# John and Cindy Ayres submit second planning application for Traveller pitches in Sonning Common



John and Cindy Ayres have submitted a second planning application to establish a mobile home park on land in Sonning Common, Oxfordshire, that historically served as an orphanage during World War Two. The proposal, which seeks permission to develop four Traveller pitches on a 0.7-hectare site adjacent to Little Birches nursery and Bishopswood recreation ground, has sparked concerns among local residents.

The couple had previously applied to South Oxfordshire District Council to build two Traveller pitches on the same land, situated near a recreation area and woodland within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. That initial application, along with a subsequent appeal, was rejected by the council. This latest plan includes not only the four pitches but also a turning circle, three parking spaces, and a designated base for a mobile home unit.

In their planning submission, the Ayres emphasise that the development would be accompanied by "a significant landscape enhancement to the site enclosing the pitch with native hedgerows and reinforcing the existing boundary shrubs.” They also argue that the proposal would help address a shortfall in accommodation for the Traveller community.

However, local residents have voiced strong opposition to the scheme, citing concerns about the impact on the area's character and safety, particularly given its proximity to a nursery and children's playfields. Chris Montgomery-Bevis, a 49-year-old sales director living nearby, told The Oxford Times, “It isn’t really in keeping with the area because it is a nice walk area so it would completely change the landscape.” He recalled the earlier application attracted “a lot of objection”.

Another local, Daniela Taylor-Hewitt, 36, who works in biotech talent acquisitions, expressed unease about the location’s suitability. She said, “It is a bad idea because of the location. It doesn't make sense. I saw it and went ‘if anyone signs it off and says that’s okay, it would be ridiculous.’ I just couldn’t imagine that happening.” Speaking about the proximity to the nursery, she added, “I wouldn't want my kids at that nursery if that was there anymore. Personally, I would pull them out and move them. I wouldn't feel safe.”

Taylor-Hewitt raised concerns about a "transient" population living on the site, describing them as "random strangers that aren't part of our immediate community or area that are just here for a short period of time." She also noted the potential implications for property values in the village, stating, “We pay a lot of money to live in this area and the reason people pay a lot of money is because it’s a village, if you have a young family you’ve got that safety of living in a village - that would ruin it. It might bring property value down as well.”

The South Oxfordshire District Council is expected to reach a decision on the planning proposal by 29 April. Meanwhile, the debate continues among Sonning Common residents over the future use of this historically significant parcel of land.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.henleystandard.co.uk/news/home/195850/residents-oppose-new-plan-for-gypsy-pitch-near-playing-field.html> - This URL supports the claim that John and Cindy Ayres have submitted another application to build a Traveller pitch near a historically significant site in Sonning Common. It outlines the details of the proposal, including the location and local opposition.
2. <https://www.gbnews.com/news/oxford-news-planning-neighbour-row-traveller-pitch-historic-ww2-site> - This URL corroborates the historical significance of the site and local opposition to the plan. It highlights the site's role as a former World War Two camp and the concerns of residents about the proposal's impact on the area.
3. <https://www.henleystandard.co.uk/news/sonning-common/176794/plans-for-gypsy-pitches-in-woods-refused-permission.html> - This URL confirms that the Ayres' previous application for gypsy pitches in Sonning Common was rejected. It provides context to the current proposal by mentioning past attempts.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework> - This URL can be used to discuss recent changes in planning policies regarding traveller sites and green belt land, as it outlines national guidelines that might influence local decisions.
5. <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/planning> - This URL can provide access to South Oxfordshire District Council's planning decisions and policies, helping to understand how they evaluate proposals like the Ayres' application.
6. <https://www.chilternsaonb.org/> - This URL relates to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where the proposed development is located. It provides context about the area's conservation status and the potential impact of developments.
7. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25119289.oxfordshire-villagers-outraged-plans-traveller-camp/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data