

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0271
Valid 01/07/2021

LAND OFF HARLECH
DRIVE
BIDDULPH

PROPOSED BLOCK OF FOUR
WOODEN STABLES WITH
CANOPY

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

Whether or not the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The Impact on the character and appearance of the area

The impact on the setting of a Grade II listed building

The impact on residential amenity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is in Biddulph and to the south of the town centre on the southern edge of Knypersley and comprises part of a field in a green gap between Tunstall Road, A527 to the west and Harlech Drive and Denbigh Close residential roads to the east. Knypersley Sports Club and sports fields, off A527 lie immediately to the west of the fields within the property which includes the application site and more fields outside of the property lie to the north and south. Knypersley Hall, a Grade II listed building lies immediately to the east reached via a track at the end of Harlech Drive. The same track provides the access to the site. The development boundary of Biddulph runs along Harlech Drive and as the land is outside of this line, it is within the Green Belt and also deemed to be within “the countryside” for the purposes of the Council’s Local Plan. The land slopes downwards from the track towards Tunstall Road to the west. The actual red line application site is part of the field next to the track and is adjacent to the north boundary of the field.

PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application to retain a standard mono-pitch stables building with four stables and a length of 15.6 metres which was placed in the south-east corner of the field, facing west, as shown on the drawings originally submitted with the application. However, the stables building has been relocated close to the north-east corner of the site close to the entrance to the site. The back edge is alongside the north boundary and it faces south. The building had a mix of timber and corrugated metal sheet finishes which have recently had a dark stain applied to them. The roof comprises corrugated metal sheeting.

An amended site plan has been received to show the new position of the stables and also to adjacent small timber shed-like structures which are storing horse feed and horse accessories. A light gravel hardstanding has been added in front of the stables and to the side connected to the site access to the east.

Further information has been submitted informing that there are three horses currently on the site (there were four at the time the application was submitted) and one of the four stable rooms is being used to store hay and straw.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (Adopted September 2020)

SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Sections 12 (Design), 13 (Green Belts) and 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2006/0709 (06/00776): Haybarn and stables. Refused.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 19/8/2021

Neighbour consultation period ends: 19/8/2021 (original plans) and 21/3/22 (amended plans)

Press Advert: 13.07.21 (affecting the setting of a listed building).

Public Comments

Letters of objection from nine local households were received raising the following points:

- The land is untidy with building materials
- The stables harms the setting of the listed Knipersley Hall
- Poor quality building materials affecting the appearance of the area
- Visually intrusive from Tunstall Road
- Traffic affecting the use of the Public Right of Way, delivering horses and building materials
- No consideration for the removal of manure.
- Building used for domestic and commercial storage and not horses
- Contrary to Green Belt policy – refusals of previous buildings at the site
- Size and scale inappropriate and excessive for its purpose
- Concerns over later changes of use of land to commercial or residential uses
- Public Right of Way use dangerous due to vehicles and building materials blown onto path
- New building next to the access blocking views from neighbouring properties

Four letters of objection were received in response to the consultation on the amended plans showing the new relocated siting of the stables, all of which were from previous objectors. The points raised are as follows:

- Poor quality building materials
- Attempt to gain change of use of land
- The site is a “dumping ground”
- The new location has greater “impact” on local residents
- Within the setting of listed buildings
- Right of way to residential properties being blocked by vehicles
- Harmful to and out of keeping with the appearance of the area

Parish Council Comments

In response to the original plans, the Town Council recommended refusal until an assessment was undertaken of the setting of the listed building and the impact on trees.

No comments were received in response to the amended plans.

Conservation Officer

In response to the original plans, a Heritage Assessment was requested due to the proximity of the building to the listed building.

Severn Trent Water

No objection.

Staffs County Council Public Rights Way of Way Section

It is important that users of the path are still able to exercise their public rights safely and that the path is reinstated if any damage to the surface occurs as a result of the proposed development. The applicants should be reminded that the granting of planning permission does not constitute authority for interference with the right of way or its closure or diversion.

OFFICER COMMENTS

The site is in the Green Belt and Policy SS10 of the Local Plan requires strict control over inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Paras 149 and 150 of the NPPF list the exceptional forms of development which are not inappropriate in the Green Belt and therefore by definition do not harm its openness. Buildings for the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation is listed. Equestrian uses are deemed to be outdoor recreational uses. There are currently horses grazing on the land and it is reasonable to expect some form of shelter and stabling for the horses. Stables buildings for this purpose are appropriate facilities for this form of outdoor recreation and therefore I consider the provision of a stables building on the land to not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt which harms its openness and therefore the principle of an appropriate stables building on the land to be acceptable.

I do not consider the scale of the building to be excessive for the purposes as there are three horses requiring stabling and the building would provide four stables but one of these is being used for the storage of hay and straw. There are also two small timber shed-like structures to house the horse equipment and fodder a short distance to the east of the building on the hard-standing between the building and the site access. These have a combined footprint of approx. 3 or 4 sq.m and do not exceed the height of the building. These have no additional visual impact than a larger stables structure which accommodates a tack or storage room commonly found within stables buildings.

The land within the property is large enough for the grazing and accommodation of four horses in accordance with the guidance from the British Horse Society which advises between 0.4 and 0.8 hectares per horse. The property has 2.5 hectares of land.

The original siting was deemed to be unacceptable. It was within the setting of the Grade II listed Knypersley Hall and also due to a combination of its siting in an elevated part of the site in the south-east corner and the light coloured metal and wooden board materials, unduly prominent from Tunstall Road where there are green gaps to the east of the road, particularly where the sports fields are located and where there are views of sloping green open fields forming the countryside. From this road, the building, as well as being harmfully prominent in the landscape also directly interfered with views of Knypersley Hall from this road. The building also had an untidy ramshackle and unfinished appearance.

However, following a site meeting, the applicant removed the building from the original siting and re-positioned it away from the listed building and close to the site access. I consider the new position to be acceptable. It is largely screened from Tunstall by large trees on the north boundary and the end of the block faces this road rather than the much longer and more prominent front elevation. The appearance of the building has also been improved and includes a darker stain finish but at the time of a site visit on 12.4.22, works advised to the applicant were not complete. This includes the completion of timber panelling on all four sides of the building and a darker stained finish and these can be imposed by way of planning conditions.

The new position does not interfere with the setting of the listed buildings. It is much further from them and there is no visual connection or link between the two, including when approaching the site access from Harlech Drive where non-listed dwellings block the view of Knypersley Hall when looking towards the stables building. It is more visible when approaching the site from Harlech Drive but due to the height, design and finishing materials, it would appear as a conventional stables building within a field which is not uncommon in rural areas and would not be harmfully intrusive in the street scene and does not have a height and scale out of keeping with other buildings in the area. In 2006, application for a stables and agricultural storage building on the same siting as the new siting for the stables was refused permission. This was refused solely due to the impact on the openness of the Green Belt and not the impact on the appearance of the area or the impact on the setting of listing buildings to the south. The refused building was much larger than the building currently in place at 12.2 x 10.4 metres in footprint and with an American hay-barn

style design. There are also Council records of subsequent pre-application written advice to the applicant at the time that a reduction in the size of the building would have improved the chances of a planning permission being granted for stables. The stables building now positioned on the land is considerably smaller than the refused scheme and as discussed above, appropriate in size in terms of its purpose and impact on Green Belt openness.

The building is positioned close to a large mature tree but is not close enough to the tree given the low-key physical nature of the building to cause it any harm.

The light gravel hard-standing is also appropriate to a rural area and is not larger than required and is also enclosed by timber post-and-rail fencing to the front of the building.

With regard to residential amenity, the structure would be at least 20 metres from the nearest dwellings, which lie to the west and south. The dwelling to the west is a bungalow and views of the building from the windows would be partly obscured by vegetation boundary screening/hedges and due to the limited height and materials would not appear overbearing or visually intrusive to the extent that the living conditions of the occupants would be harmed. The dwelling to south is a two-storey dwelling with first-floor windows facing the building but again, due to the presence of hedges and trees and limited height of the building and distance from the windows, the impact would not be harmful to residential amenity. It is worth noting the 2006 application for a much larger building in the same siting was not considered harmful to residential amenity.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The stables building does not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and is not close enough to listed buildings to affect their setting. With the safeguard of conditions requiring the appropriate completion of the development, the development would not harm the visual or residential amenities of the area. The development therefore complies with the Council's Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston

Recommendation Date: 21.4.22

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

