

**Application No:** W 11 / 1109

**Town/Parish Council:** Kenilworth

**Registration Date:** 06/09/11

**Case Officer:**

Erica Buchanan

**Expiry Date:** 01/11/11

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**Fernhill Farm Rouncil Lane Kenilworth CV8 1NN**

Caravan storage in remaining section of paddock, change of use FOR Mr & Mrs  
Cockburn

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The application is being presented to Committee because the applicant is a former District Councillor, and also because of the number of letters of support received, and the recommendation is to refuse.

**SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS**

**Kenilworth Town Council:** Declared an interest and no comments were offered.

**Warwickshire County Council Highways:** No objection providing vehicles can leave the site in a forward gear

**Public Response:** No letters of Objection Received.

67 letters of support have been received. Much needed business, stops caravans being stored on residents drive, restrictive covenants prevent storage on residents drives and secure sites only option, site is not visible from the road or public footpath, secure and safe storage, half the paddock is already used for storage of caravans, the need outweighs the harm, important community facility, important farm diversification, site is managed professionally, well screened, good access roads, secure caravan storage helps to promote tourism.

**The Country Land and Business Association (CLA)** proposed development would provide employment for 3 part time staff, contributes to long term operation and viability of the farm.

**Caravan Storage Site Owners Association (CaSSOA)** Site helps to prevent caravan crime and theft, insurers request caravans are stored in a secure location, site is silver award site.

**NFU** Diversification of farms is essential, provides a local need, does not affect the openness of the Green Belt, nor the amenity of the area, provides employment.

**RELEVANT POLICIES**

- Planning Policy Guidance 2 : Green Belts
- RAP9 - Farm Diversification (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP1 - Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP2 - Amenity (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)

- DP3 - Natural and Historic Environment and Landscape (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP6 - Access (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP7 - Traffic Generation (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DAP3 - Protecting Nature Conservation and Geology (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- RAP6 - Directing New Employment (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP14 - Crime Prevention (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- Ministerial Statement of 23rd March 2011- Planning for Growth

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

W/11/0039 Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the existing use for caravan storage  
Approved 06/06/11

W/11/0691 Caravan and vehicle storage in two redundant agricultural buildings and in adjacent yard-Change of Use. (Retrospective Application)  
Approved 01/08/11

The farm has already been granted planning permission for the change of use of a yard and two agricultural buildings for the secure storage of caravans and vehicles. A Certificate of Lawfulness has also been granted for part of the paddock for its use. The two combined areas provide for a total of 170 caravans stored on site.

## **KEY ISSUES**

### **The Site and its Location**

The application site is part of Fernhill Hill Farm and lies within the Green Belt located to the east of the farm complex. The site measures 0.45ha and comprises a grassed paddock area. To the North of the site and forming part of the paddock is an area already in use for caravan storage granted permission under a certificate of lawfulness. Further to the west of the site a small area has previously been granted planning permission for caravan storage along with two agricultural buildings. The site is surrounded by fields with no neighbouring properties visible from the site. To the North of the site is a public footpath.

### **Details of the Development**

The application is for the remainder of the paddock area not covered by the Certificate of Lawfulness to be used for the storage of caravans. The site has previously been used for the storage of caravans as an extension of the existing use on the farm and evidence of its use are indicated by hardstanding areas, and temporary access roads with a few caravans remaining on the area subject to this application. The site would cater for a further 80 caravans and the application has been submitted to regularize the use.

### **Assessment**

The site lies within the Green Belt where there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. The main consideration for the current application is therefore whether very special circumstances outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt by reason of its inappropriateness.

PPG 2 Green Belts paragraph 3.12 states that a material change of use of land is inappropriate development unless it maintains the openness of the Green Belt. In my opinion the extensive external storage by its nature does not maintain the openness of the Green Belt and represents a significant visual intrusion in the Green Belt. I consider that the change of use is inappropriate development which is by definition harmful.

A supporting statement for the application has been submitted by the Caravan Storage Site Owners Association. This statement argues there is a demand and need for the secure storage of caravans due to changes in the insurance industry for all caravans, restrictive covenants on new properties limiting the storage of caravans, and increased concern of caravan theft (which is a concern in the County). No evidence is provided as to whether this demand/need could be met elsewhere, including sites outside of the Green Belt.

Whilst there is clearly demand for a secure site for caravan storage as demonstrated by the supporting letters, there is no evidence that there is an increased demand that the existing facilities can not provide or that could not be provided elsewhere on land outside of the Green Belt.

In conclusion, I consider that there are no very special circumstances that exist and no justification to show that the need outweighs the harm for this inappropriate use within the Green Belt.

Whilst the proposal would also contribute towards sustaining the vitality of the existing farm buildings, the scale and nature cannot be satisfactory integrated into the landscape without being detrimental to its character thereby contrary to Policy RAP9 of the Local Plan.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Refuse, subject to the refusal reasons listed below.

## **REFUSAL REASONS**

- 1 The site is situated within the Green Belt and Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 states that, within the Green Belt, the openness of the area will be protected. It also contains a general presumption against "inappropriate" development in Green Belt areas and lists specific forms of development which can be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The proposed development does not fall within any of the categories listed in the Policy and, in the Planning Authority's view, very special circumstances sufficient to justify departing from this Guidance have not been demonstrated.
- 2 RAP9 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011 states that developments for farm diversification should be of a scale and nature appropriate to the rural location and that they should be satisfactorily integrated into the landscape without being detrimental to its character

The proposal cannot be satisfactory integrated into the landscape and is considered to be detrimental to its character and is contrary to policy RAP9