



In addition, the Green Belt argument was used against Kite's Nest site being a gypsy and traveller site. It is less than a mile away and the sites are in several aspects similar, therefore this argument applies equally if not more so to Site GT 19. To oppose the Kites Nest site on the grounds of impact on Green Belt and propose GT19 site when on Green Belt land would also show a lack of consistency in WDC's appraising of sites with similar issues.

The Inspector's report from Kites Nest refusal stated:

*"For development to be allowed in the Green Belt, very special circumstances need to be identified. What constitutes very special circumstances are not identified by local planning authorities. The term is consequently a moving target as appear to be the weights and measures used to arrive at a weighted decision. The appellants (at Kites Nest) provided a list of 15 issues that could be considered as very special circumstances as to why the development should be allowed. These did not include such common issues as health, education or children. The issues are complicated and fraught."*

Impact on the Green Belt should alone be a sufficient ground for refusal.

**Criterion: Availability of the site (including impact on the existing uses on the site)**

The owner of the land at site GT19, Robert Butler, does not want to sell it for a Traveller and Gypsy site. Therefore a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) would be needed and Warwick District Council has said that a CPO could be used. This is in complete contravention of ministerial statements.

The use of a Compulsory Purchase could set up conditions for a legal challenge.

If the GT19 site were to be approved it would put the current owner's business at considerable risk and so there would also be the question of compensation for the owners business that suffered as a consequence.

Expenditure on this and a CPO would not be an appropriate use of limited financial resources of WDC.

**Criterion: Proximity to other residential properties**

The Kites Nest inspector found and the Secretary of State agreed that the Kites Nest site was situated within the local community of about 10 households, and that community would be dominated by a 13 or 8 pitch scheme.

The same argument applies for site GT19 which is set within a group of houses 4 houses to the south and a Shell petrol station to the north followed by a further 10 houses. The provision of five pitches on this site would increase the housing density by 25 per cent and thus would change the local dynamics.

The use of the term "community" is deliberate; it is not the same as settlement or that term would have been used. There is a close-knit and neighbourly sense of community amongst the occupiers of the 10 or so dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the proposed GT19 site.

The Kites Nest inspector accepted that the scattered houses do form an identifiable community. Birmingham Road houses similarly form a community and therefore it could be argued that approval of site GT19 would be going against the inspector's comments which have helped WDC in the past.

PPTS Policy B, paragraph 11(a) states that policies should "*promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community*". PPTS - Policy C states that authorities should "*ensure that the scale of such sites does not dominate the nearest settled community*".

For the above reasons, selection of Site GT19 would appear to contravene these policies.

**Criterion: Safe Access from the Site for vehicles and pedestrians.**

Approval of the GT19 site would locate the pitches between the canal and a fast and busy road (Birmingham Road A4177). Traffic on this road is already dangerous and if proposed housing developments occur it would be set to increase. This road has had 2 fatal accidents in the last five years. There was also another serious accident in March 2014.

Movement of caravans and large vehicles in and out of the site on such a fast and busy road would not only be potentially dangerous to the proposed occupiers of the GT19 site it could increase the likelihood of more accidents to other traffic. In fact an application by the current owner for the importation, storage and cutting of timber was refused on the grounds of Green Belt citing the fact that the site is on a busy and fast main road (Birmingham Road A4177). To refuse the landowner's application on such grounds and then ignore them when assessing the GT19 proposal is contradictory.

**Criterion: Impact on visual amenity including the visibility of the site and surrounding area.**

The previous inspector involved with Kites Nest found that the development was very prominent through "gappy hedges" and from public footpaths, and that the existing caravans were an "extremely jarring element". The secretary of State agreed with this assessment. Site GT19 would be similarly visible through gappy hedges.

The road is higher than the proposed site so that it would be overlooked. In the current consultation document reference is made to a habitat buffer being required to the canal side of the development. It could be argued that similar screening would be required on the road side to give the residents privacy from passing traffic and to screen off the caravans from the neighbouring houses. Screening issues for Site GT19 are even more extensive than Kites Nest.

Site GT 19 would also be visible from the canal which is a tourist attraction with its many locks and is likely to have an adverse impact on important features of the natural and historic environment. The present canal dates back to 1799 and the flight of 21 locks are well known among waterways aficionados and are a greatly valued heritage asset. There is also a great deal of narrow boat traffic, especially in the summer months, to see and use the 21 locks.

**Criterion: Distance to nearby Schools ... etc.**

Education would have to be provided for gypsy children and it has been suggested that children could attend Budbrooke School. Budbrooke School is already struggling with numbers due to rising population. Ferncombe School in Hatton is also full.

**Criterion: Impact of land contamination, noise and other disturbance**

The five pitches present potential noise and disturbance for families living in close proximity.

**Compliance with PPTS - health and wellbeing**

**It is noted that no criterion is listed to address this policy and it should be.**

PPTS Policy B - Paragraph 11(e) states that local planning authorities should, ensure that their policies: *"provide for proper consideration of the effect of local environmental quality (such as noise and air quality) on the health and well-being of any travellers that may locate there or on others as a result of new development."*

The GT19 site is adjacent to a nearby canal. There could be detrimental effects to the health and well being of young children living near the canal.

Also, to put children on a site near a potentially dangerous road does not appear to comply with this Policy.

**Criterion: impact on heritage assets and setting of heritage assets**

The flight of 21 locks was opened in 1799 and known as the "stairway to heaven". The tourist heritage side of Budbrooke is currently underdeveloped. Ramblers, joggers, dog walkers, cyclists, artists, photographers, bird watchers and other groups use the towpath. Then there is the river traffic. Narrow boat owners travel along the canal at weekends and for their holidays. Boats are also rented for holidays.

To locate the Gypsy and Traveller Site adjacent to this area would not enhance it but have an adverse affect and the history and heritage of the area.

We understand that the current owner of proposed GT19 site in conjunction has drawn up plans with British Waterways for a marina with a restaurant and a conference centre. This would include a heritage area with pictures and artefacts of traditional life so that local people and visitors could see and appreciate the lives of former generations.

The viability of this proposal should at least be considered in order to examine whether it could increase the tourist industry in the area and provide employment opportunities for local people.

It would seem that encouraging tourism, preservation of heritage, and possible employment opportunities should take precedence over inappropriate use of expenditure on CPOs and potential financial compensation.

I wish this document to be regarded as my personal representations against the GT19 site.

Yours sincerely

