 1827. By allowing the public to come and visit the site, to use or benefit from the views of the historic reservoir, Knypersley Mill, the Farmhouse, and the Barn conversion this is the epitome of good conservation, and communal heritage values.

For the reasons rehearsed, it is considered that all three applications are appropriate development and should be **approved**.

7.0 Appendix A - Pre - application advice and consultation

FW: Knypersley Mill Farm - Ref SMC/2020/00131



planenforcement SMDC <planenforcement@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk>
To: 'markjameshall@hotmail.co.uk'

Reply Reply All Forward ...
Thu 19/11/2020 10:49

Dear Mr Hall,

I refer to my recent site visit and our meeting at your property on 30th October.

I have now had the opportunity to discuss the results of my site visit with the Principal Planning Officer and I must advise you of the following:

The shepherds hut located within the farmyard and used as a holiday home. This shepherds hut is not considered to be a moveable structure due to its connection to mains services and the fact it has a fixed raised platform and access steps. I must therefore advise you that a retrospective application for its retention is required.

Two other shepherds huts are located within the farmyard. These are not connected to any services and are on wheels. One has been sold and will shortly be removed and the other is fitted out as an ice cream sales facility. You enquired about the acceptability of using this to sell ice creams on land adjacent to the highway. I should advise that such use would require a change of use planning permission for that area of land.

The agricultural building being used for indoor caravan storage. This represents an unauthorised change of which requires the benefit of formal planning approval. I therefore require a change of use planning application for the use of the barn for indoor caravan storage. One caravan was noted on the former menage. This caravan is dilapidated and not stored for financial gain. I note that you told me it is your old caravan. I should point out that its removal is not something I would pursue.

The caravan and associated hard surface located near to the mill pond. The retention of the caravan requires planning permission and officer opinion is that a planning application is unlikely to be supported. I therefore request that you remove this caravan and its associated hardstanding.

The former agricultural building used for residential purposes. I note that you have said the work to convert the building was completed more than four years ago, this would now be immune from enforcement action and as such I would recommend you submit an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for the operational development.

The use of the above building appears to be ongoing as a holiday let. I have been made aware of a listing on AirBnB which clearly shows the building has been let out as a holiday home until the start of this month's National lockdown. This represents an unauthorised change of use and I therefore request the use ceases forthwith. An application to regularise the change of use to holiday let is required for this use to continue.

Other development such as the menage, jetties on the millpond, the platform for the zip wire, the new access to the orchard and repairs to the millpond embankment are considered to be either immune from enforcement action or permitted as either repair and maintenance or permitted development.

Other matters relating to the importation of waste and quarrying are still with Catherine Woolridge from Staffordshire County Council; as yet I have not had an update from her and you may be hearing separately from the County Council on those matters.

Please confirm receipt of this email and your understanding of its content within 7 days of receipt. Once I have received your confirmation of receipt, I will be writing to formally request planning applications for those matters which require such action to be taken.

Yours sincerely

Andy Thomas
Compliance and Monitoring Officer
Tel 01298 28400 – extension 4172

Figure 13: Enforcement Advice from Mr A Thomas via email (19-11-20)

Knypersley Mill Farm - Ref SMC/2020/00132



planenforcement SMDC <planenforcement@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk>

To: 'mark hall'

Cc: Bruce Johnson

You forwarded this message on 14/04/2021 17:20.

Reply Reply All Forward ...

Wed 14/04/2021 14:28

Good afternoon Mr Hall,

I refer to our meeting during my site visit yesterday (Tuesday April 13th)

Since my previous visit, I note that you have an additional hardstanding containing a shepherd's hut, in residential use at the time of my visit on land to the rear of the camping and caravan club site. Please note this unit and the proposed use of it will need to be included in the planning applications you submit.

I also note that you intend to use the land rear of the certificated site as a touring caravan park. As discussed during our meeting, please ensure that the plans submitted clearly show that you intend this to be in addition to the land licensed by the Camping and Caravanning Club and not an extension of the existing site for which you are licensed for 5 caravans only, none of which may remain in situ longer than 28 days.

I also note that you have some caravans stored externally on the former manege ; outdoor storage of caravans on green belt land is unlikely to be supported due to National and Local planning policy, however you have the right to apply and also to appeal any refusal.

I note that you have said the hardstanding on the land to the rear of the existing certificated caravan site had been hard surfaced at around the same time as you constructed the manege in order to form a track. I am of the opinion that the hard surfaced track formed at that time would have been permitted by part 6 of the GPDO. However, I am also of the opinion that this area of hard surface has recently been extended to form the two caravan pitches recently provided in that area and also a further area of hard surface provided last year on the boundary of the certificated caravan site land. You described this pitch as having been created to allow some visitors an isolated pitch as they had tested positive for covid19. Planning applications for the caravan park will need to show the hard surfaces associated with the pitches required.

I look forward to receiving confirmation when the planning applications for the above, and those issues previously discussed, have been submitted. For completeness, I should remind you that the use of the former agricultural building as a holiday let, the use of the agricultural building as indoor storage, the shepherds hut in the yard, currently used as a long term holiday let all require planning permission.

The development to provide the manege and to convert the former agricultural building for which a change of use to holiday let is required would, in my opinion, benefit from a certificate of lawful development, the work having been completed over four years ago.

I look forward to hearing from you soon,

Kind regards

Andy Thomas

Compliance and Monitoring Officer

Tel 01298 28400 – extension 4172



www.highpeak.gov.uk

www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk



Figure 14: Enforcement Advice from Mr A Thomas (14-04-21). A 're-cap' following the appointment of Smytheman Architectural to address the concerns.

Evidence of existing use - Completion of Proposal 01

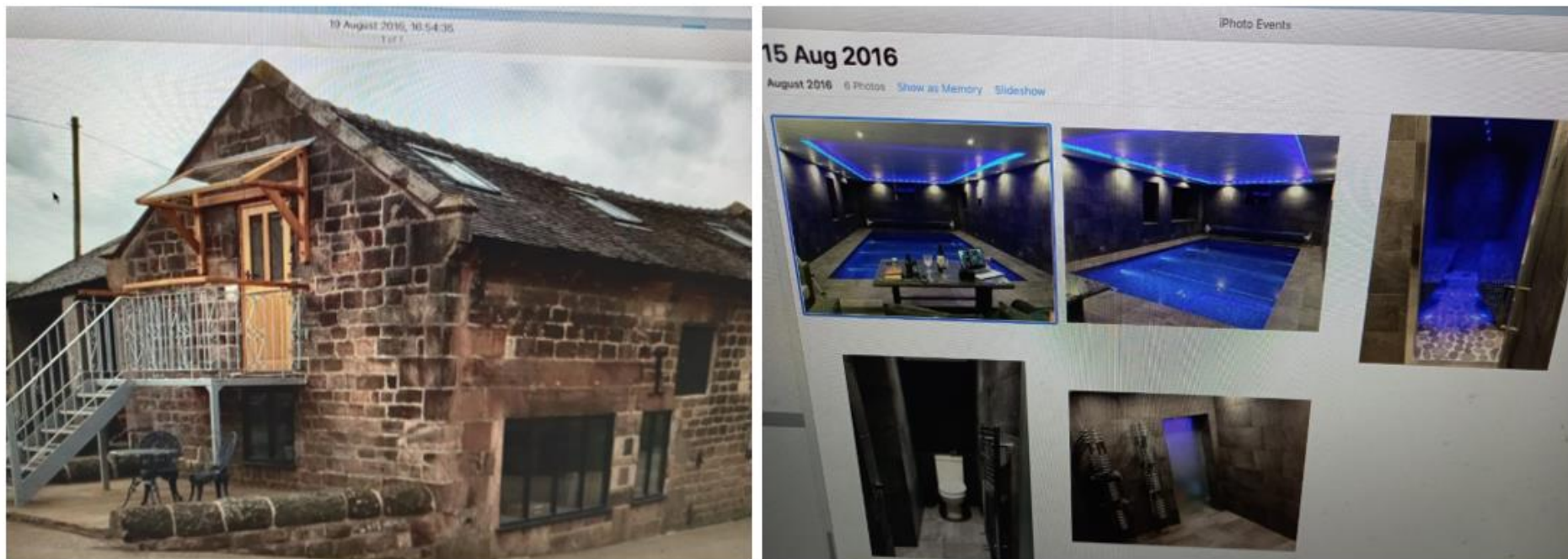


Figure 15: Images dating from 2016 demonstrating the completed accommodation in August 2016, earliest evidence attached with the application shows completion to be circa 12-07-2016.

Evidence of existing use – Holiday Let Use

Date	Guest	Comments
29th Oct 2016	Katie & Freddie Cox	Thankyou for a wonderful week. The house is well equipped and very comfortable. The pool area is fantastic!
25th Dec 2016	Lee & Gemma Morgans	Thankyou for a lovely holiday and being so helpful. We had a great Christmas.

Date	Guest	Comments
10/01/17	The Baudens	Had a fab stay! We will be back soon! Thankyou!
14/01/17	The Tavernors	We had a lovely stay! Thankyou for your hospitality. We had a brilliant time over.

Date	Guest	Comments
19/02/17	The Patels	Thank you for a fantastic stay. The barnhouse is perfect and the pool area is wonderful!
26.3.17	The Holmes	Thank you for a wonderful stay. The pool is fantastic

Sat 27 May - Sat 3 June 2017	Andrew, Keri-Anne & Jude Gillow	Lovely accommodation and setting. We have been extremely comfortable here and made the most of the beautiful pool, steam room. Our little boy has really enjoyed himself too.
	MILTON KEYNES BUCKS	Lovely walk round the local reservoir - so pretty. The nearby Roaches walk (on way to Milton) is highly recommended too.
		*The top pub up the hill was very accommodating and did the food on a Thursday 6-8pm. A lovely stay overall - lucky with the weather and will go home x feeling relaxed from this holiday. Thank you

Figure 16: Guest Book images relating to the Holiday Let (Proposal 01) these date from over 4 years ago.

8.0 Appendix B

Smytheman Architectural would like to reference the following appeal decision whereby an existing Campsite on a similar farmstead with 29 static caravans and 86 touring caravans looked to increase the number of static caravans to 43. The appeal established some very important principles. The proposals used plant screening and reducing visibility of static caravans, which would effectively have the appearance of new buildings. The proposals had Tourism / Economic benefits, whilst the effect on the greenbelt was modest. The conclusion was that special circumstances outweighed the harm to the greenbelt.



Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 24 January 2013

Site visit made on 24 January 2013

by John L Gray DipArch MSc Registered Architect

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 7 February 2013

Appeal Ref. APP/P2365/A/12/2181220

Abbey Farm Caravan Park, Dark Lane, Lathom, Ormskirk, L40 5TX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr R Perkins against the decision of West Lancashire Borough Council.
- The application, ref. 2011/1039/FUL, dated 21 September 2011, was refused by notice dated 25 June 2012.
- The development proposed is the siting of 14 additional timber-clad holiday caravans (lodges) within the existing confines of Abbey Farm Caravan Park, together with landscape planting.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed. Planning permission is granted for the siting of 14 additional timber-clad holiday caravans (lodges), together with landscape planting, at Abbey Farm Caravan Park, Dark Lane, Lathom, Ormskirk, L40 5TX, in accordance with the terms of the application, ref. 2011/1039/FUL, dated 21 September 2011, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule attached to this decision.

Harm to openness and visual impact

5. The siting of 14 static caravans on previously undeveloped land would be bound to reduce the openness of the Green Belt. The drawings submitted with the application show a lodge about 12.2m x 6.1m on plan and 3.9m high. There would be six of those and eight smaller ones (the same length but scaling a little less than 4.0m wide). It is of little moment in the context of openness and visual impact that they would be static caravans rather than permanent buildings, even if the differentiation may have been relevant when considering potentially inappropriate development under PPG2 and Policy DS 2. In visual terms, the static caravans would have the appearance of 14 new buildings where previously there had been none.
6. That would inevitably reduce the openness of the Green Belt. It would also run contrary to one of the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt, reiterated in paragraph 80 of the Framework – to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
7. On the other hand, the visual impact of the proposal would be very limited, even without the landscaping proposed along the northern boundary of the appeal site. There is already a significant tree belt to the west. Trees around the southerly perimeter of the Caravan Park prevent views from the south, from which direction the appeal site is anyway beyond a paddock approved for the siting of 22 touring caravans. Views from the east are towards the existing Caravan Park. It is only from the north that the proposed caravans might be seen, in fleeting glimpses from trains passing just to the north and (at some distance), from the A59 road. They would also be seen by people using Abbey Lane, the public footpath which is also the access to the Caravan Park from the south; it passes through the site, crosses the railway line and continues northwards past an industrial area to the A59 a little to the west of Burscough.
8. The application plan proposes a native hedgerow along the northern boundary of the site and tree planting within it. The latter would be primarily for the benefit of occupiers of the caravans, the intention being to provide a high quality setting. The hedgerow would contribute to that, providing a sense of enclosure to the area. It would also, if designed and allowed to grow to 4.0m or more, effectively prevent the caravans being seen from viewpoints to the north. They would still be visible from Abbey Lane – but screened by the existing hedgerow and trees and in the context of the existing Caravan Park.

Figure 17: Example of Greenbelt appeal decision where the Planning Inspector appears to take a similar view to policies discussed in this Planning Statement. See similarities between Section 4.0, 5.0 and 6.0 of this document.

Other considerations

10. There are a number of other considerations to be weighed in the balance.
11. The National Planning Policy Framework supports a prosperous rural economy, including supporting both "the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas ..." and "rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside". The second of these includes supporting the expansion of tourist facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres. That does not outweigh Green Belt policy, which is set out elsewhere in the Framework, but it must certainly be a material consideration.
12. The existing caravan park is substantial, well-established and cannot be considered as other than a permanent feature in this rural area. It may be well-screened but screening cannot obscure all signs of development and itself must influence the visual character of the landscape. The Council accepts that there are no obvious sites in rural service centres to meet whatever need or demand there may be – and, if there is a need or demand to be satisfied, any other possible location would almost certainly also be in the Green Belt, would be inappropriate development within it and would have to be assessed by the same process as this appeal proposal.
13. Then there is economic sustainability. An extension to an existing caravan park should be much more economically sustainable than creating a new one – it would involve the improvement of existing facilities rather than the provision of new; and that would likely benefit users of the existing caravan park. Some existing users of Abbey Farm Caravan Park have expressed strong interest in the proposal, which suggests that, once advertised more widely, ample demand would materialise. However, it is a moot point whether such a demand would equate to a need for the proposed development which would have to be met somewhere within the constrained boundaries of the administrative district.
14. The financial viability of the existing business comes under the same economic sustainability umbrella. The appellant's bank has no wish to extend its facilities beyond their existing level and sees the appeal proposal as the means by which to service the existing loan; it sees a need for the business to generate additional revenue through "static sales". And the generation of new revenue enables investment in new or existing facilities on site, enabling the Caravan Park's rating, and thus its income, to be maintained.

Overall conclusion

21. There are very special circumstances which clearly outweigh the proposal's being inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the (very modest) harm it would cause. There is no objection in relation to biodiversity and no objection on any other matter. Accordingly, the appeal may be allowed, subject to conditions.

Conditions

22. The Council suggested 11 conditions in the event that the appeal was allowed, including the standard time-limiting condition and one to identify the approved plans. On the latter, only the location plan and site plan need be identified; the submitted drawings of the lodge were essentially illustrative and a condition to control design as well as materials would adequately cater for absent details of the caravans themselves. Conditions stipulating the maximum number of caravans and their maximum dimensions are unnecessary; the number is identified in the application and the maximum size in other legislation. As indicated above, a condition requiring improved visibility is unnecessary. So too, given the absence of any evidence of potential threat, is a condition requiring an ecological survey.
23. Foul and surface water drainage appear to be resolved but the suggested condition will insure against any presently unrecognised constraint. The hard and soft landscaping conditions may be amalgamated; lighting within the site should be controlled and implementation and maintenance should be provided for; on the other hand, there are no existing trees that need to be retained or protected. A condition ensuring holiday occupation is appropriate but the criterion seeking to limit the period of occupation by any individual or group of people is unenforceable and may be omitted.

John L Gray

Inspector

Figure 18: The Overall Conclusion to Appeal APP/P2365/A/12/2181220 at Abbey Farm Caravan Park