

Mr Patrick Donavan	Material change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 5 Traveller pitches, including the laying of hardstanding and construction of a 1.8m timber fence. (Retrospective).	06.06.2025	25/00492/FUL
	Land At Wassell Grove Lane, Hagley Worcestershire, DY9 9JH		

Councillor Lambert has requested the application is considered by Planning Committee rather than being determined under Delegated Powers

RECOMMENDATION: That full planning permission be **REFUSED**:

Consultations

Highways: Objection

- Based on the submitted plans provided in appendix G of the submitted highways technical note, a visibly splay of 2.4 metres by 48.36 metres can be achieved to the left of the site access and 2.4m x 63.7metres can be achieved to the right.
- Whilst these accord with the requirements of Manual for Streets and the Worcestershire Streetscape Design Guide, it would require the removal a substantial amount of well-established hedgerow which could undermine the character of the lane, and present better levels of visibility which could increase vehicle speeds at this location to the detriment of highway safety.
- If the hedgerow cannot be removed, based on the Local Planning Authority's' assessment, then the Highway Authority concludes that the required visibility splay in accordance with Manual for Streets and the Worcestershire Streetscape Design Guide based on the 85th percentile speeds cannot be achieved. Therefore, the applicant would not be able to demonstrate a safe and suitable access in accordance with paragraph 115 matter c of the National Planning Policy Framework
- It is noted that the development site is remote from key services and facilities which would support the development. The Highway Authority does note that in its assessment that the site is not sustainable but that this is a matter to the Local Planning Authority to assess and conclude on in its assessment of the development proposals.
- However, the Highway Authority is concerned that whilst the development may be car dominated, some residents may still undertake active and sustainable travel to access services and facilities. The nearest shops are located at the junction of Wynnall Lane, Wynnall Lane South and Oakfield Road to the northwest of the site. This is approximately 1.20km away with the use of rural lanes with no footway provision and limited verges which are not lit. In addition, it would require pedestrians to walk along routes which are subject to a signed 40mph speed limit. The Highway Authority concludes at the application does not meet the

requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework notably paragraph 117 to the detriment of highways safety.

- Also consideration to a recent planning appeal decision (APP/P1805/W/25/3374801) for a refusal of a planning in principle application at Primrose Nurseries, Fairfield Road, Bournheath, Worcestershire, where the appeal was dismissed in substantial part because safe, practical pedestrian access to bus stops and local facilities does not exist, routes exceed recommended distances and lack pavements/lighting, and walking in the carriageway would increase conflict and discourage sustainable travel leaving residents car dependent and conflicting with BDP1/2/16 and the NPPF. The highway Authority would conclude the same principle would apply for this proposed development.
- Summary & Recommendation: The Highway Authority has undertaken a full and robust assessment of the additional information which has been submitted in support of the planning application. After careful consideration and appraisal, the Highway Authority is concerned that the level of visibility proposed by the applicants traffic consultant cannot be achieved without removal of a significant and well-established hedgerow, and there is insufficient information regarding forward stopping sight distances, which raises concerns that the proposals could undermine highway safety.
- In addition, the development would be car dominated with lack of access to nearby facilities but also would require pedestrians to walk in live carriageways of rural nature due to there being no footway provision or streetlighting.
- The Highway Authority concludes the proposals have the potential to have a detrimental impact upon the safe operation of the highway network and therefore does not accord with the requirements of paragraph 116 which is supported by the following matters in paragraphs 115 and 117.

Conservation Officer

- The application site is located close proximity to Wassell Grove Farmhouse, listed Grade II and the associated barns, curtilage listed, to north and now converted to commercial office use.
- It is considered that the development does detract from the setting of the listed farmhouse, and the curtilage listed barns as the rural setting contributes to the significance of the listed farmhouse, the development will harm the significance of the building. The development is therefore at odds with the requirements of the 1990 Act, policies in the Bromsgrove Development Plan and the NPPF. Paragraph 215 of the latter is therefore engaged, and the applicant needs to demonstrate that the harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

- No objection subject to conditions relating to:
 - A programme of archaeological work is required within 12 months of an approved planning application

North Worcestershire Water Management

- It is my view that the submitted surface water drainage strategy has not demonstrated that the surface water runoff from the site will be attenuated to

greenfield runoff levels effectively and therefore that the proposed development will not exacerbate existing off-site flood risk. I would therefore argue that the application should not be permitted without a revised surface water drainage strategy. If you nevertheless decide to approve this application, then I would prefer it if you could use a condition that references the National standards for SuDS (Defra, 2025) as this sets out the required design criteria such as the need to design for a 1 in 100 year event plus climate change allowance and the requirement to limit flows to pre-development (greenfield) rates.

- Notwithstanding the drainage strategy submitted with the application, within three months of the date of the decision a scheme for surface water drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include design details of surface water drainage measures for all impermeable areas and shall demonstrate compliance with the National standards for sustainable drainage systems (Defra, 2025). The scheme shall detail how it will be ensured that no runoff will bypass the surface water drainage scheme and discharge unattenuated to the adjacent ditch. The approved surface water drainage scheme shall be implemented and thereafter maintained in accordance with the agreed scheme.

Hagley Parish Council

- Objection
- Additional information has been supplied in the form of a Tree Survey and Heritage Impact Assessment. The first does nothing to change anything, as it is written for submission with a planning application for prospective development, not for a retrospective one. Thus, its recommendations could not be applied as conditions. The damage to be guarded against has already been done.
- The second is a well written Heritage Impact Assessment showing negligible impact on the designated heritage asset but failing completely to address the overall impact on the area. Neither document materially changes the basic reasons of the previous objection. Wassell Grove Lane has the character of a reversed letter Z. We consider the Heritage Impact Assessment to be disingenuous in that it does not adequately address the impact on the section of the lane before the corners, approaching from the southwest. Nor does it adequately address the effect travelling in the opposite direction, where ugly caravans are highly visible on the right and the listed buildings on the left. This inevitably adversely affects their setting.
- As stated, the site is in the Green Belt. Under Policy BDP4, the development of no buildings in the Green Belt is considered inappropriate. This reflects the provisions of National Planning Policy Framework (para 154), which refers to “development”, rather than just “buildings”. Both these are subject to exceptions, but none of the exceptions applies to this case. BDP15 contains further provisions allowing certain development to meet the needs of rural communities, but, again, none of the cases listed applies here.
- This is an unsuitable site for the unauthorised development that has taken place. Planning consent should be refused and BDC should continue its enforcement proceedings.

Publicity

77 letters sent 29.09.25 (expired 20.10.25)

Site notice displayed 06.06.2025 (expired 30/06/2025)

Press notice in the Bromsgrove Standard published 23.03.2026 (expired 13.04.2026.)

A total of 83 comments has been received in relation to the application. Of those 83 are recorded as objections. No supporting comments have been received.

The material planning issues raised include:

- Highway/traffic issues including the narrowness of the road, volume of traffic, the impact on pedestrians, including children, using the road, additional traffic which would result from the proposal, the lack of footpaths or street lighting and the site access is dangerous
- The impact on protected species/wildlife
- The site is in the Green Belt and should be protected. There are no very special circumstances for the development
- The development would be out of character with the area
- There are no local amenities and access to amenities would be reliant on the private car
- Lack of mains sewage locally
- Impact on the landscape
- The land is not designated for residential development
- The large area of hardstanding is unnecessary
- The visual impact of the proposed development

Some of the comments received raised matters which are not material planning considerations. These matters are not reported here.

Councillor Lambert

- I wish to call the application in due to the public interest and the large number of comments from residents.

Relevant Policies

Bromsgrove District Plan

BDP1 Sustainable Development Principles

BDP2 Settlement Hierarchy

BDP4 Green Belt

BDP11 Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople

BDP16 Sustainable Transport

BDP19 High Quality Design

BDP20 Managing the Historic Environment

BDP21 Natural Environment

BDP23 Water Management

Others

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance

PPTS Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

GTAA Worcestershire Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment 2014

GTAA Gypsy and travellers Accommodation Assessment Addendum 2024
 Bromsgrove Gypsy and Traveller Assessment (GTAA) Update – Dec 2021
 The House of Commons briefing paper entitled Gypsies and Travellers; Planning Provisions 19 December 2019
 High Quality Design SPD

Relevant Planning History

24/00254/FUL: Change of use of land to equestrian use, retention of stables, hardstanding and alterations made to the vehicular access.
 Withdrawn 21 May 2024

22/01627/ENFGA: Appeal against enforcement notice reference 20/00240/INV (erection of a building) based dated on ground 'd' - that, at the time the enforcement notice was issued, it was too late to take enforcement action against the matters stated in the notice.
 Appeal Dismissed 06 November 2023

20/01032/FUL: Change of Use from a pony paddock to provide 2 no. Gypsy / Traveller pitches inclusive of 2 no. Static Caravans, 2 no. Touring Caravans, 2 no. Amenity Blocks, access driveway and Bio-Disc.
 Withdrawn 23 November 2023

Site Description and Proposal

The application site is located on the west side of Wassell Grove Lane in Hagley. The site previously comprised an open parcel of land with an existing access from Wassell Grove Lane. This access is being retained for use by the occupiers of the site. The site is opposite a Grade II listed building. There are two TPO trees on the boundary of the site.

This application seeks planning permission for the material change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 5 Traveller pitches, including the laying of hardstanding and construction of a 1.8m timber fence.

The 5 pitches on the application site are currently occupied by touring caravans. However, permission is sought for both mobile homes (“MH”) and touring caravans (“TC”), as well as small utility rooms (“UT”) on each pitch. The existing shed which has been built at Plot 1 is proposed to be replaced by a utility room. Car parking and amenity space is also proposed to serve each pitch.

Assessment of Proposal

Gypsy Traveller Status

The definition of gypsies and travellers is set out in Annex 1 (Glossary) to the Planning policy for traveller sites 2015 (PPTS) as:

“Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health

needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.”

Whilst the application seeks permission for a permanent settled base, the application sets out that the proposed occupiers of the pitches continue to travel frequently throughout the year. As such it is considered that the occupiers fall within the above definition as gypsies.

Need and Supply of Pitches

The Bromsgrove District Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment 2024/25 (September 2025) confirms that for the period 2024/25 to 2041/42, there is a need for 37 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across the District. Of this need, 17 pitches are needed in the first five years and 20 over the longer-term period 2029/30 to 2041/42.

This development would contribute 5 pitches to the 17-pitch shortfall within the next 5 years.

It is therefore evident that there is an identified need for additional pitches in the next five-year period, and that the LPA cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable sites.

Green Belt/Grey Belt

The application site is located in the Green Belt. Paragraph 155 of the NPPF (2024) is therefore of relevance, confirming that the development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate development, subject to meeting all of the relevant criteria.

The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, the NPPF defines grey belt land as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in Paragraph 143, excluding land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

In relation to purpose (a), which relates to the sprawl of large built up areas, the PPG notes that villages should not be considered as large built up areas.

The application site is located in the ward of Hagley, on the edge of Stourbridge. The site is physically contained in its own right, and hence the development would not result in the sprawl of large built up areas in this regard. As such the application site does not strongly contribute to purpose (a).

In relation to purpose (b), which relates to the merging of towns, the PPG again

confirms that this does not relate to villages. In any case, by way of the site's position, the site does not form a gap between towns. The site's containment ensures that the development would not result in neighbouring towns merging into one another. Therefore, the application site does not strongly contribute to purpose (b).

In relation to purpose (d), which relates to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns, the PPG again notes that this does not apply to villages. In any case, the proposal does not impact the setting and special character of a historic town and so the application site does not strongly contribute to purpose (d).

It is noted that grey belt land excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development. The application site is not located within any of the designations listed at footnote 7, and so there are no strong reasons for refusing or restricting development in this regard.

Therefore, as the application site does not strongly contribute to the purposes of the Green Belt, and there are no other strong reasons for refusing or restricting development as set out in footnote 7, the application site is defined as comprising grey belt land.

In considering the impact on the remaining Green Belt in the plan area, the development of the application site would not affect the ability of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan from serving all five of the Green Belt purposes in a meaningful way. The application site itself is well contained. The development of the site would therefore not encroach into open countryside. Hence, the proposal meets the criteria of Paragraph 155(a).

b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;

There is a demonstrable unmet need of pitches

c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and

In accordance with Paragraphs 110 and 115 of the NPPF (2024), it is understood that development should be located sustainably, whilst recognising that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.

The application site is located in Hagley, opposite Wassell Grove Business Centre and a collection of residential properties. The site is no less sustainably located than this existing development. The site is also located in close proximity to Stourbridge, which contains a large variety of public transport links and local services. This includes the local schools which several of the occupiers' children attend. The closest is located on 1.3 miles and is easily accessible.

I consider later the question of the sustainability of the location and find this is, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of the Framework and the provisions of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), not an unsustainable location for the particular development proposed. Accordingly, I conclude that the requirements of Paragraph 155(c) are met.

d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.

The Golden Rules set out within the NPPF relate to major developments and policies for affordable housing. Hence, the Golden Rules are not applicable.

Conclusion on Grey Belt

It is considered that the site is within land that is grey belt.

Character and Appearance

Worcestershire County Council's Landscape Character Assessment defines the area as "Timbered Plateau Farmlands" which comprises a varied, mixed farming land scape of hedged fields, scattered farms, woods and wooded valleys associated with upstanding areas of undulating relief. The landform conveys a sense of strength and dominance which tends to override the pattern of tree cover and fields. Variations in landform within this landscape create a changing sequence of visual perspectives, ranging from open vistas on plateau summits to more secluded scenes along valley bottoms.

The NPPF places an emphasis on fostering well-designed places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being. This is the social objective of the NPPF and its sustainability goals. Whilst Traveller site developments may not be regarded as well integrated into the 'Timbered Plateau Farmland' they serve a purpose for those within the nomadic part of our society.

It is considered that the proposal will cause some harm to the character and appearance of the area specifically the introduction of the boundary fence into the existing field. However, with additional planting and landscaping around the site this detrimental impact can be reduced to mitigate the harm caused to the character of the area. By agreeing to a landscaping condition, the character of the site will align better with the countryside setting, The development would avoid the risk of creating an urbanised feel and instead respect the essential rural character of the locality.

Location of the site

The site is distinctly separate from nearby urban areas. The access from the road network is poor and there being no direct footpaths and otherwise unlit rural roads. In common with many countryside development sites, the site is located some distance from any local shops and services, 2km to Hagley and 2km to Stourbridge to the North.

While the Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP) identifies that growth within the district should be located at the most accessible and sustainable locations in accordance with the Council's settlement hierarchy, it does not set out any specific requirements concerning accessibility to shops and services for Traveller sites.

Indeed, paragraph 155 and footnote 57 of the Framework indicate that particular reference should be made to paragraph 13 when determining whether Traveller sites in the Green Belt would be in a sustainable location. I do not see that any of the aims of paragraph 13 are undermined by this development.

On this basis it is reasonable to consider sustainability in the round. While the site is poorly located in terms of access to services, there are sustainability benefits in providing a settled location for Travellers and the council acknowledges the demand for such provision. Moreover, the Framework advises at paragraph 110 that 'opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making'.

With the above points in mind, I do not regard this as an unsuitable location for the particular development proposed in terms of access to services and find no conflict with the Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP)

This also means that I regard the location as sustainable for this development for the purposes of Paragraph 155 of the Framework.

Best Interest of Children and Personal Circumstances

The application is supported by information regarding the occupiers of the proposed pitches and their personal circumstances. It has been requested that the detail of this information be kept confidential due to the sensitive nature of the contents; a brief summary has been set out below.

The site is proposed to be occupied by an extended family, with the intention that three of the pitches will have occupants that include children.

Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights states that everyone has the right to respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence. Where the article 8 rights are those of children, they must be seen in the context of article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which requires a child's best interest to be a primary consideration. It is however important to note that a child's best interest is not determinative of the planning issue and may be outweighed by the cumulative effect of other considerations provided that the adverse impact on the child of any decision is proportionate.

The occupiers' needs for the proposed pitches can be described as follows: -

One plot is occupied by two adults and their four children of ages ranging between 3 and 11. The three eldest children are all having their educational needs met in the locality through a combination of school/nursery attendance and education from the education department of Worcestershire County Council.

The family are registered at the local doctor's surgery and the local dentist and living nearby makes these visits and access to healthcare much easier.

One plot is occupied by one adult and four children of ages ranging between 6 and 16. The educational needs of the children are being met in the locality through a mixture of school attendance and home schooling. The children's education has improved since they have occupied the site. All occupants of this plot are able to access services locally including being registered with a doctor's surgery. The family are pleased to have a stable home on a safe site.

One plot is occupied by two adults and three children of ages ranging between 12 and 15. Previously, the two adults were moving around a lot of sites around Birmingham and Stoke-on-Trent. One adult has health needs and so is very much reliant on family support.

The remaining two plots have no children on them.

From the personal circumstances as listed above it is clear there is a locational need in terms of education and health.

Heritage Impact

Wassell Grove Farm is a Grade II listed Georgian farmhouse, which dates from the early 19th century, with later additions and alterations. The building is of three storeys and constructed of brick, with a single storey side extension encompassing the former dairy and tack room. To the north are a range of 19th century brick barns, now in separate ownership and converted to offices. The farmhouse has both architectural and historic interest being a substantial three storey building some fine architectural detailing and its size indicating the wealth of the farmstead at the time. The associated barns form a regular courtyard in an L plan with some additional elements. The complex comprises an interesting survival of a historic farmstead with almost all its 19th century buildings extant, and the original plan clearly legible. The house and barns are located in a predominantly rural location, and this setting contributes to our understanding of the listed buildings and their significance.

The conservation officer states that: *'With the exception of the loss of field boundaries the immediate setting has changed little during the 20th and early 21st centuries. Wassell Grove House has been demolished and replaced with a modern house, not seen from the road. The stables to the house, immediately to the south of the farmhouse, have been converted to residential use but they have maintained their form. As noted above although the barns to the farmhouse have been converted to commercial use the plan form remains legible. The house has undergone various works of upgrading over the years but no more than one would expect to maintain a property in use, and its architectural interest is still clear.'*

The application site is located to the west of Wassell Grove Lane, and to the north west of the farmhouse and to the west of the converted farm buildings. It was a paddock, but the front half of the site has been cleared of grass and five caravan

itches have been laid out, together with an access track roughly opposite the entrance to the converted barns.

The development of the caravan pitches on the site has altered the rural character of the setting of the listed farmhouse and converted barns introducing built form into the paddock. There are clear views of the development as noted above from the southerly section of Wassell Grove lane and the footpath to the west, as well as views from the upper floors of the listed building. The development detracts from the setting of the listed building and converted barns and therefore the significance of the listed building and curtilage listed buildings.

Although the historic association of the site and the listed farmhouse remains appreciable from looking at historic mapping it is undermined by the development on the site.

The fact that there is a small campsite some distance away does not make camp/caravan sites typical of the area. The other site is not within the setting of the listed building and cannot be seen from the road. It can be argued that the immediate setting of the farmhouse has changed due to the conversion of the associated barns to a commercial use. However, their plan form and original use remains clearly legible despite the conversion. As noted above the development is prominent and dominant in views from the southerly section of Wassell Grove Lane and the public footpath. Both vantage points have been completely ignored in the applicant's Heritage Statement.

It is therefore considered that the development does detract from the setting of the listed farmhouse, and the curtilage listed barns as the rural setting contributes to the significance of the listed farmhouse, the development will harm the significance of the building. The development is therefore at odds with the requirements of the 1990 Act, policies in the Bromsgrove Development Plan and the NPPF.

The conservation officer states that '*where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*'

Paragraph 215 is therefore engaged, and the applicant needs to demonstrate that the harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme.

The applicant within the planning statement has identified the public benefit to the scheme that the scheme will provide 5 pitches which would contribute to the 17 pitches deficit in the first five years and 20 over the longer-term period 2029/30 to 2041/42. It is therefore evident that there is an identified need for additional pitches in the next five-year period, and that the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable sites. This is a public benefit and as the harm is stated to be *less than substantial* the public benefit of the addition pitches outweighs the harm to the listed building.

Highway Safety

The site will be accessed from Wassell Grove Lane in Hagley, and is located within a 30mph signed speed limit, partly due to the sharp bend to the southeast of the site which has limited visibility.

The Highways officer has stated that *'Based on the submitted plans provided in appendix G of the submitted highways technical note, a visibly splay of 2.4 metres by 48.36 metres can be achieved to the left of the site access and 2.4m x 63.7metres can be achieved to the right. Whilst these accord with the requirements of Manual for Streets and the Worcestershire Streetscape Design Guide, it would require the removal a substantial amount of well-established hedgerow which could undermine the character of the lane, and present better levels of visibility which could increase vehicle speeds at this location to the detriment of highway safety'*.

It is the Local Planning Authority's view that the removal of the hedgerow would lead to a further harm to the character and appearance of the site. If the hedgerow cannot be removed, then the Highway Authority concludes that the required visibility splay in accordance with Worcestershire Streetscape Design Guide cannot be achieved.

In addition, the Highway Authority adds that *there has been no consideration of forward stopping sight distances on Wassel Grove Lane, especially due to the sharp bend which restricts motorists forward visibility of the access. Who therefore may not be able to react in time to a vehicle exiting the proposed access arrangements. This concern needs to be addressed and evidenced to resolve these concerns, and the access arrangements should be supported by a Road Safety Audit Stage 1 which is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of GG119 Road Safety Audit which forms part of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.*

Therefore, it is concluded that the level of visibility proposed by the applicants traffic consultant cannot be achieved without removal of a significant and well-established hedgerow. In addition, there is insufficient information regarding forward stopping sight distances, which raises concerns that the proposals could undermine highway safety.

As a result of the following the application therefore fails to accord with the adopted policy BDP16 and the consequences of this will result in an unacceptable impact on the highway network, which is also contrary to paragraph 114, 115 and 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Furthermore, the Highway Authority states that: *the development site is remote from key services and facilities which would support the development. The Highway Authority does note that in its assessment that the site is not sustainable but that this is a matter to the Local Planning Authority to assess and conclude on in its assessment of the development proposals.*

However, the Highway Authority is concerned that whilst the development may be car dominated, some residents may still undertake active and sustainable travel to access services and facilities. The nearest shops are located at the junction of Wynnall Lane, Wynnall Lane South and Oakfield Road to the northwest of the site. This is approximately 1.20km away with the use of rural lanes with no footway provision and limited verges which are not lit. In addition, it would require pedestrians to walk along

routes which are subject to a signed 40mph speed limit. The Highway Authority concludes at the application does not meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework notably paragraph 117 to the detriment of highways safety.

In addition, the development would be car dominated with lack of access to nearby facilities but also would require pedestrians to walk in live carriageways of rural nature due to there being no footway provision or streetlighting.

The Local Planning Authority concludes therefore that the future occupiers of the development would not have sufficient pedestrian infrastructure to access services within the local area, including public transport, posing a risk to highway safety and at odds with the aim of planning policies to provide safe and suitable access for all. As the future occupiers would be forced to walk in the carriageway on rural and narrow roads to access the wider highway network and services, the proposal would be contrary to Policy BDP16 of the Bromsgrove District Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on Drainage

North Worcestershire Water Management argue that the application should not be permitted without a revised surface water drainage strategy. However, a condition is suggested if any approval was to be recommended.

Notwithstanding the drainage strategy submitted with the application, within three months of the date of the decision a scheme for surface water drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include design details of surface water drainage measures for all impermeable areas and shall demonstrate compliance with the National standards for sustainable drainage systems (Defra, 2025). The scheme shall detail how it will be ensured that no runoff will bypass the surface water drainage scheme and discharge unattenuated to the adjacent ditch. The approved surface water drainage scheme shall be implemented and thereafter maintained in accordance with the agreed scheme.

This condition would mitigate any impact onto the surface water drainage impacts and would be compliant with policy BDP23.

Ecology/Trees

The application is supported by a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) undertaken by an experienced and qualified ecologist. It is noted that a number of the comments received on the application raise the presence of various forms of wildlife within or in close proximity to the application site. The PEA found that the only genuine protected species potential present within this application site breeding birds. The boundary hedgerows and the individual trees all have bird nesting potential, as would be expected at any similar property. No evidence of previous ground nesting birds was present, with no old nests or eggshells. No large buildings are present at this site and also no trees with any obvious bat roosting features, so bats cannot roost here.

Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of some grassland habitat through the spreading of hardstanding, and the excavation works the PEA considers that the losses could be reasonably mitigated. Any mitigation and enhancement could be reasonably controlled through the imposition of planning conditions and as such it is considered that in ecological terms the site could accommodate the development as proposed. It should be noted that as the application is retrospective it is exempted from BNG.

Intentional unauthorised development

The proposal is retrospective. Intentional unauthorised development is a material consideration to be weighed in the determination of applications. In addition to the siting of caravans, an area of hardstanding comprising aggregate has been laid on the site and a surrounding fence erected. The works do not exceed the minimum needed to create a habitable environment. Nonetheless, works carried out have resulted in the loss of a modest area of grassland.

The appellant has sought to regularise the development by applying and paying the fee for a grant of retrospective planning permission. It is known of the significant shortfall in supply of pitches. Therefore, the intentional unauthorised development should carry modest weight against the proposal.

Publicity

A site notice and press notice was displayed and neighbour letters were issued, with the Council receiving a total of 58 objections and 0 supporting letters.

A table summary of objections

Comments	LPA response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway/traffic issues including the narrowness of the road, volume of traffic, the impact on pedestrians, including children, using the road, additional traffic which would result from the proposal, the lack of footpaths or street lighting and the site access is dangerous 	The Highway Authority is concerned that the level of visibility proposed by the applicants traffic consultant cannot be achieved without removal of a significant and well-established hedgerow, and there is insufficient information regarding forward stopping sight distances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact on protected species/wildlife 	The Council's is satisfied that planning conditions could be secured to protect and secure enhancements for biodiversity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is in the Green Belt and should be protected. There are no very special circumstances for the development. 	With regards to Green Belt and Grey Belt this has been explained in the report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development would be out of character with the area 	The landscape impacts of the proposals have been assessed in this report.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no local amenities and access to amenities would be reliant on the private car 	The sustainability of site has been assessed in this report.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of mains sewage locally 	The applicant has submitted a foul drainage plan that would be conditioned to be implemented if the application was to be recommended for approval.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the landscape 	The landscape impacts of the proposals have been assessed in this report.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The land is not designated for residential development 	With regards to Green Belt and Grey Belt this has been explained in the report.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The visual impact of the proposed development 	With regards to landscape character section in the report this has been explained in the report.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The large area of hardstanding is unnecessary 	North Worcestershire Water Management argue that the application should not be permitted without a revised surface water drainage strategy. However, a condition is suggested if any approval was to be recommended.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the listed building over the Road 	The heritage impacts of the proposals have been assessed in this report.

Planning Balance

The application site is located within land considered to be Grey Belt and given compliance with the relevant criteria of para 155 of the NPPF, the proposal would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Significant positive weight is attributed to the provision of a five-pitch Gypsy and Traveller site. The evidence demonstrates a clear and ongoing shortfall in the supply of authorised Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within the District. In this context, the proposal would make a meaningful contribution towards meeting an identified unmet need, which is a core objective of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS).

Further positive weight is attached to the personal circumstances of the occupiers, notably the welfare and educational needs of the children residing on the site. The PPTS and national planning policy require decision-makers to have regard to the best interests of children as a primary consideration. In this case, those interests would be materially harmed by the refusal of planning permission, and this factor attracts significant positive weight.

Turning to identified harms, there would be some harm to the character and appearance of the area by virtue of additional boundary fencing. However satisfactory mitigation could be achieved through the use of an appropriate condition. Other technical matters such as Drainage, Ecology and Trees are considered to be

acceptable, or are capable of being made acceptable, through the imposition of appropriate conditions. Collectively these matters are neutral in the planning balance.

'Less than substantial' harm to the setting of the nearby Grade II listed buildings and curtilage listed barns has been identified. However, consideration of the public benefits arising from the scheme, as required by Para 215 of the NPPF outweighs this identified harm.

However, the intentional unauthorised development on the site carries modest weight against the proposal.

Significant weight against the proposal is given to the applicant's failure to demonstrate adequate visibility splays which in turn leads to an unsafe access. In addition, the site would lead to future occupiers being forced to walk in the carriageway on rural and narrow roads to access services. In circumstances when an unacceptable impact on highway safety has been shown, Paragraph 116 of the NPPF indicates that the proposal should be refused on highways grounds.

Overall, it is considered that harm to Highway Safety taken together with other harms, would demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme and that Planning Permission should therefore be refused.

RECOMMENDATION: That full planning permission be REFUSED

1. Without the removal of a large amount of Hedgerow insufficient visibility splays have been provided onsite. Therefore, the applicant would not be able to demonstrate a safe and suitable access in accordance with paragraph 115 matter c of the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition, insufficient information has been submitted to consider the forward stopping sight distances on Wassell Grove Lane, especially due to the sharp bend which restricts motorists forward visibility of the access.

Any future access arrangements should be supported by a Road Safety Audit Stage 1 assessment. The application therefore fails to accord with the adopted policy and the consequences of this will result in an unacceptable impact on the highway network, which is contrary to paragraph 114, 115 and 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. The future occupiers of the development would not have sufficient pedestrian infrastructure to access services within the local area, including public transport, posing a risk to highway safety and at odds with the aim of planning policies to provide safe and suitable access for all. As the future occupiers would be forced to walk in the carriageway on rural and narrow roads to access the wider highway network and services, the proposal would be contrary to Policy BDP16 of the Bromsgrove District Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

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