



**CHANGE OF USE OF STORAGE CARAVAN (STATIC)
TO RESIDENTIAL USE (INCLUDING REMOVAL OF RAILWAY
CARRIAGE, LOCKUP CONTAINERS AND DEPOSITED MATERIALS)**

PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT

**GRANGE FARM
(LAND SOUTH OF GRANGE ROAD, ROYSTON)**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The proposal which forms the subject of this application for planning permission relates to a site known as Grange Farm, Royston. The scheme is for the change of use of the existing static caravan utilised for storage to residential use. The proposal also includes the improvement and tidying of the site and removal of existing buildings and structures to the benefit of the Green Belt and visual amenity.

The site is in a wholly sustainable location being adjacent to the existing settlement of Royston which contains shops, schools and access to health services. There is a bus route in close proximity to the site.

Prior to the submission of this application, discussions have been held between the applicant and the Council's Planning Officer, Mr Joe Jenkinson, and it is understood that the application is considered to be acceptable in principle subject to the imposition of conditions requiring removal of buildings, tidying of the site and restrictions on the future use of the site.

The following supporting documents/information is also submitted with the application:-

1. Full plans showing details of the proposed layout of the site and buildings including a site survey – Stamford Geomatics;
2. Planning Support Statement – Townsend Planning Consultants.

It is considered that this statement, together with the accompanying documents and plans, clearly demonstrate to the Council that the proposal accords with national and local planning policy. Notwithstanding the site's Green Belt location, it is considered that it can be reasonably argued that the reuse of the existing static caravan would not constitute inappropriate development, but in any event when judged against the development and all material considerations it is clear that the necessary "very special circumstances" arise in this case to justify the grant of planning permission through the significant improvements to the site.

This statement now proceeds to provide details of the background to the proposals. The details of the scheme are then set out. Relevant planning policy and central government advice in the form of the NPPF are then discussed. The issues that the proposal raises are then examined in detail (in particular the issues relating to Green Belt), and finally the conclusion reached that conditional planning permission should be granted for the proposal to proceed. Nevertheless, the applicant remains willing to discuss all aspects of this proposal with the Council.

2.0 THE SITE AND THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The Site

The subject site, which is known as Grange Farm, Royston, incorporates a number of agricultural buildings, storage areas and extends to some 9 acres of thereabouts. The subject site also incorporates a static caravan which has been on site for a number of years for which a Certificate of Lawful Use has been granted for its retention. In more recent times the matter of the caravan has been raised with the Council's Planning Officers and the Council's Legal Department confirmed the stationing of the static caravan is lawful through the passage of time.

The site has changed hands in recent years and incorporates a number of unsightly containers, buildings and materials which have been deposited on the site.

It will be noted that the site is located on the edge of the settlement of Royston adjacent to an existing housing area and within walking distance of shops, schools and facilities. The site is in a sustainable location.

2.2 The Proposal

The subject proposal seeks the reuse of the existing lawful static caravan to provide residential accommodation.

As part of the proposal the land will be tidied and improvement works on the site (detailed on the submitted plans) will include:-

- (i) Removal of the railway carriage.
- (ii) Removal of the shipping container.
- (iii) Removal of the livestock building.
- (iv) General tidying of the land and removal of materials.

This will be of significant benefit to the Green Belt.

The applicant will continue to utilise the site for agricultural purposes which will mainly involve the grazing of horses. Other small scale agricultural activities will continue such as keeping of hens and sheep. The remaining buildings will be utilised for agricultural storage.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

By virtue of Section 38 (6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the planning authority must determine the planning application in accordance with the statutory development plan (insofar as it is material to the application), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF also advises of a presumption in favour of development which accords with the development plan. The importance of the statutory development plan in the decision making process necessitates an examination of the relationship between the policies and proposals of the plan and government guidance.

3.1 Central Government Policy Advice

3.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework

With regard to Green Belt development at para 87 it states:-

“As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”.

Para 88 goes on to state:-

“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. “Very special circumstances” will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of

inappropriateness, and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

Para 89 goes on to state:-

“... Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt”.

The advice goes on to state that these can include the reuse of buildings. Whilst it is accepted that a static caravan is not a ‘building’, it is considered that this proposal is akin to the approach to the conversion of rural buildings.

In any event, it is considered that “very special circumstances” arise as follows:-

- (i) The proposal can have no more impact on the Green Belt than its current use;
- (ii) The proposals to tidy the site and remove the building will be of significant benefit to the Green Belt; and
- (iii) This application will provide the opportunity for the Council to control the further use of the site through the imposition of conditions.

3.2 Local Planning Policy

3.2.1 Unitary Development Plan

Policy GS8A deals with the reuse and adaptation of buildings in the Green Belt. Whilst it is not argued that this is a standard proposal for the conversion, nevertheless, it provides the basis of being dealt with in a similar manner as the proposal and clearly relates to reuse of an existing building.

3.2.2 Barnsley Local Development Framework Core Document (Adopted September 2011)

Policy CSP34 – Protection of the Green Belt

This sets out the general approach to Green Belt in the district. It is contended that this proposal demonstrates “very special circumstances” and as such there is no conflict with policy.

4.0 THE ISSUES

4.1 The Development Plan

The Development Plan is the starting point for the consideration of this application. It is considered that this statement, together with the supporting documents and plans, fully demonstrate that the proposal wholly accords with the Development Plan. Due to the “very special circumstances” that arise in this instance, it is considered that the proposal conforms with the Council’s Green Belt policies.

It is considered, therefore, that in the context of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the presumption inherent therein should be weighed in favour of the applicant.

4.2 Other Material Considerations

4.2.1 Need - The Green Belt/“Very Special Circumstances”

It is acknowledged that this site is located within the Green Belt and that the proposal must be judged in the context of policies relating to that fact. In terms of Green Belt policy, the Council are invited to accept that the proposal which would reuse an existing static would not necessarily constitute “inappropriate” development. However, in any event it is quite clear that the necessary “very special circumstances” exist in this case which warrant the grant of planning permission. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal conforms to the development plan (as outlined above).

The “very special circumstances” which exist in respect of the proposal consist of a number of issues, which considered together amount to such special circumstances. In this respect, attention is drawn to the recent case of Basildon DC –v- SSETR where it was accepted that the “very special circumstances” necessary to clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt can include a number of material considerations, which taken in isolation may not be sufficient but when considered together amount to “very special circumstances”.

- (a) Removal of unsightly building containers and the tidying of the site to the significant benefit to the visual amenity and openness of the Green Belt.
- (b) The opportunity for the Council to control by condition the future use of the site.
- (c) This proposal will reuse a lawful static caravan and that is considered to be akin to the conversion of a rural building to a dwelling.

4.2.2 Visual Impact

Significant benefit will accrue from the removal of unsightly buildings, lock-up containers and materials.

4.2.3 Flood Risk / Drainage

The site is not within a flood risk area.

4.2.4 Conditions

As set out in discussions with the authority, the applicant is prepared to agree to conditions that not only require removal of the building and structures and tidying of the land, but also the future restriction of the uses of the site and preclusion of commercial use.

The applicant intends to continue to utilise the site for agricultural purposes (including the grazing of horses).

5.0 CONCLUSION & BENEFITS OF THE SCHEME

The applicant proposes to reuse the existing lawful static to residential use. Notwithstanding the fact that the site is situated in the Green Belt, it is ideally located next to the existing settlement.

It is considered that taking into account all the circumstances relating to this case, it is clear that the “very special circumstances” necessary to warrant the grant of planning permission are present, notwithstanding the fact that the site is located in the Green Belt.

The proposal will also bring wider benefits to the Green Belt through the removal of buildings and improvements to the land and the controlling of the use of the site.

The applicant remains willing to discuss all aspects of this matter with the Council.