

PLANNING STATEMENT

**LAND OFF POST LANE
STANLEY**

NOVEMBER 2021

Site Address:

Land off Post Lane, Stanley, Staffordshire

Applicant:

Mr. & Mrs. McConnell

Proposal:

Change of use land to equestrian and erection of stable block and
formation of equestrian manege

Planning Statement:

Date Issued: 8th November 2021

Job Reference: RDP/2021/159

Report Prepared By:

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. McConnell to seek full planning permission for the change of use of land off Post Lane, Stanley to equestrian use, along with the erection of a stable block and the formation of an equestrian manege.
- 1.2 The proposed stable block is to be positioned adjacent to the northern site boundary and will comprise of three stables and a tack room. The building will occupy a footprint of 83.8 square metres and stand to a ridge height of 4.2 metres. It will encompass a traditional stable design with overhanging roof and is to be constructed from concrete blockwork and finished in horizontal timber cladding, with green box profiled metal roof.
- 1.3 The proposed manege will be located to the south of the stable block and will occupy an area of 800 square metres (40m x 20m). It is to be surfaced with sand and rubber and will be enclosed by 1.5m high post and rail fencing at 1.8 metre centres.
- 1.4 The means of vehicular access to the site off Post Lane will remain unchanged from its current arrangement. A new hedgerow will be planted along the eastern site boundary, with all existing boundary trees and hedgerows to otherwise be retained.

2 Site & Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and lies on the western side of Post Lane, a short distance south of the Endon Cricket Club. The site area extends to some 7.9 acres (3.23 hectares) and is located wholly within the Stanley Conservation Area.
- 2.2 Vehicular access to the site is taken direct off Post Lane in the northeast corner of the site, with the carriageway of Stanley Bank wrapping around the southeastern / southern boundaries of the site, rising up in level towards Stanley village.
- 2.3 A mature hedgerow encloses the northern boundary of the site and it interspersed with mature trees. Further hedgerows enclose the western site boundary. The southern / southeastern site boundary is enclosed by a dry-stone wall and benefits from a number of mature trees along its length.
- 2.4 To the immediate north of the site lies a field that is used for equestrian purposes that includes within it a stable block and equestrian manege, as approved under application SMD/2016/0223.

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 recently adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- *a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, including starter homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities*
- *quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers;*
- *easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community;*
- *increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce;*

- *a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment;*
- *development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings;*
- *development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations.*
- *support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.*

3.3 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. It goes on to state that the Council will continue to exercise strict control over inappropriate development, allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

3.4 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should:

1. *be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;*
2. *be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance;*
3. *create, where appropriate, attractive, active, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate public spaces, green infrastructure including making provision for networks of multi-functional new and existing green space (both public and private), landscaping, public art, 'designing out crime' initiatives and the principles of Active Design;*
4. *incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the impact of the development;*
5. *protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, overbearing development, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution;*
6. *promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate;*
7. *provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use;*

8. *require new developments to be well integrated for car, pedestrian and cycle use as well as other sustainable transport links;*
9. *ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available, and where necessary enhanced, to enable the development to proceed;*
10. *ensure, where appropriate, equality of access and use for all sections of the community;*
11. *be served by high speed broadband (>30mbps) unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with Next Generation Access Network providers that this would not be possible, practical or economically viable. In all circumstances during construction of the site sufficient and suitable ducting should be provided within the site and to the property to facilitate ease of installation at a future date.*

2.5 Policy DC2 of the Local Plan relates to 'The Historic Environment' and states that:

1. *The Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.*
2. *Protection will be given to designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets as set out in the NPPF.*

3. *All applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.*
4. *Where development is likely to affect archaeology, both designated and undesignated, the Council requires the submission of a desk based assessment, and where appropriate, field surveys and trench evaluation by a qualified professional.*
5. *Where the loss of significance is unavoidable, recording should take place and this should be added to the Historic Environment Record as a minimum, held by Staffordshire County Council.*
6. *The Council will continue its proactive approach to heritage assets at risk and welcomes development proposals which would result in the sympathetic reuse of these assets in line with NPPF policy.*
7. *The Council will promote development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area and those interests of acknowledged importance through the use of Conservation Area Appraisals, Design Guidance and Statements, Archaeological Assessments, Characterisation Studies and Masterplanning.*

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out guidance, *inter-alia*, in respect of safeguarding the Green Belt and securing high quality design. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMD/2016/0223 – Land off Post Lane, Stanley

- 4.2 This application granted consent for the change of use of land to the immediate north of the application site to equestrian use, along with the erection of a stable block and formation of a manege. Reference is made to this application within the Planning Assessment below as a material consideration.

5 Planning Assessment

Green Belt

- 5.1 The application seeks consent for the change of use of land to equestrian use along with the erection of a detached stable block and the formation of a manege. The site is located within the Green Belt wherein policy SS10 of the Local Plan confirms that strict control will continued to be exercised over inappropriate development, allowing only for exceptions as defined by government policy.
- 5.2 Paragraphs 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework relates to development in the Green Belt and identifies a number of forms of development that can be considered acceptable within the Green Belt. These include:

“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” (paragraph 149(b) refers)

- 5.3 Paragraph 150 of the National Planning Policy Framework goes on to confirm that engineering operations and the change of use of land, such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation) are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided that they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 5.4 The proposed stable block constitutes an appropriate facility for outdoor sport and recreation and owing its modest scale and proximity adjacent to

the mature hedgerow that forms the northern site boundary, coupled with the presence of nearby buildings to the north (stable block) and the northeast (Linden / Oak Cottage)), the development will not give rise to any material harm to the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the five purposes of including land within it. The proposed stable block therefore amounts to an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt.

- 5.5 The proposed manege likewise constitutes an appropriate facility for outdoor sport and recreation, and by virtue of its flat and open nature, will not give rise to any material harm to the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the five purposes of including land within it. It therefore also amounts to an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt.
- 5.6 The associated change of use of the land to equestrian use will likewise not give rise to any material harm to the Green Belt and therefore also amounts to an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt (paragraph 150 of the NPPF refers). The site area extends to some 7.9 acres and therefore affords ample grazing land to meet the British Horse Society recommendations of 1 - 1.5 acres per horse. The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable.
- 5.7 In reaching this conclusion I draw attention to the conclusions of the Local Authority in its determination of application SMD/2016/0223 on land to the immediate north of this site. That application proposed the change of use of the land to equestrian use, along with the erection of a stable block and the formation of a manege. In recommending approval of the application, it was concluded that:

“It is judged that the proposal meets the Green Belt test being, in the main, ‘open’ in form. The building is small scale in profile and

would not, in the position proposed to the rear of trees and highway hedging, significantly disrupt openness”

- 5.8 It is respectfully submitted that the submitted proposal commands similar conclusions, as it involves the erection of a stable block that is modest in scale, and which has been positioned against the backdrop of the mature hedgerow along the northern site boundary. The proposal will therefore not materially affect the openness of the Green Belt or give rise to conflict with the five purposes of including land within it, and consequently accords with the requirements of paragraphs 149 and 150 of the National Planning Policy Framework and policy SS10 of the Local Plan.

Design and Layout

- 5.9 The scale, massing and design of the proposed stable block is typical of this kind of development, and will have a muted, low-key impact. The siting of the building adjacent to the hedgerow that forms the northern site boundary will soften its visual impact and anchor the development into its surroundings. The stables will furthermore be finished in a muted palette of materials (timber cladding and green metal roof) that will assimilate well with its rural surroundings.
- 5.10 The principal views of this development will be from Stanley Bank / Post Lane which runs along the eastern and southeastern boundaries of the site. The presence of existing mature trees along the southeastern boundary helps to soften and filter views of the application site, and to provide further screening the applicant proposes to plant a new indigenous hedgerow along the eastern site boundary to the south side of the vehicular access. In doing so the impact of the development will be further reduced and will have no greater impact than that which has already been found to be acceptable by

the Local Authority on the site to the north, under application SMD/2016/0223.

5.11 Consideration had been given to re-orientating the building through 90 degrees and siting it to the south of the vehicular access, so that its long axis would run north/south fronting onto Stanley Bank. It was nevertheless felt that siting the building in the submitted location would be less conspicuous as the development would assimilate with the backdrop of the mature hedgerow. The applicant is agreeable to considering the re-siting of the building if the current siting is of concern to the Local Authority.

5.12 The proposed manege is to be located to the south of the building on an area that is currently flat in nature and will not have a material adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area. Both stables and maneges are features which are commonly found within the countryside, and indeed can also be observed to the immediate north of the site. The proposed development will therefore not be out-of-keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area and accords with the objectives of policies SS1 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

Heritage Impacts

5.13 The application site is located wholly within the Stanley Conservation Area which constitutes the only heritage asset affected by the proposed development. The applicant has commissioned a Heritage Statement to accompany the application which has assessed the contribution of this site to the Conservation Area and notes that the scene looking north from the village is one of rural character incorporated a mix of uses, including equestrian and cricket ground. The stables and manege are noted to have been located where they will have the least impact on the Conservation Area, and to this end the proposal accords with policy DC2 of the Local Plan.

Residential Amenity

- 5.14 Owing to the location of the stable block, the nearest residential property to the site lies approximately 125 metres to the northeast of the site (Linden), the development will have no adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers by virtue of noise and general disturbance. The proposal is therefore consistent with the relevant provisions of policies SS1 and DC1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Highway Safety

- 5.15 The application site benefits from an existing vehicular access direct onto Post Lane in the northeast corner of the site, which gates set back from the carriageway edge. It is considered that the use of this access for the comings and goings associated with the equestrian use of the land would have no greater impact on highway safety than the existing agricultural use of the land. Within the site a turning area will be provided so that vehicles are able to exit the site in a forward gear. The proposed development will therefore not give rise to any material harm to highway safety in the locality and accords with the requirements of paragraph 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposed stable block, manege and change of use of the land are considered to constitute a sustainable and appropriate form of development within the Green Belt, and are of a scale, massing and design that are appropriate for their intended use. The proposal will furthermore not give rise to any significant adverse impact to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the Stanley Conservation Area, and is located sufficiently distant from neighbouring occupiers so as not to cause harm to residential amenity. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with policies SS1, SS10 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.