

**Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside**

Naomi Reynard  
Planning and Building Control  
North Hertfordshire District Council  
PO Box 480  
Herts  
M33 0DE

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 (by email)

Dear Ms. Reynard

**Application No 19/00660/FP**  
**Proposed use of land to site 8 Camping Pods for use as holiday accommodation**  
**At Poplars Farm, Roe Green, Sandon, Buntingford, Hertfordshire, SG9 0QG.**

The information provided with this application is so limited that it makes comment difficult. The plans provided are rudimentary. There are no plans or elevations of the buildings proposed and no Design, Access or Planning Statement provided. Consequently we have had to make assumptions in order to respond.

In our view, the proposed accommodation pods constitute inappropriate development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, contrary to Saved Policy 6 of the current North Herts Local Plan. (We accept that the Policy is not completely in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, but the principles of restricting development in the countryside apply.) In Policy SP5(d) of the Submission Local Plan, which is currently subject to Examination In Public, the Council reiterate that it will operate a general policy of restraint in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt. By definition, any structure, however small, which is constructed in otherwise open land in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt will impact adversely on the openness of the countryside.

As there is no Planning Statement, it is impossible to determine the grounds on which the applicant justifies this development. We assume that any case would rest on Policy CGB1(e) in the Submission Local Plan which would permit development of modest proposals for rural economic development or diversification. However, while that policy can be attributed weight, it is not yet an adopted policy of the Council. As no case has been put forward for economic need, we expect the Council to request sufficient evidence to demonstrate the unequivocal need for these units before granting permission.

The lack of information raises a number of questions which we would also expect the Council to satisfy itself on before granting permission:

Camping Pods fall under the provisions of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. The Council must satisfy itself that the proposal meets those provisions.

There is no indication in the application as to what services are being provided. We assume that campers will expect an electricity supply to the pods. The law dictates that no camping pods shall be connected to a mains electrical supply unless it is done with a single campsite electrical hook up cable, which in itself can only be installed after being approved by the local planning authority. There is no reference to this in the application, or a plan showing the proposed route of such a cable.

Similarly there is no reference to sanitary provisions other than a reference to a 'package treatment plant'. Camping Pods are not normally connected to a water supply or provided with drainage, which means that all cleaning, toilet, laundering and catering must be undertaken in purpose-built on-site facilities. There is no indication of such facilities on the plans. The plans do indicate a 'recreation area', but there is no explanation of what this will consist of, or the hours of operation.

As there are no plans, elevations or details of the proposed units, we have no information on their construction. Most commercially sourced camping pods are timber. There are no details of proposed fire safety measures, nor access for fire vehicles.

In answering question 9 on the application form the applicant says that vehicle parking is not relevant. The plans do not indicate how vehicles will access each pod. Vehicle parking is indicated adjacent to the 'recreation area', but this is some distance from each of the pods and it is unrealistic to assume that the users will park there and transport their luggage on foot to the pods, particularly in inclement weather. It is usual on camping sites for users to park their vehicles adjacent to their accommodation. The applicant should provide further details on this aspect.

The Application Form also defines the land as agricultural. Consequently we assume that the proposal is intended as Farm Diversification. As such, the applicant should demonstrate that the majority of their income is through agriculture, that the diversification is necessary to sustain that primary agricultural use and that a viable business plan for the camping use is in place. None of those points are addressed in the application.

Consequently, given the inadequacies of the documentation, we urge the Council to reject the current application.

Yours sincerely,

David Irving