



Planning Application reference 190647
 Demolition of existing buildings on the site and redevelopment to provide 150 residential dwellings with access, link road to allow for potential future connections, associated parking, private open space at Land adjoining The Gables, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree, Colchester, CO5 0LU.

Note on Existing Gypsy and Traveller Allocation

This note has been prepared by Strutt & Parker on behalf of Marden Homes Limited to support the above planning application.

A small part of the application site (0.18ha parcel of land) is allocated as a Gypsy and Traveller site in Colchester Borough Council's (CBC) adopted Local Plan (2011). This site is known as Pony's Farm. This planning application proposes the use of the site for residential dwellings and this note sets out how it is intended there will be no net loss of gypsy and traveller provision as a result of the scheme.

Policy Considerations

Policy SA H2 - Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation of CBC's adopted Local Plan, allocated sites within the Borough area to provide accommodation for Gypsy and Travellers. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the allocated Gypsy/Traveller sites within Colchester Borough Council's adopted Local Plan (as shown at Policy SA H2) alongside respective site areas. The site areas have been recorded using the site boundaries defined on the associated adopted Proposals Maps, and the number of pitches on each site are those confirmed within Policy SA H2.

Table 1: Allocated Gypsy/Traveller sites and associated site and pitch sizes

	Gypsy/Traveller Site	Pitches Accommodated	Site in Hectares (approx.)	Average Pitch Size per Site (ha)	Average Pitch Size across the Borough (ha)
1	Severalls Lane, Colchester	12	2.19	0.18	0.15
2	Clearview, Rectory Road, Aldham	1	0.07	0.07	
3	Colt Farm, Tiptree	2	0.25	0.125	
4	Emmanuel, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree	1	Not available	Not available	
5	Nunns Farm, Lower Road, Layer Breton	1	0.4	0.4	
6	The Paddocks, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree	2	0.22	0.11	
7	Stableview, Newbridge Road, Tiptree	2	0.16	0.08	
8	Bridge Side, Turkey Cock Lane, Stanway	3	0.32	0.11	
9	Ponys Farm, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree	1	0.18	0.18	

10	Land adj. to Gwynlians, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree	2	0.14	0.07	
11	Orchard Place, Vernons Road, Chappel	3	0.28	0.09	

Table 1 confirms therefore that the application site at Pony's Farm currently accommodates one pitch.

The present owner/occupier of Pony's Farm is Mr N Taylor. Mr N Taylor has entered into an agreement applicant to vacate his plot, if planning permission is granted. We understand that Mr N Taylor intends to relocate onto the existing nearby gypsy and traveller site at Colt Farm, approximately 100m to the east. There will therefore be no net loss of pitches.

Policy H5 – Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople, provides the criteria to assist in the identification of new sites. Policy H5 States the following:

"The Council will identify sites to meet the established need of gypsies, travellers and travelling show people in the borough.

The Council will seek to locates sites within reasonable proximity to existing settlements, and with access to shops, schools and other community facilities. Site should be also providing adequate space for vehicles and appropriate highway access. Any identified need for 'transit' (temporary) sites for gypsies and travellers will be met in appropriate locations related to the current working patterns of the travelling community."

As Colt Farm has already been allocated through the Local Plan, it is evident that CBC view Colt Farm as an acceptable location for the provision of Gypsy/Traveller accommodation.

Average Pitch Size and Site Capacity

Table 1 also calculates the average provision of pitch space per allocated site (site size/number of pitches). Of the recorded sites, the average Borough pitch size is 0.15ha.

The table shows that of the 10 gypsy/traveller sites that were measured, 7 sites recorded average pitch sizes that are smaller than the average pitch size within the Borough. Three of the sites; Clearview, Stableview, and land adj. to Gwynlians, have average pitch sizes that are approximately half the Borough average.

The Council's approach to the provision of pitches compared to the approximate area of the allocated sites across the Borough is inconsistent, with the majority of the sites accommodating pitches that are on average smaller than the Borough average of 0.15ha and some sites accommodating single pitches on sites that are much larger than the Borough average.

The calculations show that areas as small as 0.07ha can accommodate a single pitch, which is the average pitch size for both Clearview and Land Adj. to Gwynlians. If this pitch area is taken as the minimum size requirement for pitches across the Borough, in our view it should be considered acceptable to offset the loss of one pitch at one of the sites if it can be agreed with the relevant parties that the pitch can be accommodated for at another site.

Pony's Farm currently consists of 1 pitch on 0.18ha of land, and is one of 3 sites in the in the Borough that comprises a pitch area that is significantly larger than the Borough average of 0.15ha (0.4ha). The site is also significantly larger than the minimum pitch size in the Borough of 0.07ha.

Relocation to Colt Farm

We understand that the occupier of Pony's Farm, Mr Nelson Taylor, intends to relocate his current accommodation to Colt Farm. Colt Farm currently accommodates 2 pitches on 0.25ha of land, and has average pitch size of 0.125ha. Introducing a 3rd pitch would reduce the average pitch size to 0.08ha, which is still larger than the minimum pitch size requirement.

Having regard to Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites – Good Practice Guide (Communities and Local Government, 2008), a permanent pitch can vary in size and accommodate large extended families. As a minimum, a pitch should be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan, parking space for two vehicles and a small garden. At present, we understand that Colt Farm shares ample amenity buildings, play spaces and parking areas.

Strutt & Parker, July 2019