

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR RETROSPECTIVE PLANNING PERMISSION TO BE GRANTED  
FOR THE SITING OF ONE GYPSY/TRAVELLER'S PITCH AT LAND ADJOINING CHESTER'S FARM,  
CHESTER ROAD, EFFINGHAM, KT24 5SQ

Background:

The Land is currently occupied by one traveller family comprising of the son and daughter in law of one of the landowners and their two children aged 5years and 18 months old. There is no planning permission in place for the use and the family seeks to regularise the position. They have one static caravan (14' by 36') (labelled A on the Site Plan) and a tourer and have built a small stable block (labelled B) on the land. Building B is currently a wooden off the peg stables building and permission is sought to place a brick built structure comprising 2 stables and a utility/bathroom and toilet at the end closest to the family's accommodation.

Use:

The Static caravan will be used to house the family and the stables are to provide shelter for the horses the family keep. There will also be a utility/bathroom and toilet built in with the stables.

Amount:

The caravan floor space (Building A) is 46.44 metres square.

The stables floor space (Building B) is 43.2 metres square.

Layout:

The caravan is sited on a hardstanding tucked into the side of the pitch behind established screening and next to the stable block. Both the stable block and the caravan look out over fields owned by the family for over a decade and used to house horses.

Scale:

The dimensions of the static caravan (A) are 4.26m deep x 10.9m long

The dimensions of the stables (B) are 3.6m deep x 12.2m long

Landscaping:

The land will be left as it is currently, a field with a small hardstanding on which is sited a static caravan, space for the storage of a tourer next to it and then the stable building next to that. The family wish to live with their horses in close proximity and wish to remain private for the reasons outlined below. The caravans cannot be seen from the road and are well screened with established trees on the land adjoining which is in the ownership of Guildford Borough Council.

The development is already served by a septic tank which was on site in situ because of a previous occupation of the land with an old static caravan having previously been sited next to the farm buildings. At the moment the land is served by a hose from a neighbouring property and water will need to be brought on properly.

Permission is sought to provide a hard surface of impacted crushed concrete to provide a driveway into the site on the area marked 'H'.

Permission is also sought to place a closeboarded fence to a height of 4 along the line marked CD, DE and EF on the site plan with a gate at position G. this is to provide an enclosed safe garden for the children of the family to play safely.

Appearance:

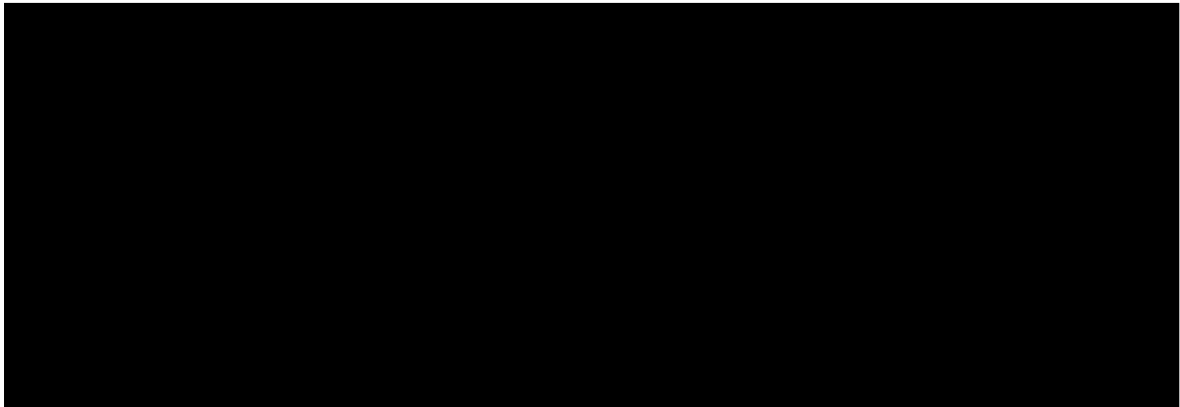
The static home is a one storey caravan purchased off the shelf. It has white window frames and white faux details such as corner stones and is painted pale grey so as not to be obtrusive and blends in well with the landscape.

The stables will be brick built and have natural wood stable doors and uPVC windows and doors in the utility part of the structure. The roof will be a pent wooden roof covered in roofing felt.

Personal circumstances:

The applicant and the proposed occupants are Romany gypsy by heritage. The land was purchased in 2007. The family has lived in the near vicinity for 40 years.

The owners of the land live at New House which is on the same road opposite. The property was placed on the land during March 2020 following a family emergency. This was of course the period of Covid lockdowns, and the family was in a significant predicament which required them to relocate without the time and ability to find an alternative site.



Following this incident it has become apparent that the family can no longer pursue a nomadic lifestyle for their safety. Nor can they purchase a plot on a larger site or take up council sites. Their need for privacy and security is paramount and as such it is argued that the usual considerations of the 5 year land supply and council provision of sites suitable for occupation are not relevant in this case. Whilst they must settle down the family are simply unable to manage in bricks and mortar, being of Romany heritage their customs in not occupying such accommodation are important to them.

The council were aware of their presence as electricity way leaves were entered into to bring the electric over the adjoining council land. No planning permission was sought at the time and a PCN was served in September 2023. In October 2023 it was responded to.

Given the Covid period, communication with third parties was difficult and the applicant was anxious to ensure that the whereabouts of her sons was kept as low profile as possible for fear of reprisals.

Climate change:

There are no concerns in relation to flooding.

Policy matters:

#### Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

This development meets the aims of the Policy on Traveller sites in the provision of a private site in circumstances where alternatives are not available to the family. It will be all too easy for the family to be found if they are on sites for multiple families or on council sites. Travelling would be unwise for the family and the area is able to accommodate them easily and near their family.

#### Green Belt

Whilst the site is in the green belt it is submitted that the proposed development is entirely in keeping with the green belt. The site location is not heavily developed, and the site has been designed to ensure the minimum of impact upon the environment and the built environment of the area. Many of the hallmarks of traveller sites are not present as the family wishes to use the land for horses as well as live there and have no need for hardstanding or hardcore areas. They wish to use the land for equestrian purposes and to live there in symbiosis with their animals discretely.

The development is therefore sustainable in terms of materials and scale.

It is argued that these proposals and the family's needs meet the criteria of very special circumstances which would permit development in the green belt under NPPF 147.

The development proposed on this site is designed to be respectful of the green belt and it would be in keeping with the countryside, being unimposing, discrete and of natural materials. NPPF 148 is of course engaged but it is argued that the potential harm (in developing a small crop of impermanent buildings next to a farm) is outweighed by the needs of the family concerned.