

## DEVELOPMENT APPROACH STATEMENT

Over the years, since 1994, I have been involved directly with various groups and individual families of travelling Showpeople to assist them to secure a permanent home. In many cases, the focus on objectives, procedures and instruction became rather clouded and fragmented due to the many equal shareholders, (each showmen as direct client) and lack of forum. The latter due to the peripatetic lifestyle. This can reflect negatively through the procurement process which remains evident in the implemented product, the winter quarters themselves.

I sympathise with the plight of many of these families not able to feel that they belong to a place, nor to call it home.

As an example, I have known Mrs. Vanessa Wheatley since she was a young teenager growing up with her brother Mr. John Bagnall in temporary residence in a pub car park in Cannock, and laybys in South Staffordshire and Walsall. She is now married to Mr. John Wheatley, and with her own family, yet still squeezing into temporary residence in Wolverhampton and the Midlands.

Naturally, I am keen to assist the Showpeople who, whilst peripatetic in their trade need not be nomadic in their existence.

I believe a structured corporate approach with well-adhered procurement process and controlled implementation of site development complying strictly to planning control is the best way to secure, implement and manage a permanent Showpeople site. I believe Countryman Fairs (Inkberrow) Ltd. is such an organisation, consisting of Directors highly skilled in organisation and management, with a vested interest in the welfare of their workers, the Showpeople.

As a frequent visitor to Country Fairs, I am witness to the close relationship between the organisers (Countryman Fairs) and the Showpeople running the attractions, the countryside crafts and fraternity in UK and Europe, as well as craft stalls from America and the Far East.

The site occupation will be by those Showpeople associated with Countryman Fairs (Inkberrow) Ltd., occupying either through leasehold, ownership or for those less able but deserving, affordable rental plots.

The site plan shows alignment of structure planting which has been carefully designed to provide visual screening to the perimeter and within the site. This structure planting, together with the access will remain in the control of Countryman Fairs (Inkberrow) Ltd. to ensure the maintenance of same. Within each parcel defined by the structure planting, the plots will be laid out to accord with the Model Standard Package to ensure privacy, fire safety and safe operation by the residents. An illustrative layout is incorporated in the amended site plan.

TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE'S SITES - A PLANNING FOCUS

MODEL STANDARD PACKAGE

*The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain*

Founded 1889



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## INTRODUCTION

The travelling showpeople's way of life is unique : it combines a lifestyle of a peripatetic nature, travelling from fair to fair predominantly through the summer months, with one that is more settled, where a permanent site "a home" is required predominantly during the winter months.

Within the planning framework it is these permanent sites where travelling showpeople are experiencing difficulties. Many of these sites are historical and have an established use, but where new sites are needed travelling showpeople have experienced great difficulty in securing a valid use for the land. With recently revised legislation and with the publishing of Circular 22/91 by the Department of the Environment, the Guild issues this booklet not only for guidance to its members but also for reference by Local Planning Authorities, who are increasingly being made aware of the problems experienced by travelling showpeople.

This package also incorporates model standards for the layout of new sites - a useful tool for travelling showpeople when laying out their sites and also for Local Planning Authorities when considering this specific use of land.

### TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE'S SITES

Travelling showpeople require a permanent base where they can store, maintain and repair their equipment and where they can station their caravans, when they are not travelling for the purpose of their business. This has traditionally been known as the winter quarters site as historically it has only been through the winter months - 1st October until Easter - when a permanent base has been required. Today however, more showpeople are wishing to occupy their permanent sites also during some periods of the summer months; older family members require less seasonal occupation and a more permanent base assists in the education of children.

Generally throughout the Country the number of showmen's sites has diminished, primarily through different forms of redevelopment and sometimes as a result of compulsory purchase. At the same time Membership to the Guild has remained constant. Where traditional showmen's sites have survived there has been a tendency for these to become overcrowded and, as single family units have expanded, other showpeople have been displaced. As a result of redevelopment and displacement some showpeople have been left to find their own sites.

A situation has arisen in many parts of the country where demand for showpeople's sites exceeds supply and where there is a clear and established need for additional showpeople's sites.

## HISTORY AND WAY OF LIFE OF TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE

Today's showman is the heir to a long tradition of providing popular entertainment. We can only speculate on the first appearance of his earliest ancestor: like the institution of the fair itself, it pre-dates recorded history.

The first generation of strolling performers undoubtedly relied on their physical and artistic skills to amuse the crowds at the fair. Tumblers, conjurors and other entertainers who wandered from place to place can be found in Roman records. In this country the first glimpses of these "jongleurs", as Chaucer was to describe them, can be seen in the margins of medieval missals such as the Luttrell Psalter. The illustrations of everyday life used to decorate these religious texts depict figures of minstrels, dancers and balancers performing feats with knives and balls.

Their presence at the great trading fairs of the Middle Ages was equally marginal, these peripatetic performers only coming into their own after the day's business was done and the fairgoers sought refreshment and relaxation at the alehouse or inn.

As the trading aspect of the fair declined, the showman took over centre stage. By the 17th century, the booths of the illusionists, puppeteers, theatricals and acrobats were the main attractions at events such as the legendary Bartholomew Fair in London's Smithfield. The diarist Samuel Pepys wrote vivid accounts of his visits to this fair, thronged by rich and poor alike. Such was the popularity of fairs after the Restoration that, when the Thames froze over in January of 1684, booths for puppets and plays were set up on the ice and remained there for over a month.

At the start of the 19th century contemporary engravings depict the grand booths of the theatrical companies and the menageries dominating the fairground scene. Only on the periphery of the fair can be spotted small riding devices such as hand-turned roundabouts and swinging boats.

The elevation of these rides from minor to major attractions had to wait until later in the century. It was the invention of a practical form of steam engine to turn a roundabout that enabled the development of the magnificent Galloping Horses, the Switchback Railways and all their successors down to the present day.

The shows that had given him his title were to be soon eclipsed by these lavishly-decorated "merry-go-rounds and whirligigs", but the showman - now riding master - quickly responded to the changing circumstances with an age-old adaptability. In maintaining the tradition of the fair, the showman was demonstrating more than mere economic self-interest. His way of life was - and still is - largely driven by its own momentum, born perhaps out of the essential nature of the fair itself.

Since it evolved out of the annual festivals of pre-historic times, held on the downland slopes of southern England, the fair has been an integral part of the social fabric of this country. In the Middle Ages it was paramount as the only venue for the exchange of goods other than those sold at the weekly market. As a result of the Black Death in the 14th century and the consequent Statute of Labourers, the hiring of workers was added to its function - an aspect of the fair that continued into this century.

Over the centuries the fair has nurtured or developed kindred forms of entertainment. The theatre survived the zeal of Cromwell by seeking refuge on the fairground, while pantomime owes its inspiration to the "forains" or strolling players who crossed over from France to perform at fairs in the late 17th century. An audience for moving pictures - and hence the cinema - was created in the Bioscopes of the enterprising showmen of the 1890's.

Before the age of mass entertainment the arrival of the fair was the highlight of the year in most communities. It brought a form of amusement that was unpretentious and available to all. These same qualities exist today: it is the accessibility and undemanding nature of the fair that ensures its continuing - if underestimated - appeal.

### THE SHOWMEN'S GUILD OF GREAT BRITAIN

The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain is a democratic organisation set up at the turn of the century, with the principal objective of protecting the interests of its members - travelling showpeople who gain their livelihoods by attending fun fairs. Its objective is achieved in two ways; by its code of rules for members and through the legal and constitutional processes of the land.

The Guild is accepted at both national and local levels as the negotiating body for travelling showpeople. It has a parliamentary agent acting on behalf of the showpeople in respect of proposed legislation and a delegation of officers who deal with matters involving Local Authorities.

Some of the Central Council's powers have been delegated to three main Committees; Management, Appeals and Safety. With particular reference to the Safety Committee, this ensures that Members maintain and operate their equipment to the highest of standards. It ensures that they comply with the Code of Safe Practice at Fairs, published by the Health & Safety Executive, and with specific Guidance Notes issued for individual types of fairground rides. Each year Members of the Guild submit their equipment for inspection by a firm of independent engineers. This ensures a consistently high standard of repair and safety.

The Guild is concerned with the retention and promotion of existing fairground sites - as with travelling showpeople's sites, redevelopment schemes have taken their toll. The loss is felt by the town which loses part of its heritage, by the people who are denied an essentially popular form of entertainment, and by the showman who loses part of his livelihood.

Of equal concern to the Guild is the diminishing number of showpeople's sites, as identified in the preceding section. It is hoped that, by the preparation of this model standard package, Local Planning Authorities will be able to obtain a better understanding of the requirements of travelling showpeople and the problems that they face in retaining and/or finding a permanent site.

The Guild's Head Office is in London and there are ten regional sections within the U.K. For development control purposes relevant to individual Local Planning Authorities, each of the ten sections will be able to assist. The ten sections of the Guild, together with correspondence addresses, are set out in Appendix A.



## THE PLANNING SITUATION

Whilst travelling showpeople enjoy permitted development rights, and hence do not require express planning permission for the use of land when travelling for the purpose of their business, planning permission is required for the change of use of land and/or buildings for travelling showpeople's sites, whether these sites are proposed to be occupied on a traditional winter quarters basis or where more permanent occupation is envisaged.

Travelling showpeople do not enjoy any priority status in respect of seeking planning permission and, whilst there is a commonly held misconception that their use of land is similar to that of gypsies, this is not the case and indeed they are specifically excluded from the definition of gypsies under the Caravan Sites Act 1968. They do not benefit from the duty on Local Authorities under that same legislation to provide gypsy accommodation and historically they have had little assistance in providing sites for themselves.

The present planning scene, insofar as it affects travelling showpeople's sites, is affected by the following :

1. Town and Country Planning Act 1990.  
Planning and Compensation Act 1991.

These two Acts have brought considerable changes to planning legislation and, arguably, one of the most fundamental alterations was introduced under Section 54a of the 1990 Act. This in effect introduces a presumption in favour of development that is in accordance with the development plan. Hence, in the determination of planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should determine the application in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2. Department of the Environment Circular 22/91.

Prior to the issuing of this Ministerial Circular, little formal policy guidance had been given to Local Planning Authorities in respect of planning considerations relating to travelling showpeople. This, together with the fact that few development plans contain specific policies relating to the needs of travelling showpeople, made it difficult for travelling showpeople to secure sites for their permanent use.

With the publishing of Circular 22/91 the special requirements of travelling showpeople have been highlighted, giving Local Planning Authorities firm guidance in respect of this unique use of land.

Policy Guidance as set out in Circular 22/91 can be summarised as follows.

- (i) Local Plans - Local Planning Authorities should consider the needs of travelling showpeople when preparing their local plan and unitary development plans. They should identify existing sites and make an assessment of the amount of accommodation required. Plans may make specific proposals for sites which would be suitable locations for showpeople's quarters.

- (ii) Planning Applications - These should be determined in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is not relevant, where for example no policy is included relating to the needs of showpeople, the application should be determined on its merits. It is emphasised that advice contained in other Circulars and Planning Policy Guidance Notes restricting development in specially protected areas should be adhered to and that very special circumstances have to be demonstrated to justify allowing development for purposes not normally appropriate in green belts.
- (iii) Enforcement Action - Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to regard showpeople in the same light as other small businesses and self-employed people. Reference is made to Planning Policy Guidance Note 18, which in part states that Local Planning Authorities should consider the underlying reasons for any breach of planning control and investigate whether the use could be allowed to continue on a modified and hence acceptable basis.
- (iv) General - Local Planning Authorities should be ready to discuss showpeople's needs at an early stage, both while local plans and unitary development plans are being prepared, as well as in the development control context. It encourages pre-application discussions and Local Planning Authority involvement to enable showpeople to secure their own sites. The Circular urges Local Authorities to give every assistance in finding permanent sites for purchase or rental, whether publicly or privately owned.

The Guild sees that it is of utmost importance that Local Planning Authorities are aware of the needs of travelling showpeople during the stages of preparation of development plans, in order that site-specific or more general policies can be incorporated within these development plans to allow for both the current and future requirements of travelling showpeople.

SITE CRITERIA

Showpeople's sites do not fit neatly into any definition of any one land use category. The sites combine a residential use, attained by the siting of their mobile caravans, with a commercial use - that of storing and maintaining fairground equipment. Quite often the sites themselves may be sub-divided to allow for these two distinctive uses.

As a result of the joint use, and it is essential that these are combined, sites do not fit easily into existing land use categories; because of the commercial use they do not fit easily within any built up residential area and because of the residential use, which requires some residential amenities, they do not fit easily within any built up industrial area.

Whilst each site must be considered on its own particular merits, in general the following criteria can be applied.

1. The site should be relatively flat.
2. The site should have good vehicular access, suitable for the ingress and egress of large vehicles.
3. The site should be in close proximity to a good road network.
4. The site should be close to schools and other community facilities.
5. The site may have existing buildings located on it, which could be used for the storage, maintenance and repair of equipment.
6. A mature and natural landscaping is of benefit.
7. The site should respect amenities of any occupants of residential properties nearby.
8. The site should provide for amenities normally expected for human occupation.

## MODEL STANDARDS.

### Introduction.

The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain recommend the following model standards with respect to the layout of new sites used by showpeople when they are not travelling and the provision of facilities, services and equipment. They are model standards, i.e. they represent the standards normally to be expected as a matter of good practice on such sites. They should be applied with due regard to the particular circumstances of each case, including the physical character of the site, any services or facilities that may already be available within convenient reach or other local conditions. Further information in connection with specific regulations in force should be obtained through the relevant Statutory Authorities and it should be noted that these standards may require adaptation to meet the particular requirements of Statutory Authorities.

The model standards apply to sites for individual showmen, sites in multiple occupation and sites in multiple ownership, where individual plots within the site have been formed.

### Site Boundaries.

1. Boundaries to the site (or individual plots) should be clearly marked and the site or plot made secure from members of the public.

### Site Layout.

2. There should be separate areas identified for the stationing of caravans and for the storage, maintenance and repair of fairground equipment.

It is recommended that a three metre wide area should be kept clear within the inside of all boundaries.

### Density and Spacing of Caravans.

3. Caravans used for the purposes of human habitation should be positioned not less than six metres from any other caravan, subject to the following variations.
  - Porches may protrude one metre into the six metre spacing.
  - Where awnings are used, the distance between any part of the awning and an adjoining caravan should not be less than three metres.
  - The six metre recommended guide can be relaxed in the cases of showmen's specialist caravans used solely for living accommodation and any touring caravan used solely as sleeping accommodation, but these should in any event be positioned not less than three metres from any other caravan.

- Other extensions or attachments can be permitted between units only if of a non-combustible construction (including non-combustible roof) and sufficient space is maintained around each unit so as not to prejudice means of escape in case of fire.
- 4. The density should not exceed 60 caravans per hectare, calculated on the basis of usable area allocated for residential purposes on that site and excluding lakes, roads, communal services and other areas unsuitable for the siting of caravans. The density should be consistent with safety standards and health and amenity requirements.

#### Storage and Maintenance of Fairground Equipment.

- 5. A separate area shall be allocated within each site for the storage, repair and maintenance of fairground equipment.
- 6. Any buildings erected in connection with the above should comply with the Building Regulations in force at the time. In any event these buildings should be not less than six metres from any caravan used for the purposes of human habitation.
- 7. Any lorries, trailers, trucks, vans, etc. not used during the course of daily activities should be parked within this allocated area.
- 8. No equipment exceeding five metres in height should be stored on sites.

#### Roads, Gateways and Footpaths.

- 9. Roads and footpaths should be designed to provide adequate access for fire appliances. Roads of suitable material should be provided so that no caravan standing is more than 50 metres from a road. Such access routes should not be less than 3.7 metres wide, should have clear, unobstructive width and should have no overhead structure or cable less than four metres above the ground. Emergency vehicle routes within the site should be kept clear of obstruction at all times.
- 10. The access to the site and internal road layout should be designed to maximise highway safety.

#### Hardstandings.

- 11. Where possible, every caravan and item of fairground equipment should stand on a hardstanding of suitable material.

#### Fire Fighting Appliances/ Fire Points.

- 12. Fire points should be clearly marked and should be established so that no caravan or site building is more than 30 metres from a fire point. Each individual plot should have an individual fire point.
- 13. Fire fighting equipment shall be provided in a prominent position on any fairground equipment.

14. Suitable fire fighting equipment should be installed and suitably protected against damage by frost. Such fire fighting equipment can include water stand pipes with hose reels to B.S. standards, fire hydrants to B.S. standards (installed within 100 metres of any caravan standing), water extinguishers (2 x 9 litres) or a water tank of at least 500 litres capacity fitted with a hinged cover, two buckets and one hand pump or bucket pump.
15. A means of raising an alarm in the event of a fire should be provided at each fire point.
16. All alarm and fire fighting equipment should be installed, tested and maintained in working order.
17. Each fire point should exhibit a notice indicating the action to be taken in case of fire and the location of the nearest telephone. The notice should include the following :-

"On discovering a fire

1. Raise the alarm;
2. Ensure the affected unit is evacuated;
3. Call the fire brigade (the nearest telephone is sited . . . .)
4. If practicable, attack the fire using the fire fighting equipment provided."

#### Fire Hazards.

18. Long grass and vegetation should be cut at frequent and regular intervals when the site is occupied to prevent it becoming a fire hazard to caravans, buildings or other installations on the site. Any such cuttings should be removed from the vicinity of caravans. The space beneath and between caravans should not be used for the storage of combustible materials.

#### Storage of Liquefied Petroleum Gas.

19. Liquefied Petroleum Gas storage and installations should comply with fire, health and safety regulations in force at the time.

#### Electrical Installations.

20. Where feasible, sites should be provided with an electricity supply sufficient in all respects to meet all reasonable demands of the caravans and maintenance facilities. Any electrical installations which are not Electricity Board works should be installed, tested and maintained in accordance with the provisions of the Institution of Electrical Engineers' Regulations and other regulations in force at the time. Electrical installations and appliances should be worked on by competent persons and inspected periodically in accordance with the recommendations in force at the time. Any overhead lines should be clearly marked.

Water Supply.

21. All sites provided with a water supply should be in accordance with the appropriate Water Byelaws and statutory quality standards.

Drainage, Sanitation and Washing Facilities.

22. Satisfactory provision shall be made for foul drainage, either by connection to a public sewer or sewage treatment works or by discharge to a properly constructed septic tank or cesspool approved by the Statutory Authorities.
23. Properly designed disposal points for the contents of chemical closets should be provided with an adequate supply of water for cleaning the containers.
24. On occasion, communal toilet blocks can be provided which should be sited conveniently so that all site occupants may have reasonable access.

Refuse disposal.

25. Dustbins with lids shall be provided and kept for rubbish and the site shall be kept clean and free from refuse.

Parking.

26. Only one car may be parked between adjoining caravans of six metres spacing, provided that the door to the caravan is not obstructed. Other car parking spaces should be made available where necessary to meet additional requirements of the occupants and their visitors.

Recreation Space.

27. Some recreation space should be provided around caravans or in a specially designated area for children's games and/or other recreational purposes.

APPENDIX A

OFFICES OF THE SHOWMEN'S GUILD OF GREAT BRITAIN

Central Office :-

Guild House,  
41 Clarence Street,  
STAINES,  
Middlesex TW18 4SY.

Telephone 0784 461805/6.  
Facsimile 0784 461732.

1. Northern Section,  
Secretary,  
P. O. Box 58,  
MORPETH,  
Northumberland NE65 8ER.

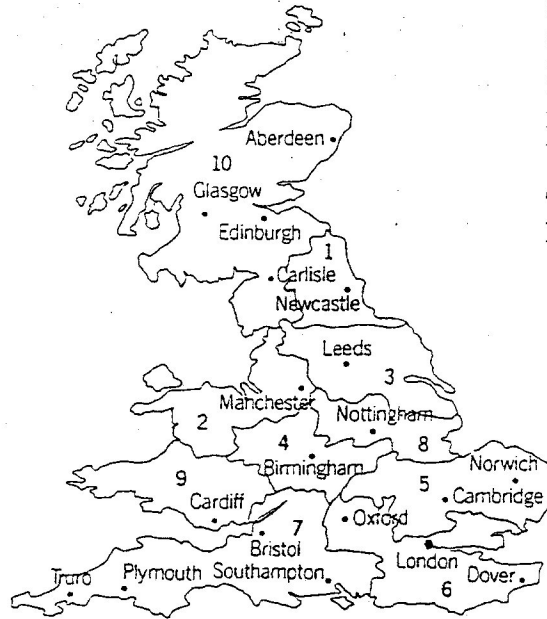
Telephone 0665 570143.

2. Lancashire Section,  
Secretary,  
Showmen's Guild of Great Britain,  
11 St. Mary's Place,  
BURY,  
Lancs. BL9 0DZ.

Telephone 061 762 9502.  
Facsimile 061 761 5430.

3. Yorkshire Section,  
Secretary,  
151A King Street,  
Drighlington,  
LEEDS BD11 1EJ.

Telephone 0532 853341.  
Facsimile 0532 853329.



4. Midland Section,  
Showmen's Guild of Great Britain,  
Office No. 2,  
70-76 Alcester Road South,  
Kings Heath,  
BIRMINGHAM B14 7PT.

Telephone 021 444 1363.

5. Norwich and Eastern Counties Section,  
Secretary,  
18 Langham Place,  
NORWICH NR1 3TD.

Telephone 0603 627731.

6. London and Home Counties Section,  
Showmen's Guild of Great Britain,  
Guild House,  
41 Clarence Street,  
STAINES,  
Middlesex TW18 4SY.

Telephone 0784 454780/455120.  
Facsimile 0784 449490.

7. Western Section,  
Showmen's Guild of Great Britain,  
19 West Walk,  
Yate Shopping Centre,  
Yate,  
BRISTOL BS17 4AX.

Telephone 0454 323974.  
Facsimile 0454 327981.

8. Derby, Notts, Mid and South Lincs. Section,  
Secretary,  
136 Bagnall Road,  
Cinderhill,  
NOTTINGHAM NG6 8SJ.

Telephone 0602 703808.

9. South Wales Section,  
Secretary,  
52 Beach Road,  
Newton,  
PORTHCAWL,  
Mid Glamorgan CF36 5NH.

Telephone 0656 782922.  
Facsimile 0656 785991.

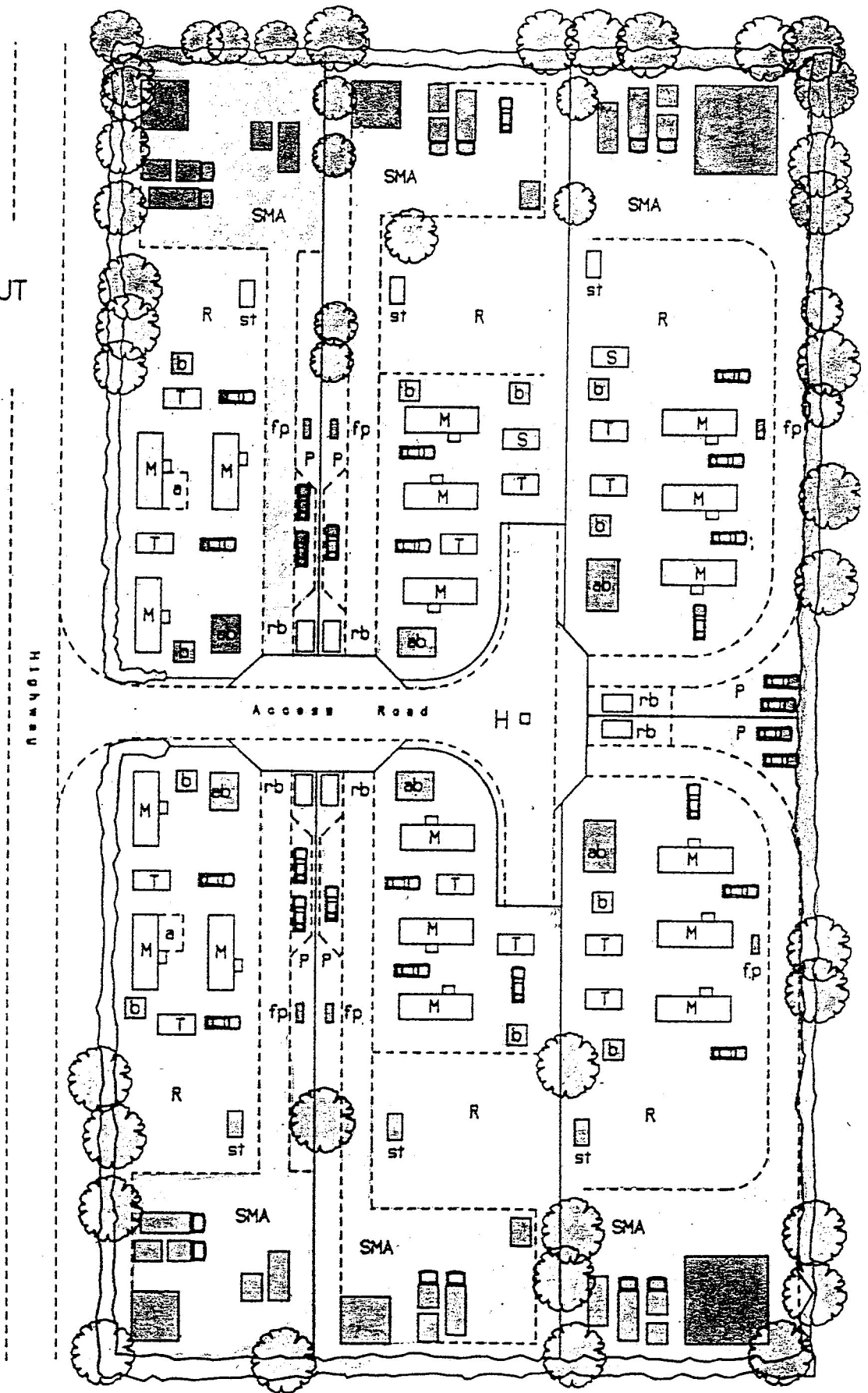
10. Scottish Section,  
Showmen's Guild of Great Britain,  
8 Fitzroy Place,  
GLASGOW,  
Scotland G3 7RH.

Telephone 041 221 7297.  
Facsimile 041 204 3190.



# MODEL SITE LAYOUT

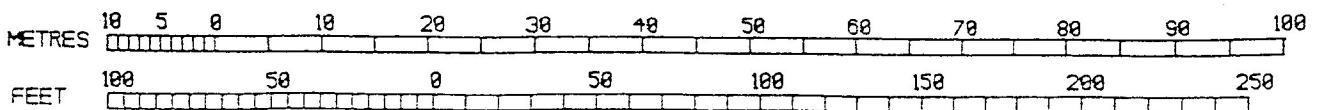
## For Large Site



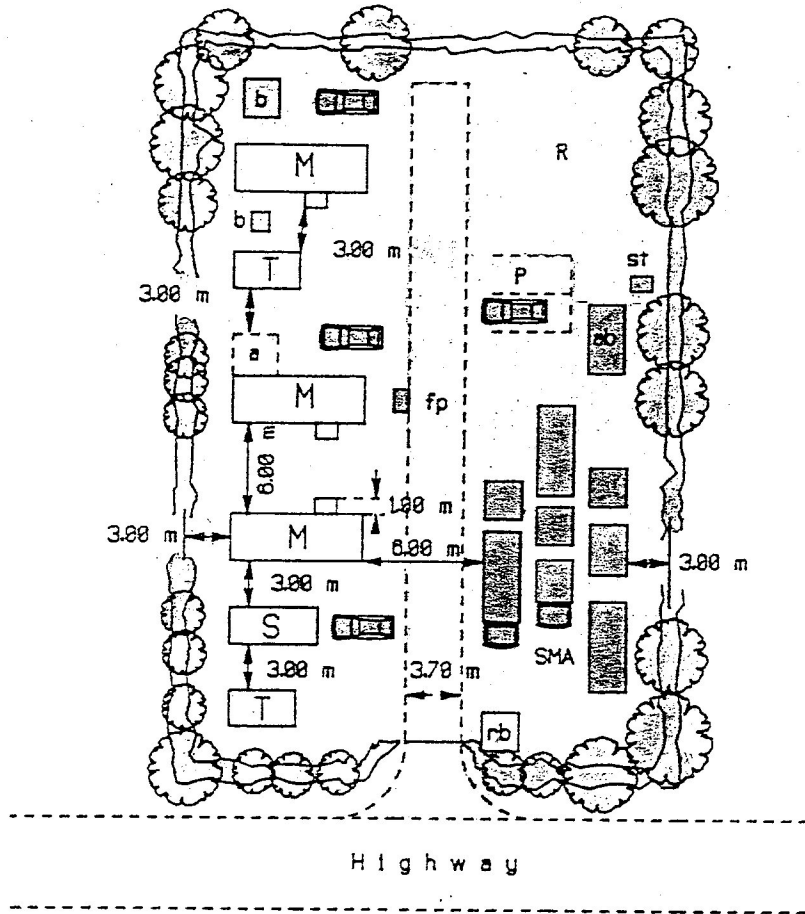
### KEY

- |     |                              |    |  |
|-----|------------------------------|----|--|
| M   | Mobile Home                  | fp | Fire Point   |
| T   | Touring Caravan              | rb | Rubbish Bins   |
| S   | Specialist Caravan           | ab | Chemical Toilet Disposal Point (Toilet-Laundry Optional) |
| SMA | Storage and Maintenance Area | b  | Non Combustible Building                                 |
| H   | Hydrant                      | a  | Awning / Pull Out Section                                |
| R   | Recreational Area            | st | Septic Tank/Cesspool (or Mains Drainage)                 |
| P   | Additional Parking Area      |    |  |

### SCALES



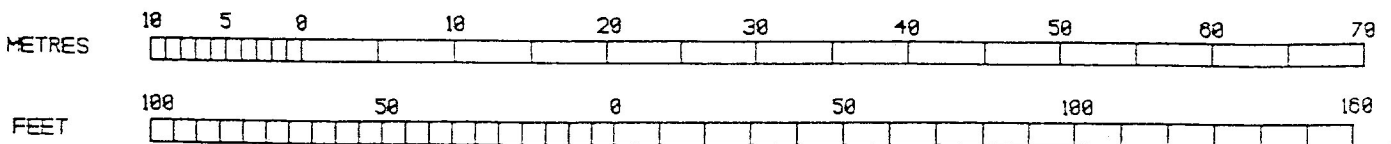
# MODEL SITE LAYOUT For Small Site



## KEY

- M Mobile Home
- T Touring Caravan
- S Specialist Caravan
- SMA Storage and Maintenance Area
- R Recreational Area
- P Additional Parking Area
- st Septic Tank/Cesspool ( or mains drainage )
- fp Fire Point
- rb Rubbish Bins
- ab Chemical Toilet Disposal Point (Toilet-Laundry Optional)
- b Non Combustible Building
- a Awning / Pull out section

## SCALES



PLANNING CONDITIONS AND SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

Where Local Planning Authorities are considering granting planning permission for the use of land as a traveling showpeople's site, they have the power to impose conditions which would enable the change of use to take place where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission. The conditions should however be fair, reasonable and practicable and they should be precise and relevant, both to the planning objectives and to the development to be permitted.

By the imposition of conditions, Local Planning Authorities may well find that the use of the land is more acceptable and that the development is more controlled. Conditions that have been imposed on some travelling showpeople's sites include, for example, the restriction of height for the storage of vehicles and equipment, the restriction of hours for the testing, maintenance and repair of equipment, a condition restricting the number of caravans and/or vehicles on the site, and a condition ensuring that a comprehensive landscaping scheme is undertaken and thereafter maintained.

Where further controls or obligations are deemed to be necessary, and where these controls cannot be secured by condition, a legal agreement may be entered into between the Local Authority and the travelling showpeople under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Such agreements may relate to the provision of sewerage or other services and restrictions on occupancy of the land.