

The Application is for full planning permission for a replacement stable block and new manege or horse exercise area. The existing access would be utilised off Keele Road which serves the application site and a neighbouring residential dwelling.

The application site is located within the open countryside on land designated as being within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and an Area of Landscape Restoration (policy N21), as indicated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The 8 week determination period expired on the 18th July 2016 but the applicant has agreed to an extension of the statutory n period to the 18th August 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

Permit, subject to conditions covering the following:-

1. Commencement of development within 3 years
2. Development in accordance with the submitted plans
3. External Materials
4. Submission and approval of manege surfacing
5. Non-commercial use only
6. Prior approval of means of storing and disposing of stable wastes
7. Only one trailer/ horse box kept on site
8. No jumps or similar features/ structures
9. No external lighting unless agreed prior to installation Visibility Splays shown on revised drawing and kept free from obstruction
10. Access, parking and turning areas provided prior to occupation
11. Prior approval for proposals for the treatment of the roadside hedgerow and a soft landscaping scheme
12. Erection of bat and bird boxes

Reason for Recommendation

The proposed manege is considered to represent appropriate development within the Green Belt. The stable building by virtue of its size and the fact that an existing stable has been converted to a residential development (which could have been brought back into use as stables) would result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt and is also inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, it is considered that the applicant has provided a case to demonstrate that the benefits of the scheme which would support outdoor sport and recreation in the Green Belt a. This amounts to very special circumstances that would outweigh the harm to the openness of the Green Belt in this instance which would justify approval of planning permission subject to the imposition of the above conditions.

Statement as to how the Local Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner in dealing with this application

Pre application discussions were undertaken between the applicant and the LPA and this has resulted in a number of supporting documents and plans being submitted with the planning application

KEY ISSUES

Full planning permission is sought for a stable block and new ménage at the site that has historically been used for equestrian uses.

The application follows the grant of planning permission (17/00073/FUL) for the conversion of another stable block building on the site to a dwelling. That permission has yet to be implemented.

The site lies within the open countryside which is designated as being within the Green Belt and an Area of Landscape Restoration as indicated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The main issues for consideration in this application are;

- Is the proposal appropriate development within the Green Belt?
- Design and impact on the character and quality of the landscape,
- Residential amenity issues,
- Highway matters, and
- Should it be concluded that the development is inappropriate in Green Belt terms do the required very special circumstances exist?

Is the proposal appropriate development within the Green Belt?

Paragraph 79 of the NPPF indicates that “the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.”

Paragraph 87 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 89 of the NPPF indicates the types of development involving the construction of new buildings that are not inappropriate in the Green Belt. Paragraph 90 sets out that “certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt”. The identified exceptions include the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it; and engineering operations are not to be regarded as inappropriate provided, again, they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

Stables are recognised as appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation within the Green Belt provided that they preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

In this instance the proposed stable would be for personal use for the applicant and her daughter who competes in dressage events nationally. The proposed building would have 3 stables, a laundry, w/c, a feed/ tack room and a horse wash room.

The site has an existing stable building that received planning permission for its conversion to a small two bedroom residential dwelling in April of this year. Members may recall that this application came before the Planning Committee on the 28th March.

The applicant indicates that the existing brick built stable (to be converted to a dwelling) would not meet the current standards for stabling horses. However, the previous application established that appropriate works could be carried out to enable it to be converted to a residential dwelling. It is likely that works could be carried out to meet the standards for stabling horses also.

There is also an existing field shelter that would be removed from the site which the proposed stable would replace. The existing shelter (timber stable) has a volume of approximately 77 cubic metres and the proposed stable has a volume of 269 cubic metres. Therefore the proposed structure would have a significantly greater volume.

It is considered that whilst stables for horses can be an appropriate use within the Green Belt the applicant could have converted the existing stable into appropriate stables and whilst some extension works may have been required the overall impact on the openness of the Green Belt would have been much less than the current proposals. Therefore it is appropriate to conclude the proposed

stable would result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt, and thus the stable building here proposed is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

In terms of the proposed manege this is an appropriate form of development in Green Belt terms. The engineering works required to construct the manege would not be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt, which would include a 1.4 metre high post and rail fence around the perimeter. No lighting is proposed.

Design and impact on the character and quality of the landscape

Paragraph 56 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

The site lies within an area of Landscape Restoration (Policy N21) as indicated by the Local Development Framework Proposals Map. This policy seeks development that will help to restore the character and improve the quality of the landscape.

The proposed stable would be constructed using rendered block work with a slate roof and timber doors and windows. This would be in keeping with other buildings in the locality and represents an acceptable design for this location.

Despite the size of the proposed building minimal views would be obtainable from any main vantage points and it has been sited within the site so as to be viewed within the context of existing buildings.

In terms of the manege this would be of a standard design and also not be viewed from the wider area. It would have an acceptable appearance.

In consideration of the above, the proposals are considered to represent acceptable designs that would comply with the requirements of the NPPF whilst also being in accordance with local planning policy.

Residential amenity issues

Paragraph 17 of the NPPF lists a set of core land-use planning principles that should underpin decision-taking, one of which states that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

The proposed stables and manege would be for personal use for the applicant and her daughter. No floodlighting is proposed and this can be restricted by condition, as can the personal use of the site. This is considered necessary due to the proximity of the proposals to neighbouring residential properties and the location within the countryside whereby there is a very limited amount of artificial lighting currently, although there is street lighting does along this part of Keele Road.

The Environmental Health Division has raised no objections subject to the conditions advised above.

The proposals are considered to comply with the guidance and requirements of the NPPF and no significant harm would be caused to local amenity levels.

The impact on highway safety

The existing access currently has poor visibility and access improvements were secured by condition as part of the recent permission for the conversion of the existing stable to a dwelling.

The Highway Authority has raised no objections subject to conditions which secure the visibility splays and the parking and turning area. A condition which restricts the development to personal use is also requested. Subject to these conditions it is considered that the proposal would provide improved access arrangements to an acceptable level bearing in mind the use of the access to serve two dwellings and the development referred to in this current application.

A condition which secures the relocation of the hedgerow outside of the bird nesting season and the details of the relocation are also advised. These conditions were imposed on the previous decision for the residential conversion.

Do the required very special circumstances exist (to justify inappropriate development)?

The NPPF indicates that very special circumstances (to justify inappropriate development) will not exist unless potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

As discussed the proposed stable, by virtue of its size and the fact that an existing stable has been converted to a residential development (which could have been brought back into use as stables) would result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

The applicant has submitted a case for very special circumstances (VSC) which primarily relates to the proposed equestrian uses being for personal use for the applicant and her daughter who competes in dressage events nationally. The VSC case indicates that the applicant needs to train daily and exercise the horses to keep them in peak condition and competition ready. The benefits besides training and the ability to train at any time during the day and weekend is the safety and wellbeing aspect of the horses, security of the site and equipment. Therefore there was a need to have living accommodation alongside the proposed stables. They advise that competing at a national level for equestrians is difficult because other sports do not rely on an animal, which has to be in top condition and trained daily. Furthermore they indicate that there are no washing facilities for the horses at the stables or washing of equipment either. When competing at a national level there are standards of turn-out which have to be complied with for both horse and rider. Domestic washing machines are not big enough to hold equine rugs and equipment due to weight therefore a commercial washing machine will be purchased for use. Feed requires correct storage and being free from mice and vermin, this is incorporated in the stable block. This is preferred than lots of smaller sheds within the site which would be more intrusive to neighbours and the surroundings.

The NPPF does support access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities (para 73).

Your Officer accepts that the proposed stable has an acceptable appearance and by virtue of the stables being adjacent to the recently approved living accommodation that would reduce the vehicle movements from the site. As such it could be considered to be a more sustainable form of development than where stables are provided remotely from a dwelling. The proposal would facilitate outdoor sport and recreation in the Green Belt, as supported by the NPPF.

It is accepted that the proposals would have a greater impact than the existing buildings on the openness of the Green Belt but it is considered that the benefits would outweigh the harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Equestrian uses do not benefit from permitted development rights, as set out in the General Permitted Development Order 2015, so there is no fallback scheme to consider here.

In conclusion the element of harm arising from the fact that the development is inappropriate and its impact on openness is considered to be clearly outweighed by the above considerations, and the required very special circumstances can be considered to exist in this case.

APPENDIX

Policies and proposals in the Development Plan relevant to this decision:

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy \(CSS\) 2006-2026](#)

Policy ASP6: Rural Area Spatial Policy
Policy CSP1: Design Quality
Policy CSP4: Natural Assets

[Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan \(NLP\) 2011](#)

Policy S3: Development in the Green Belt
Policy N3: Development and Nature Conservation – Protection and Enhancement Measures
Policy N12: Development and the Protection of Trees
Policy N17: Landscape Character - General Considerations
Policy N21: Area of Landscape Restoration
Policy T16: Development – General Parking Requirements

Other Material Considerations

Relevant National Policy Guidance:

[National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) \(2012\)](#)

[Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\) \(2014\)](#)

Other Guidance

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document \(2010\)](#)

[Planning for Landscape Change - SPG to the former Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan](#)

Relevant Planning History

17/00073/FUL Conversion of Barn to Create Single Family Dwelling Permit

Consultation Responses

Madeley Parish Council raises no objections

The **Highways Authority** raises no objections subject to conditions which secure appropriate visibility splays, the provision of access, parking and turning areas prior to occupation and the development being for personal use only.

The **Environmental Health Division** has no objections to the application subject to conditions which secure no external lighting and the development being for personal use only.

Representations

No representations received.

Applicants/agents submission

The requisite plans and application forms were submitted. A supporting statement and VSC, transport statement and ecological appraisal report has been submitted to support the application which seeks to justify the development proposed. These documents can be viewed on the Council's website;

<http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/17/00434/FUL>

Background Papers

Planning files referred to
Planning Documents referred to

Date report prepared

01 August 2017