Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

LAND OFF BAILEYS BANK
GILLOW HEATH

MAY 2019

Site Address:
Land at Baileys Bank, Gillow Heath, Biddulph, Staffordshire

Applicant:
Mr. & Mrs. Smith

Proposal:
Erection of replacement equestrian building

Planning Statement:
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Job Reference: RDP/2019/038

Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Smith to seek full planning permission for the erection of a replacement equestrian building on land off Baileys Bank, Gillow Heath, Biddulph.

1.2 Planning permission was originally granted for the erection of stables on this site under application SMD/2006/0763, with a subsequent application for a manege approved under application SMD/2007/0565. Both of those schemes were subsequently implemented and remain in situ on the site. More recently the applicants have secured permission for the erection of an additional stable block on the site, encompassing the provision of additional stabling and a canopy linking the building to the existing stables (SMD/2018/0796).

1.3 This application seeks planning permission to remove the existing stable buildings on the site, and to erect a replacement stable building in their place, encompassing a footprint of 161m^2. The building will comprise of four stables, hay and bedding store, feed store and tack room, with a centralised access. The building will stand to a ridge height of 3.9 metres. Vehicular access to the site will remain unaltered from that which already exists.

2 Site Location

2.1 The application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt, and comprises a parcel of equestrian land, located on the eastern side of Baileys Bank. Located within the site, adjacent to the westernmost boundary of the site and sat alongside a row of mature trees, are two existing stable blocks, sat upon a concrete base. To the east of the stables is the existing manege, which is enclosed by post and rail fencing.

2.2 Vehicular access to the site is taken direct off Baileys Bank to the southwest of the existing stable buildings. The site is enclosed by open fields to the north and south, with further fields to the west beyond Baileys Bank. The eastern boundary of the site is enclosed by a band of trees that line the nearby Biddulph Valley Way. A cluster of agricultural buildings lie approximately 163 metres to the northwest of the site, with the nearest residential property (Mount Pleasant Farm) located some 307 metres to the southwest.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.1 **Policy SS1** of the Core Strategy relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect development to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, amongst others, easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community; development which maintains the distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings, and development that secures high quality, sustainable environments.

3.2 **Policy SS6c** of the adopted Core Strategy relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Area Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which meets an essential local need, supports the rural diversification and

sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. The policy goes on to state that the Council will meet essential local needs by (amongst others):

- *Allowing the conversion, extension or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policies R1 and R2.*

3.3 Policy SS6c goes on to state that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

3.2 **Policy R1** of the Core Strategy relates to 'Rural Diversification' and states that all development in the rural areas outside the development boundaries of the towns and villages will be assessed according to the extent to which it enhances the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside, promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy, facilitates economic activity, meets a rural community need and sustains the historic environment. Appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area or any sites designated for their nature conservation, or historical interest by virtue of the scale, nature and level of activity involved and the type and amount of traffic generated or by other effects such as noise and pollution. Wherever possible development should be within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion. Where new or replacement buildings are involved, development should have minimal impact on the countryside and be in close proximity to an existing settlement. Within the Green Belt, inappropriate development that is otherwise acceptable within the terms of this policy will still need to be justified by very special circumstances.

3.3 **Policy DC1** of the Core Strategy relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that new development should be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area. Proposals should be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

3.4 **Policy DC3** of the Core Strategy relates to 'Landscape and Settlement Setting' and states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:

- *Resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the character of the local and wider landscape or the setting of a settlement and important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment;*

- *Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment;*

- *Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape;*

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of safeguarding the Green Belt and securing high quality design. The content of

the NPPF has been taken into account in the preparation of this Planning Statement and is discussed within the Planning Assessment below.

Planning Application SMD/2018/0796

4.2 This application granted consent for the erection of an additional stable block on the site occupying a footprint area (inclusive of approved canopy) of some 74.7m^2 and standing to a ridge height of 3.2 metres. The resultant development, inclusive of the existing stables, will comprise of four stables, a hay store, feed store, saddle store, and tack room. The application remains extant and represents a material fallback position of substantial weight that must be taken into consideration in the determination of this application.

5 Planning Assessment

3.4 The application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and proposes the erection of a replacement equestrian building. Paragraph 145 of the NPPF confirms that the erection of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt, but nevertheless identifies a number of exceptions, which includes:

> *"the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*

3.5 These provisions are reflected within policies SS6c and R1 of the Core Strategy, with the latter stating:

> *"Where new or replacement buildings are involved, development should have minimal impact on the countryside and be in close proximity to an existing settlement. Within the Green Belt, inappropriate development that is otherwise acceptable within the terms of this policy will still need to be justified by very special circumstances".*

5.1 In assessing this matter attention is drawn to the extant permission on the site, which granted consent for the provision of additional stables and a canopy connecting the building to the existing stables (SMD/2018/0796). This permission represents a material fall back of substantial weight and must be taken into account in the determination of the application.

5.2 The proposed development encompasses the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor recreation, and is not considered to materially detract from the openness of the Green Belt or the five purposes of including land within it, particularly when due regard is given to the extant planning permission on the site. Plan AL04 Rev.B demonstrates that the proposed building will occupy more or less the same footprint and part of the site as that which already exists / has approval, and consequently is considered to constitute an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 145 of the NPPF.

5.3 Notwithstanding the above, and without prejudice to the applicant's case, if the Local Authority were to conclude that the proposal is harmful to the openness of the Green Belt, and thus amounts to inappropriate development, it is submitted that very special circumstances exist to clearly outweigh the totality of harm to the Green Belt that would arise from the proposed development (Paragraphs 143 and 144 of the NPPF refer).

5.4 Paragraph 145 of the NPPF, within its list of exceptions to the usual presumption against the erection of new buildings, allows for the following:

> "*the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces*"

5.5 Whilst the proposed replacement building would be materially larger than the existing stable buildings on the site, when one has due regard to the applicants established fall back position, it is clear that the proposed development will not be materially larger than the developments that have been approved by the Local Authority on this site.

5.6 The existing stable buildings, inclusive of its existing canopy, cover a footprint of some 78m^2. The recently approved development on the site (SMD/2018/0796) granted consent for a further 75m^2 of built footprint (inclusive of its approved canopy). Consequently, the existing buildings, coupled with this approved development on the site, would collectively encompass a footprint of 153m^2.

5.7 The proposed replacement building by contrast will have a footprint of 161m^2 and thus represents a very modest increase in size of some 8m^2 (5.2%) compared to the developments which have already been approved by the Local Authority. These figures are summarised in Figure 1 overleaf for convenience.

Figure 1 – Comparison between Existing, Approved & Proposed Building

	Existing Buildings	**Existing + Approved**	**Proposed Building**	**% Difference to Existing + Approved**
Footprint	78m^2	153m^2	161m^2	5.2%

5.8 It is also submitted that the proposed replacement building will represent a visual enhancement compared to the approved scheme. The existing stables have a traditional appearance, but attached to them is a flat roofed canopy. The approved development encompassed the introduction of a new stable block to the east of the existing building, with a further canopy provided in order to link the new and the old buildings together. The resultant development however will give rise to a disjointed roof juncture where the new canopy connects with the existing stable building, as well as introducing contrasting roof pitches and maintaining the existing flat roof. The resultant effect will be a development that has a somewhat haphazard appearance.

5.9 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that development is visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, and that development be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Similar provisions are reflected within policies SS1, DC1 and DC3 of the Core Strategy.

5.10 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF reinforces these provisions and states that

> *"Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to* ***take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area*** *and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents". (my emphasis)*

5.11 The proposed replacement building will be purpose built, and achieve a visual appearance akin to the agricultural buildings observable to the northwest of the site, and throughout the rural areas of the District. Its scale, massing and design is modest in nature, and the accompanying plan (AL04 Rev.B) shows how the development will sit on the site in comparison to the existing and approved equestrian buildings.

5.12 Its proposed palette of materials is furthermore of a nature that is commensurate with that approved under application SMD/2018/0796, and which is commonplace throughout the Moorlands. The proposed development will therefore assimilate well with its rural surroundings, and in my view, will represent an improvement to the appearance of built development on the site compared to the somewhat haphazard arrangement that will arise as a consequence of the recently approved application.

5.13 In summary, if the Local Authority were to conclude that this proposal amounts to inappropriate development, it is considered that the applicant's established fall back position, coupled with the visual enhancements associated with the proposed building, will collectively amount to very special circumstances to clearly outweigh the totality of harm to the Green Belt. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in planning policy terms.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The proposed development is considered to constitute an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt in the context of paragraph 145 of the NPPF, and encompasses a scale, massing and design that is in keeping with its rural context. Notwithstanding the above, if the Local Authority were to conclude that the proposal constitutes an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt, it is considered that very special circumstances exists to clearly outweigh the totality of harm to the Green Belt.

6.2 The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policies SS1, SS6c, R1, DC1 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy DPD, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.3 The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission for the proposed development.