

DR/32/09

committee DEVELOPMENT & REGULATION

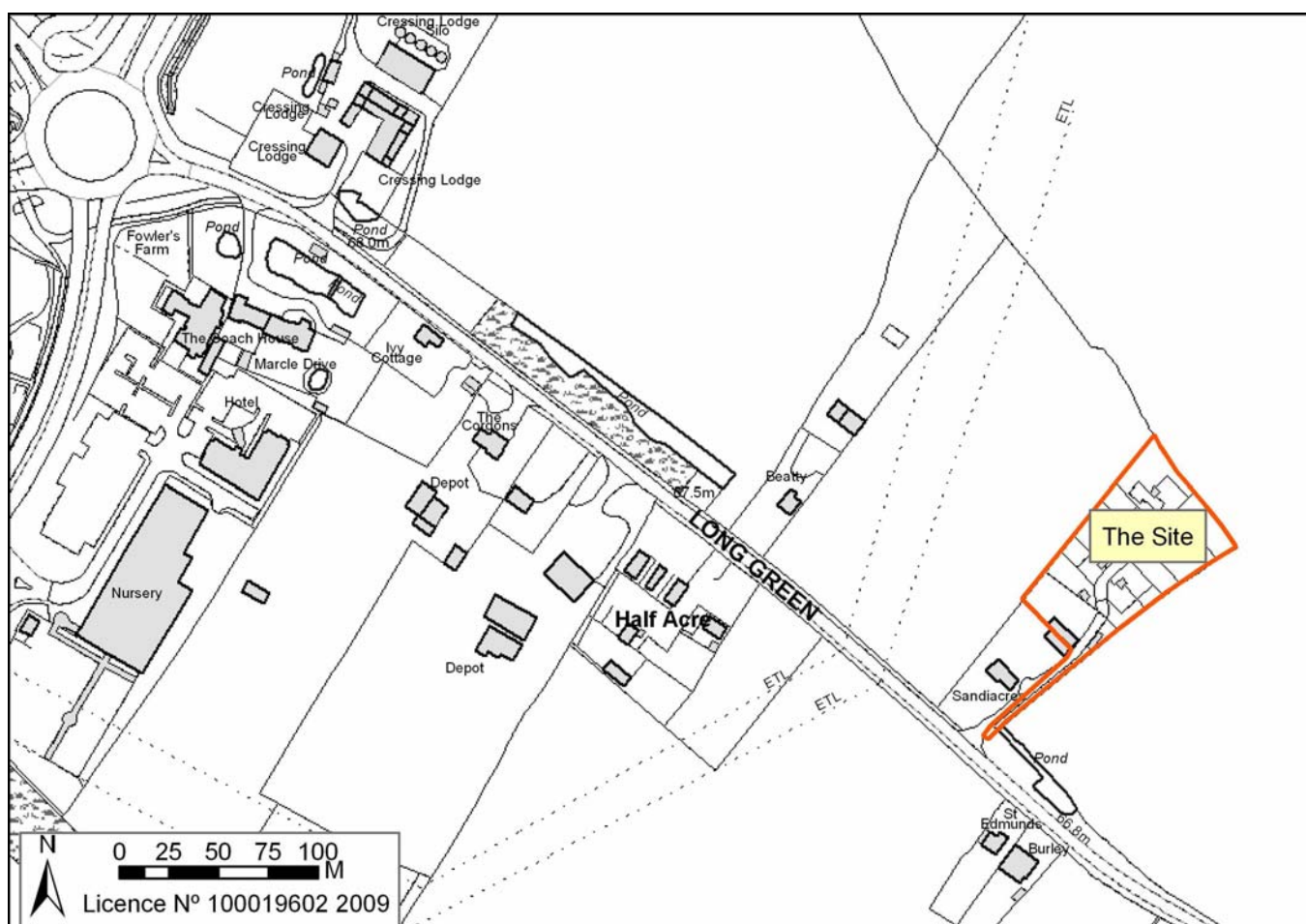
date 22 May 2009

COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT

The construction of 2 new plots to existing traveller's site, comprising new double "Day Block" with kitchens and toilets and hardstandings enclosed by closeboard fencing and steel entrance gates.

Sandiactres Travellers Site, Long Green, Cressing, Braintree, Essex, CM7 8DL
Ref: CC/BTE/14/09

Report for Head of Environmental Planning
 Enquiries to Glenn Shaw Tel: 01245 437117



1. SITE

Sandiacres Travellers Site is located in a rural setting 2 miles south-east of Braintree Town Centre, around $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to the north-east of the village Tye Green and 1 mile north west of the village of Cressing. The site is accessed via Long Green Road and lies to the north of this road.

There is 1 residential property which is located at the entrance to Sandiacres Travellers Site.

The site is screened by a mature hedge to the north, east and southern boundaries. The western boundary is screened by a 2 metre close boarded wooden fence.

2. PROPOSAL

The proposal is to provide two adjoining plots each served by back to back amenity blocks ("day rooms") with kitchen area, toilet and shower and to provide areas of enclosed hard landscaped compounds for the siting of a caravan or similar mobile accommodation.

3. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Since adoption of the RSS a review of the policies with respect to Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople has commenced and a draft amended policy has been outlined within "The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy and Statement of Reasons". The draft policy sets suggested levels of pitches for each district and the suggested provision of 25 pitches for Braintree District for period 2006 to 2011.

The following policies of the Braintree District Local Plan Review Adopted 2005(BDLPR), the East of England Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy [RSS]) provide the development plan framework for this application.

	BDLPR	RSS
Provision for Gypsies and Travellers		H3
Development likely to give rise to pollution, or the risk of pollution	RLP 62	
Countryside	RLP 78	
Layout and design development	RLP 90	

4. CONSULTATIONS

BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL – No objection subject to the consideration of the following conditions:-

- Commencement of development within 3 years.
- Alterations to the highway arrangements as described within the applicants

Design and Access Statement.

- Prior to development details of boundary treatments shall be agreed.
- Details clarifying the drainage and sewage connections.
- A condition attached to ensure that the occupation of the plots hereby approved shall be solely by Gypsies and/or Travellers as defined by the relevant Act.

COMMENT:

It is not considered appropriate to impose such a condition and would be outside the relevant tests outlined in Circular 11/95. Nevertheless the applicant has confirmed that only Gypsies and Travellers would occupy the site.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT (Landscape) ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND HIGHWAYS - No objection provided that a close-boarded fence is erected to the north west of the proposal.

HIGHWAY AUTHORITY - No objection subject to an informative for steps taken to ensure the developer provides sufficient turning and off loading facilities for delivery vehicles within the limits of the site together with an adequate parking area for those employed in developing the site.

CRESSING PARISH COUNCIL - Objects on the following grounds.

- That any additional proposed accommodation would constitute overdevelopment of the site.
- With traffic entering or leaving the site that the risks of accidents will be increased especially at peak times.
- Concerns over the arrangements for sewage disposal.

LOCAL MEMBER - Braintree Eastern - Any views received will be reported.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

9 properties were directly notified of the application. No letters of representation were received.

6. APPRAISAL

The key issues for consideration are:

- A. Need
- B. Design
- C. Impact on the Residential and Local Amenity
- D. Highways.

A NEED

The proposed changes to the draft revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for Accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople in the East of England March 2009 calls for the increase of pitch requirement for Braintree District from 16 to 25 for the period 2006 to 2011.

This proposal is for the increase of the present 12 pitches at the Sandiacres Traveller's site to 14. The applicant considers that this would utilise the remaining unused land on site which has become prone to tipping and would fulfil a demand from the traveller community for more accommodation on the site. Furthermore it is hoped that by increasing the number of pitches on this site it would reduce the number of unlawful encampments. It is considered that the provision of more permanent rented accommodation would encourage assimilation and integration of the traveller community into the local community which would encourage school attendance and community participation.

Cressing Parish Council are unable to support this application as they feel that the existing amenity is already functioning beyond the natural capacity of the site and the introduction of this additional accommodation would constitute further overdevelopment of the site especially given its rural location.

In addition Braintree District Council has raised the issue that a condition be applied to ensure that the occupation of the plots hereby approved shall be solely used by Gypsies and/or Travellers. The applicant has confirmed that Essex County Council only operates this policy,

The applicant has confirmed that Essex County Council operates 11 permanent sites with between 6 to 25 pitches per site. 50% of these sites are of 15 pitches or more. The proposed expansion of the site would bring it to 14 pitches and well within its operating capacity. As such it is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the emerging policy H3 of the Regional Spatial Strategy for Accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople in the East of England March 2009.

B DESIGN

This proposal is to allow an extension to the existing traveller's site at Sandiacres. This extension would provide two new additional plots to the existing twelve plots.

The proposed development is to provide two adjoining plots each served by back to back amenity blocks("day rooms") with kitchen area, toilet and shower. The proposed development would also comprise areas of enclosed hard landscape compounds for the siting of a caravan or similar mobile home.

The proposed blocks would be constructed using a 'fairfaced' brickwork and would match the other blocks within the site. The proposed roofs would be constructed using interlocking tiles and would match the existing roofs. The proposed window and door frames would be painted soft wood and would match the existing painted softwood window and door frames.

The site already has a boundary treatment on its western side of a 2 metre high close-boarded fence. The applicant has confirmed that the proposed development would have the same boundary treatment to match the existing. The Council's landscape advisor and Braintree District Council have not raised an objection, but have concerns that there is no close-boarded fence on a part of the north-western boundary. Provided that a suitable condition is imposed requiring close-boarded

fencing details to be submitted and implemented, it is considered that the development would not have a detrimental visual impact.

The proposed development at Sandiacres Traveller's site would be connected to the main drainage system. Cressing Parish Council has raised concerns about the arrangements for the sewage disposal which they consider to be inadequate as there have been on-going concerns over the serious pollution of the local streams and waterways. In addition Braintree District Council have raised concerns with regard to the clarification of the drainage and sewage connections that are available on site and outlining the improvements that would be required to ensure that there are no foreseeable future problems. Although this is not directly a planning issue, the applicant has confirmed that there have been no reports or issues regarding the drains for this site. The Environment Agency has confirmed that it is unaware of any drainage problems at Sandiacres traveller's site and that records show that the site is connected to the main foul sewer. The Environment Agency has also confirmed that there have been issues with the drainage on the other side of the road at Cordon's Farm and these issues are unrelated to the Sandiacres site. It is therefore considered that this proposal would comply with Braintree District Local Plan Policy RLP 62 Development likely to give rise to pollution or the risk of pollution.

It is considered that this proposal at the site would match and be related to the existing patterns of development and therefore would comply with Braintree District Local Plan Policy RLP 78 Countryside and Policy RLP 90 Layout and Design.

C IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AND LOCAL AMENITY

The site is located in a rural setting. The site is screened by a mature hedge to the north, east and southern boundaries. The western boundary is screened by 2 metre close boarded wooden fence. There is one residential property to the front of the entrance to the traveller's site and the nearest village settlement of Tye Green is 1300 yards to the south west. It is considered that this development would not harm residential amenity of the neighbouring due to the screening of the well established hedge and 2 metre high close boarded fence.

D HIGHWAYS

The applicant has stated that the existing access road is to be maintained and used to access the site. The existing vehicular barrier will be moved further up the access road to control access to the site and that traffic into and out of the site is likely to increase by around 16% which is proportionate to the number of additional plots. Cressing Parish Council is concerned that any increase in the capacity will lead to an increase in traffic entering and leaving the site and that the risks of accidents will be increased especially at times of peak traffic flow. Braintree District Council has not raised an objection to the proposal but has concerns that prior to the first occupation of the plots hereby proposed, the alterations to the highway arrangements that are described within the applicants Design and Access Statement shall be undertaken in full and retained in perpetuity. The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the proposal but has requested that an informative be added stating that steps should be taken to ensure that the developer provides sufficient turning and offloading facilities for delivery vehicles,

within the limits of the site together with an adequate parking area for those employed in developing the site and given this it is not considered that there is any reason to refuse the application on highways safety or capacity grounds.

7. CONCLUSION

It is considered that the design, scale and size which would match the existing development would not have an impact on the residential and local amenity and is in accordance with local plan policies. As there are no other factors that would warrant the withholding of planning permission, it is concluded that the application be approved subject to appropriate conditions.

RECOMMENDED

That pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, planning permission be **granted** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiry of 3 years from the date of this permission.
2. That the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the details submitted of the application reference dated 13 February 2009 together with drawing numbers: A4003 Site Location and Amenity Block Plan and Elevations proposed and design and Access statement dated 13 February 2009, except as varied by the following condition:
3. No development shall take place until details of close-boarded fencing to be erected on the north-western boundary of the site, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details
4. No occupation of the plots hereby approved shall be used other than by Gypsies and/or Travellers.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Consultation replies
Representation

Ref: P/DC/Glenn Shaw/CC/BAS/02/09

LOCAL MEMBER NOTIFICATION

LOCAL MEMBER – BRAINTREE Eastern