Design & Access Statement

For

Mrs S Smith

At

Whitegate Stables, Copt Oak, Markfield, Leicestershire, LE67 9PJ

Introduction

This is the Design & Access statement to accompany the planning submission for the extension to an existing traveller's site at the above site.

Use

The site is owned by Mr & Mrs Smith who have lived on the site with her family for 23 years. They are a local family of travellers who have a good reputation within the local community. The application site is a rectangular parcel of land located between the existing traveller's site and the site boundary facing B591 Copt Oak Road. It is currently used as grassland and is in need of maintenance. Access to the existing traveller's site is via an access road from the B591 Copt Oak Road. The whole site is surrounded to the north, east, south and west with open countryside. The site is well screened from public view. Copt Oak Road runs parallel to the north western site boundary. The M1 runs parallel to the eastern site boundary. The south western boundary faces open fields.

The application site area is within Mr & Mrs Smiths ownership. We are proposing to utilise this area into 4 travellers pitches, for travellers requiring a place of residence. The site is set back from the road and away from public view. The existing access road is to be retained as this is the only access to the proposed site. The existing site already has mains water, electricity and a septic tank for foul sewage, which we are proposing to connect to.

Amount

We are proposing to add 4 travellers' pitches within the site boundary. This will allow 4 traveller families to live within the proposed application site. Mr & Mrs Smith and their family will remain on the existing travellers pitch. The new pitches will be wardaned by Mr Smith Senior. He currently wardens the existing site and there has never been any accidents or complaints to date. The existing traveller's site has full occupancy and Mr & Mrs Smith have to turn away travellers who require pitches for their accommodation. As the proposal is for a continuation of the existing travellers site, it is a sensible location for this land use. The available space for this type of land use is limited within this local area, but the demand for accommodation is high. By making better use of this unused land

will reduce the need for travellers to house on land which they do not own. We are not proposing to alter the access road or the site amenities in any way.

Layout

The additional pitches will provide a legal base for families of travellers to accommodate their mobile homes, which are in demand in this area and throughout the country. They are located adjacent to the existing approved caravan site owned by Mr & Mrs Smith and within their site ownership. The pitches are of equal size allowing travellers mobile homes and vehicles to be located within their own pitch. Mobile homes are to be positioned a minimum of 1m from the site boundary allowing access for maintenance to the mobile homes and the boundary. The boundaries to the pitches will be identified by timber fencing to match the existing. The whole site boundary treatment is to remain as existing so it blends in with the surrounding boundary treatments. The surrounding fields and buildings will remain as existing.

Scale

The proposed site is to accommodate 4 mobile home pitches for Gypsy / traveller families. The dimensions of the mobile homes are 3.5m x 6m for touring caravans and 4m x 8m for static caravans to match those currently located with the site. The touring caravans are taken away if and when the occupants leave the site as they are their primary residence.

Landscaping

We are not proposing to alter the site boundary in any way allowing it to remain as the existing. We do propose to erect a 1.2m timber post and rail fence to identify the individual pitches which will match the existing fencing on the site. The existing boundary treatment around the whole of Mr & Mrs Smiths ownership is constructed of hedgerow and trees, over 2.5m tall which will be retained. In some areas the planting is over 4m high. This already screens the site, so the additional mobile homes will be screened from the public highway as existing.

Appearance

The appearance of the mobile homes will not affect the surrounding areas as there are a number of mobile homes already located on the adjoining site. The proposed will be constructed of fibreglass matching those located there at present.

Access

The proposed access road into the site will remain as existing allowing access from B591 Copt Oak Road. There is no need for modifications or alterations to the access or road as it currently complies with the required legislation. The type of vehicles using this access road will be to the same category as those using it at present. We are proposing to access the proposed site from this access road within Mr & Mrs Smiths site ownership, so the proposed access will be away from public view. The access way into the proposed site area will be in compliance with the fire authorities requirements.

Noise Survey

An Environmental noise survey was carried out at the site on the 13th and 21st of July 2011. This is attached within the planning submission. They summarise that a 10m wide x 2.5m high embankment can be constructed with a 2.0m high screen fence on top against the boundary facing the M1. This will reduce noise levels to 'NEC Category 'B', which is 2-4 dB above the 'NEC Category 'A' rating. We would propose to construct this bank within the amenity area provision of the proposed site if required.

Planning Policy

The site lies outside any settlement boundary in open countryside designated green belt. As the existing site already has been established for 23 years, our proposal will comply with the relevant planning policies PPG1, PPG2, PPS3, PPS7, PPG13 and Local development policy H13, H14.

The site has good, safe convenient access to the road network,

The site is conveniently located to local villages and other community facilities,

The site does not visually encroach into the open countryside

The use would does not detract from convenient, safe and enjoyable use of public right of way,

The site has substantial natural screening,

The requirements of the appropriate design policies have been met,

Hard standings will be provided and the whole travellers site has the basic facilities including electricity, water supply, Existing Foul drainage provision via a septic tank waste collections,

The site is situated so that it neither affects the visual amenity or character of the area or nearby residents nor is it affected by any environmental hazards which may affect the residents' health or welfare.

Conclusion

The existing travellers site was limited for the number of families requiring accommodation within this area. We are proposing to extend the existing is site. The site owner and his family will remain using the existing proposed pitches and the proposed pitches will be used by travellers requiring accommodation. The additional land is within Mr & Mrs Smith site boundary and ownership. The proposed site is currently grassland and in need of maintenance, by utilising this area will make better use of the land available, catering for the need of travellers. Although the site is located within the open countryside it is close to the existing properties and close to the local amenities. The demand for these locations is very high as it allows travellers to re home legally on land they own and not illegally on private land which can become a nuisance.

The need for Gypsy traveller sites in Leicestershire is very high and there is minimal provision for sites within the development plan. By increasing the number of available pitches on Mr & Mrs Smiths site will help reduce this demand, and it allows the occupants to liase together with similar people and lifestyles thus having minimal impact on the surrounding areas.