

# **PLANNING STATEMENT**

## **INCLUDING DESIGN AND ACCESS ISSUES**

**Client:** Mr & Mrs Peter Slinn

**Location:** Land Opposite Rownall View, Rownall Road, Wetley Rocks,  
Staffordshire Moorlands, ST9 0BT

**Proposal:** Retrospective application for the erection of a timber frame stable block containing 3 stables, and an equipment store (tack room) and a hay and fodder store.

**Grid reference :** SJ95015015050

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This application is submitted retrospectively for stables and change of use of the fields from agricultural to equestrian use, with a small area of hardstanding for manoeuvring of horses, with access off Rownall Road, Wetley Rocks.

## 2 APPLICATION SITE AND ITS SETTING

The application site extends to approximately 3.4 acres (1.4 hectares) of land. The field numbers for the land are SJ9497450416 and SJ9486480501. The land is situated to the North of A52 at Werrington, approximately 2 miles along Rownall Road. The land is also approximately 5 miles from Leek. The land has been subdivided with post and wire fencing to form 3 rotational fields for grazing purposes. The land is a field laid to grass with an existing hedge along the roadside boundary and is accessed via a roadside gate.

- 2.1 For the purposes of the Development Plan the site lies outside any designated settlement boundary within an area of open countryside.

## 3. HISTORY

- 3.1 There has previously been a planning application and approval for a field shelter at the front of the site, including hard standing and access alterations:

- SMD/09/00351 -Full Application

## 4. DESIGN SPECIFICATION

- **Access** : Via existing access from the road.
- **Appearance**: Timber construction, walls and divides, with profiled roofing sheets.
- **Scale** – 74 square metres of buildings, set in approximately 1.4 hectares
- **Layout** – as shown on site plan.
- **Landscaping** – hardstanding adjacent to stables, existing hedge line.
- **Screening**: Set back from the road with hedge line.

## 5. KEY PLANNING ISSUES

- 5.1 The key issues for consideration during the processing of this application are considered to be the principle of development; whether the proposal is in accord with the Development Plan, the need for the stables; and its effect upon the visual amenity of the area. For the sake of brevity the Development Plan and NPPFs policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to as appropriate.

### The Principle of Development

- 5.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory 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. This guidance is re-iterated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 5.3 At the heart of the guidance in the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.4 The Core Strategy does not have specific policies on stables. Core Strategy policy DC1 requires that development should be of a high quality; be designed to respect the site and its surroundings; and promote the maintenance of biodiversity. Core Strategy policy DC3 requires that development which would harm the character of the local and wider landscape should be resisted and important views as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment.
- 5.5 Although, the Core Strategy does not specifically mention the erection of stables there are many examples of stables in both the Green Belt and countryside including equestrian centres.
- 5.6 Section 3 of the NPPF supports the diversification of agricultural operations; Section 7 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should optimize the potential of a site, respond to local character and be of a good quality of design, and should also address the integration of new development into the natural environment. With regard to Section 11 of the NPPF the proposed development would not have any material adverse impact on the natural environment.

- 5.7 Similarly, Policy SS6c of the Core Strategy seeks to sustain the rural economy by supporting diversification of existing farm enterprises, and use of land for keeping horses is one such example of diversification.
- 5.8 The presumption in favour of sustainable development in both the Core Strategy and the NPPF is relevant to this application. The development is of a good quality of design and is designed and located to respect the site, and not adversely affecting residential amenity and as such is in accord with Core Strategy policy DC1. The statement in the Core Strategy on sustainable development states that the Council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions that allow proposals to be approved wherever possible unless there are material considerations to the contrary. It is contended that there are no such material considerations with this application and that there are no adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

*Impact on the landscape and views*

- 5.9 The proposed built development is small scale (74 square meters) and together with a small area of hardstanding would have minimal impact on the landscape. The materials are timber with profiled sheeting roofs and as such are appropriate for the countryside, being of specialist design and typical of many existing stables in the District.
- 5.10 The application does not result in a loss of wall or hedgerow field boundaries nor result in urbanisation or commuter dwellings which could be key concerns in this area. Timber stables are not urban features; similar structures are common throughout the District and the countryside nationally.
- 5.11 Whilst the site is visible from Rownall Road, the scale of the building is partially screened by the existing hedgerow, which means it is not prominent in the landscape.
- 5.12 Core Strategy policy R1 promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy provided that it does not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area. Where new or replacement buildings are involved, development should have minimal impact on the countryside. This is the case here. The proposed development and land use will help ensure that the land is well maintained as pasture land and that the biodiversity of the site is maintained.

## **6. THE NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.1 The total area of the site is approximately 3.4 acres which is sufficient – based on the British Horse Society’s guidance to provide grazing for 1.5 acres per horse. The proposal is for one building containing 3 small stables, therefore it would be considered appropriately sized for the number of horse. The stables are vital to provide shelter for the horses in bad weather and winter and the shed is needed to store tack, feed and equipment to maintain the health of the horses and the land. Therefore, the shelter is considered essential for the welfare of the horses.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The case for the development is that:

- The development is small scale; appropriate to a rural location; would not harm the countryside and will ensure the future management of the land.
- The buildings is set back from the road, partially screened by hedges and would not have any harmful effect on the landscape or views.
- The building is stained timber and of appropriate construction, similar to many stables in the district and the countryside nationally.
- The site utilises an existing access into the field.
- It is in accord with the Development Plan and as such is sustainable development which should be approved. Horse grazing on land does not require planning permission and whilst the stables do require permission they are vital for the welfare of the horses.
- Appropriate recreation uses and buildings such as stables are allowed in the Green Belt.
- We believe this approach, set out in the NPPF, applies just as much in the countryside and Green Belts.