

## DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

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**SMD/2021/0307**  
**Valid 14/06/2021**

**KNYPERSLEY MILL FARM**  
**JUDGEFIELD LANE**  
**BROWN EDGE**

**RETROSPECTIVE FULL  
PLANNING PERMISSION FOR  
THE CHANGE OF USE OF  
AGRICULTURAL BARN  
BUILDING TO A INDOOR  
'STORAGE' (B8) BUILDING  
FOR STORAGE OF MODERN  
AND HISTORIC CARAVANS  
AND THE CHANGE OF USE OF  
AN 'EXISTING MENAGE'  
WHICH WAS CREATED IN  
2015 (4+ YEARS) TO BECOME  
'OPEN AIR STORAGE' (B8)  
FOR PRIVATELY OWNED  
CARAVANS BY MEMBERS OF  
THE PUBLIC WHO USE THE  
CAMPSITE FACILITIES**

**(FULL - MINOR)**

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### **MAIN ISSUES**

Impact on the Green Belt and the character and appearance of the area

### **DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

The small farmstead dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> C. It is accessed via a straight driveway track from the highway. The farm is surrounded by open countryside, characterised by small scale, irregularly shaped field parcels that are enclosed by traditional hedgerows on the slopes of undulating or rounded hillsides. To the rear or south of the farmstead, the applicant has excavated into the sloping ground to provide a level surface 20m by 50m.

### **PROPOSAL**

To the rear or south of the established and contained farmstead, the applicant has excavated into the sloping or banked land a flat surface area that he says was constructed as a horse arena. It is not clear whether the construction was completed or brought into use - there are no formal enclosures, the edges are contained by the edges of exposed earth excavation, and the surface is a mix of sand and grassy patches. The area is roughly 20m by 50m. There is a contemporary farm shed that backs onto the area with doors facing north onto an area of hardstanding that has open access around to the side and onto the open area.

The applicant is already using the building and the open area to store caravans for customers, who store and keep their caravans on the land when they are not in use

and collect and use them for holidays off the site. The submitted plans show outside space for 20 caravans with further space within the 125 sq m building. He seeks planning permission for this 'material change of use' development that has already occurred.

## **RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES**

### **Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)**

S01 Spatial Objectives  
SS1 Development Principles  
SS10 Other Rural Area Strategy  
DC1 Design Considerations  
DC3 Landscape Character  
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

NPPF July 2021

## **SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS**

None Relevant

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **Publicity**

Site Notice expiry date: 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021  
Neighbour consultation period ends: 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021  
Press Advert: N/A

### **Public Comments**

4 Objections have been received. The comments raised are summarised below:

- The application states that the caravans would be stored by customers who use them on the onsite camp ground, that doesn't make sense.
- Irrespective of what is declared on the app form (certificate A) I don't believe the applicant to be the sole owner of the land.
- The development is harmful to the Green Belt it does not comply with section 13 of the NPPF.
- The increased caravan storage is not fair on the owner and occupier of Knypersely Mill who share the access drive from the highway, it would also adversely affect their amenity.
- The development is visible in the landscape
- The development does not comply with sustainable transport policies

- The site does not occupy a sustainable location and would increase vehicular trips and car dependency.
- The access and highway is hazardous in this location and not suitable for towing caravans.

### **Town / Parish Comments**

Brown Edge Parish Council: No Objection

### **Environmental Health**

No Objection subject to general conditions covering noise, plant and machinery, lighting and importation of fill material.

### **Staffordshire County Council Highways**

No objection. The access with the highway is well dimensioned with visibility, existing use does not appear to have raised highway issues.

### **OFFICER COMMENTS**

#### **Impact on the Green Belt**

Development within the Green Belt is inappropriate, and by definition, harmful to the Green Belt, unless it is provided for by one of the exceptions on the closed lists that appear at paras. 149 and 150 of the NPPF. Para 150 (d) includes the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction. At para 150 (e) material change of use is another such exception, provided it preserves Green Belt openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

The proposed change of use of the barn building would comply with para.150 (d) and is therefore appropriate development. However, with regard to the change of use of the outdoor areas, the footprint and volume of the caravan structures, particularly of the number and density proposed, undoubtedly affects openness when compared to the pre-existing use, which is said to have been a horse arena which is commonly a surfaced area, generally free from structures, to provide facility for outdoor sport and recreation in a way that preserves openness.

The exception in the Framework requires that such proposals must both preserve openness 'and' not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The development proposed evidently encroaches into a part of the countryside that is currently undeveloped, beyond the southern edge of the farmstead defined by the back edge of farm sheds, and in that regard would be harmful to the essential characteristics of the Green Belt, namely its openness and permanence.

The loss of openness identified would mean that, in the context of paragraph 149 of the Framework, the proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

### **Other Rural Area Strategy**

The development could be described as farm or rural diversification, making use of land for alternative income stream, generally this type of development can, in principle, find support within the other rural area strategy (SS10). However, the strategy is heavily caveated, requiring compliance with the NPPF in respect of Green Belt locations, and the quality of the countryside to be enhanced by prioritising the need to protect the quality and character of the area. Development therefore that would be inappropriate in the Green Belt and harmful to the character and appearance of the countryside, can not therefore be compatible with the strategy.

### **Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area**

The rear southern and side western edges of the site area are exposed to open countryside, characterised by small scale, irregularly shaped field parcels that are enclosed by traditional hedgerows on the slopes of undulating or rounded hillsides. From the south and south west there are unrestricted views across open field toward the edges of the site area. Where the excavation is at its deepest across the southern edge, and the height of the cutting might conceal a modestly sized caravan that is situated against this edge, the size and shape of the caravans would not necessarily be uniform. There is an obvious intent to include larger motorhomes within the storage



and there is a potential for the height of such vehicles to appear above the edge of the excavation, particularly if they are situated further toward the buildings on the northern edge or against the western edge where the edge slopes and grades to a much shallower depth.



Moreover, from the high ground of the rounded hill top to the east, which provides the certified 5 van site, the whole of the storage area is very visible and apparent within the landscape, where the open ground should otherwise run neatly to the edge of the farmstead and the bottom of the farm buildings.



The caravans of varying sizes and shapes, arranged inevitably out of convenience rather than to be conspicuous, would be exposed and apparent in the open countryside landscape, albeit it to differing degrees. However, overall the development creates an untidy and exposed expanse of storage to the otherwise, defined edge of an established farm stead. Where the caravans are visible they would be alien and intrusive features within green rolling countryside. There would conflict with policies SS10, DC1 and DC3 of the Local Plan.

### **Other Considerations**

The description on the application form is oddly stated, in that it describes the storage as being for customers that use them on the adjacent camp ground. It is assumed that actually, the storage would be for any customer that requires a place to keep and store their caravan when it is not in use and generally they collect the caravan and use it for

holidays off site. This application has been considered accordingly, and in any event the submitted plans detail the number of caravans that are stored.

Certificate A is taken on its face, there is no evidence to show a false declaration, which would at the applicants risk be an offence and invalidate any permission. As the permission is to be refused this matter does not affect the determination.

Maintenance and access rights along the shared drive is a civil matter between landowners in which the authority cannot adjudicate. However, it is considered that collection and return would be relatively occasional, over a period of time, not at an intensity or regularity to affect amenity. The caravans would not pass within unreasonably closed proximity of the neighbour.

Caravan holidays are by definition dependent on the car, where ever the destination the journey is car dependent. Even if the caravan were collected and taken from an urban area the journey would be onward, most likely to a site in a countryside location. On this site, there is at least the option or possibility of using the stored van on site at the adjacent camp ground. Overall, a dependency on car journeys and the sites location outside of a settlement, is not a reason to refuse permission.

The highway authority has not objected to the development they consider the access to be well dimensioned with adequate visibility for towing caravans. They do not support objection on highway safety grounds.

#### **CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE**

The development would be inappropriate and harmful to the Green Belt and there would also be some harm to the character and appearance of the area, in these regards there would be conflict with the other rural area strategy and the policies of the Local Plan listed above. Planning permission should be refused.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE**

**Case Officer: Ben Hurst**

**Recommendation Date: 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

**On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**