

15 June 2011

Mr Philip Isbell
Principal Development Management Officer
Planning Services
Mid Suffolk District Council
131 High Street
Needham Market
Suffolk IP6 8DL

For the attention of Ms Sian Bunbury, Planning Officer

Dear Mr Isbell

RE: Proposed 40 pitch touring caravan site together with associated twin sanitary blocks and associated infrastructure – Westley Way, Badwell Ash Planning application Ref: 0215/11

1. I am writing on behalf of the Suffolk Preservation Society ('the Society') in response to the above planning application for the change of use of land to the south west of Badwell Ash village to create a 40 pitch caravan site together with associated infrastructure.
2. The Society wishes to submit an objection in principle and detail to the proposed development which it believes would serve to materially harm the visual amenities and tranquillity currently enjoyed by local residents and would also serve to destroy the existing habitat for important species of ground nesting birds.
3. The site provides an important habitat for protected species including the Skylark (UK and Suffolk BAP and 'Red List' species) and 'Amber List' birds using the site including Sand Martins and Kingfishers. The Society strongly believes that the use of the site for a caravan site will harm the interests of these protected species contrary to the Provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (s.1 and Schedule 1) and the NERC Act 2006 (s.41). The Society does not believe that it is possible to effectively mitigate the impact of such development due to the intensity and fundamental nature of the scheme proposed.
4. In the opinion of the Society the site is unsuited to the proposed use by reason of its essential characteristics. The open, undulating nature of the site and the numerous extensive views from public vantage points would be fundamentally harmed by the introduction of forty intrusive caravans together with the requisite lighting (however well designed and screened). It is not accepted that this site could accommodate this

form of development without significant harm to landscape quality and character. The fact that the applicants identify the need for significant structural screen planting is in itself a tacit acknowledgment that the scheme would be fundamentally harmful to, and at odds with, the defining landscape elements. This site has been effectively reinstated to agricultural use following quarrying activities. The aspect of the site from Westley Way would be radically altered by the proposals and would appear alien in character in the arable landscape of High Suffolk. The existing tranquillity of the site would be significantly compromised by a scheme of this scale and intensity.

5. Policy CS5 of the Adopted Core Strategy states that the Council will protect and conserve landscape qualities and encourage development that is consistent with conserving its overall character. Core Strategy Objective SO1 seeks to "Protect, manage, enhance and restore the landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity of the District". In the opinion of the Society this scheme runs counter to these aims. 'Saved' local plan policies GP3, SB3, CL1, CL8 and CL17 are of particular relevance. CL1 confirms that "The landscape quality and character of the countryside will be protected for its own sake". In this case, both the quality and character of the countryside would be materially compromised by these proposals.

Conclusion

8. The Society believes that the current application is contrary to national and local planning policies that together seek to protect and enhance the countryside and to enhance biodiversity. The Society believes that this scheme would serve to harm these interests of acknowledged importance and consequently recommends that the Council refuse planning permission in conformity with adopted Core Strategy and allied 'saved' local plan policies having regard to PPS7 and PPS9.

Yours sincerely



Simon Cairns
MRTPI IHBC
Director

CC: Badwell Ash Parish Council, SPS Mid Suffolk , John Hines Esq