



Development Policy Manager,
Development Services,
Warwick District Council,
Riverside House,
Milverton Hill,
Leamington Spa CD32 5QH

9941

20 July 2013.

Dear Sir,

GT 02 PROPOSED SITE FOR GYPSYS AND TRAVELLERS

I wish to STRONGLY object to the proposed site GT02 located on the Fosse Way at its junction with the A425.

Addressing the criteria by which the sites would be assessed for suitability I would like to point out that in most instances in my opinion the proposed GT 02 site will not meet the criteria and I outline my reasons as follows:

1. Convenient access to a GP surgery, school and public transport

Although the Enfusion report states that there is a GP surgery within 1.5 miles this is totally incorrect. The nearest is 3.3 miles and is fully subscribed with the next one, Cubbington Road Surgery, being 4.7 miles distant. Clearly this is not convenient nor indeed is it on a direct bus route. Schools are also further than stated and are already near capacity and likely to be so when the housing suggested in the local plan is built in Radford Semele.

2. Safe access to the road network and provision for parking, turning and servicing on site.

As regards the location of the site itself and safe access to the roadway network as a mother myself, I would point out that the site chosen is very close to the junction of two major roads which, at peak times, sees over 2000 vehicle movements per hour. Consequently the site and its residents would be subject to a higher level of noise and air pollution than would be desirable and access and egress of a large number of resident's vehicles would be on to busy roads which could result in traffic accidents.

2.1 Child safety

For the residents, particularly young children, being located so close to such busy roads is both unsafe and unhealthy. Additionally, a further concern for the children's safety is that the Grand Union Canal is relatively close by and by definition; young children are naturally drawn towards water.

2.2 Highways and safety

Gypsy and Traveller families tend to have a higher ratio of children and young adults and therefore GT 02 seems not to be a safe location. It is sited on the junction of two main roads with high traffic flows and the Fosse Way in particular sees fast traffic despite the nearby speed camera and is a designated High Risk route by the County Council.

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2.3 Additionally GT 02 is located near areas of woodland which would be an attraction for children and young adults and this together with the proximity of the Grand Union Canal would seem to present a safety issue for the residents of the proposed site.

3. Avoiding areas where there could be potential for noise and other disturbance

Traffic density and flow

GT 02 is located within 50 m of the busy junction of the A425 Southam Road and the B4455 Fosse Way, which sees some 15,500 vehicle movements in a 12 hour period from 07.00 to 19.00hrs and in peak hours this figure reaches over 2,000 vehicles. GT 02 would seem not to fit the criteria of avoiding noise and providing a safe location. Also the additional traffic generated by the proposed GT 02 site would add to peak hour delay.

4. Provision of utilities (running water, toilet facilities, waste disposal etc)

GT 02 is located at a point where there is no main gas, sewerage or drainage and these services would need to be provided, thus adding to the cost of the development. Furthermore it is possible that the electricity supply will be a problem as it is a rural feeder supplying a limited number of consumers and therefore a new or upgraded supply line may be needed.

GT 02 is situated on a limited rural electricity line which will possibly not meet the increased requirements or if it does, will affect power available to established residences and local businesses. It would therefore, contrary to the criteria, place undue pressure on local infrastructure and services.

5. Avoiding areas where there could be adverse impact on important features of the natural and historic environment.

The criteria seek to avoid areas where a site could have an adverse impact and requires that the site should be integrated into the landscape without harming the character of the area. Clearly such a large 15 pitch site located in the foot of the valley will be visible from all directions and will be a major intrusion into the openness of the countryside and furthermore will progress extensive urbanisation (site and street lighting, pavements, bus shelters etc.,) into a green field/agricultural area.

Incidentally the land identified is high-quality agricultural land under continuous arable use producing food.

6. Avoiding areas where there could be adverse impact on important features of the natural and historic environment

6.1 Historical Roman Fosse Way

GT 02 is located right next to the historic Fosse Way. The road now known as the Fosse Way was built in AD 43, nearly 2000 years ago and has been a major highway throughout the centuries. There was a tollhouse on the junction of The Fosse Way and Southam Road in the 17th and 18th. centuries.

6.2 Ecology and habitat

GT 02 is close to two historical traditional woodlands, which provide a habitat for birds, bees and small mammals that would be greatly affected by the proposed site and the possible intrusion and activities of younger residents. It is known to be habitat for Pipistrelle bats (*Pipistrellus*) and also crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) amongst many other species.

6.3 Archaeological considerations

If GT 02 is approved it is important that a major archaeological dig should take place prior to the site work so that the archaeology and heritage of the area can be recovered and safeguarded.

6.4 Tourism

In terms of tourism, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire, Kenilworth and surrounding areas are major tourist hotspots.

GT 02 will be on the junction of the two major routes into the area and a highly visible site could have an adverse effect on tourism and the local community.

6.5 Urbanisation

GT 02 will involve considerable infrastructure in addition to the actual site. Its proximity to the roundabout may require traffic control and road widening to upgrade a right turning lane access. Further features could include bus shelters and a pedestrian crossing and more street lighting would be needed.

7. Sites which can be integrated into the landscape without harming the character of the area

The criteria by which Warwick District Council will assess seek to promote peaceful and integrated coexistence between the site and the local community. GT 02 is located in a rural setting with a very limited number of bricks and mortar housing located in a half-mile radius. Residents on site would well outnumber local residents and this cannot be considered a good basis for integration.

The proposed site is 1.5 miles from any sizeable local community but conversely is adjacent to five isolated houses and thus the settled community would not be integrated rather inundated.

Both my husband and I would not wish to continue residing in our property because of concerns over the large and very different type of community placed on us and this will apply for other older residents affected as well.

8. ADDITIONAL – The Warwickshire Exhibition Centre

Aside from the areas covered by the criteria should the site be established it would have highly undesirable effects on local businesses and likely to result in the closure of the Warwickshire Exhibition Centre with potential harm to other businesses on site as a result of customer perception. With the closure of the Exhibition Centre its large car park would be a major attraction to other gypsies and travellers from a far wider area and a situation might arise where an illegal site is created vastly larger than the proposed official site.

This would give us as landowners and Warwick District Council far greater problems than currently encountered with these communities and in all probability, as the landowner, we would be obliged to sell to the illegal occupants as the only option open to us.

The siting of GT 02 would also not be in the wider interests of Leamington Spa and Warwick being located on two important roads carrying substantial national traffic consequently the highly visible site would be detrimental to the reputation and attraction of this high-profile tourist area.

The proposed site GT 02 is presently a pleasant rural country area which whilst adjacent to two busy roads nevertheless is still very much rural countryside in aspect. The proposed site will totally change the area and will result in unsightly and irreversible urbanisation and creates potential for further ribbon development that Warwick District Council will find it difficult to contest.

I sincerely trust that Council officers and Councillors will look carefully at the wider picture and potential for further problems that this site presents and indeed (due to their proximity) the two Harbury Lane sites present when making their judgements.

