DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

SITE — Bolton Gate Farm

EXISTING — Equestrian establishment with stabling for 20 horses, ménage, on site equipment, shop and associated outbuildings

PROPOSAL — Conversion of disused stable and hayloft over into living accommodation for site manager.

SITE ASSESSMENT

Bolton Gate is situated in a rural location adjacent to Park Hall Country Park. It comprises 20 acres of pasture land bordering the country park. Access is direct from the main Leek Road leading along a short driveway onto an open yard surrounded by various farm buildings, barns and livery stables for 20 horses. A ménage is located adjacent to the main buildings and one central building is utilised as a shop and store selling various equestrian items (saddles, riding hats and clothing etc). The business has operated from the site for ~~20~~ 36 years and the current owners purchased the farm as a going concern in ~~1999~~ 2002. The business is financially viable and has a full occupancy of all available livery stables with an ongoing waiting list which should ensure the business prospers well into the future. It is also the only riding school and equestrian centre offering such facilities within the immediate locality and its excellent reputation for equestrian care and on site facilities is well known within the county. Clients in fact travel from all over Staffordshire to book riding lessons at Bolton Gate and five horses are kept permanently available for this purpose including two smaller horses for children and clients with disabilities.

The business employs four permanent staff ie a site manager and two further full time staff and one full time person in the on site shop. The requirement relating to this planning application is for a site manager to be based at the site on a 24 hour continuous basis so that all the horses can be checked and managed regularly . The present situation does not permit this as the manager lives off site and is not available out of hours, ie after 6.00pm until 8.00am. This means that security is limited to CCTV camera only and any horse failing sick or unwell overnight would not be detected until the next day. Furthermore the 20 stabled horses have an average value of £3000 meaning £60,000 worth of horses are stabled on a farm with no overnight security or managerial presence. This lack of security concerns the owners and insurers are not happy with the situation. A permanent presence on site would allay these concerns and a significant degree of security would then be established. A simple solution is available namely to convert the disused stable block and hayloft over into a site living accommodation. This building is ideally located near the site entrance and adjacent to the main yard and stables. No extension or new building would be required, internal refurbishment plus minor external alterations are all that would be necessary. These building works have previously been approved by council listed building/conservation officers and this permission is still current.

USE The part building in question is currently surplus as stables. The proposed use as accommodation for a site manager is consistent with the overall site use and would be appropriate in this instance.

AMOUNT The site and neighbourhood could easily absorb one additional small residential unit and neighbourhood services are in place to support the proposal.

LAYOUT The building layout will ensure privacy, security and practicality and not result in overlooking.

SCALE The building will not be materially changed or altered and will therefore remain at a size and scale appropriate for use as a single residential unit. Window and door openings will remain domestic in scale and size.

LANDSCAPING

No change.

APPEARANCE

The appearance of the building will not change apart from existing door openings being part built up and window units being fitted into the top sections. Hayloft doors (two number) will also be converted to single casement windows. In accordance with conservation/listed building officer requirements the units will be stained softwood with timber boarding to lower sections. Exisiting external brickwork will be re-pointed and the existing plain roof tiles retained. The overall 'farm building/barn' appearance will therefore be retained in all aspects.

ACCESS

Vehicular and pedestrian access via the main site drive and entrance will remain unaltered.

01.03.10