

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2022/0198
Valid 12/04/2022

HORTON BARN EAVES
LANE
ARMSHEAD

PROPOSED ERECTION OF
EQUESTRIAN BUILDINGS TO
THE EXISTING STABLES.

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Green Belt
- Character and appearance

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

This site was until c.2016 part of Kerry Hill Farm, a large functioning dairy farm. The newly named Horton Barn was a narrow linear single storey brick and clay tile farm building of traditional style which has been converted into a dwelling. An extensive range of typical 20thC livestock buildings attached and extending to the east has now largely been demolished. Behind these to the north where there is a fall in the land were two silage clamps. One of these is now used as a manège. A second silage clamp with concrete walls to two sides has become the site of an L plan stable block approved under SMD/2019/0753. The current proposal would be positioned in the 'open corner' of the L plan existing layout.

The general surroundings are of agricultural fields. To the west of Horton Barn is a public footpath which runs generally north into the fields and passes the west edge of the application site. Also to the west of Horton Barn is the original farm yard, farm house and other outbuildings of Kerry Hill Farm. These latter also in process of part conversion to a further dwelling. Adjacent again to the west are two unrelated dwellings.

Access to the site is from Eaves Lane at a point some 80m along to the east from the entrance to Horton Barn.

PROPOSAL

Plain form and utilitarian with mono-pitch roof. The building scales from plan as being 11m x 4m with a height of 3.4m (high edge) and 2.9m (lower edge). The internal layout is shown divided to provide WC, feed store and horse wash / drying facility.

Further amended drawings were received 9th June 2022 to reduce the red edge in order to relate more specifically to the application.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
NE2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework February 2019

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;

Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 6 – Building a strong and competitive economy; 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres; 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities; 11 – Making effective use of land; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land; 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):

- Space About Dwellings SPG
- Design Principles SPG
- Design Guide SPD adopted 21st February 2018

Local Plan Supporting Evidence Documents:

- Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

00/00901 – full – new agricultural cattle shed and extension to existing cattle shed – approved – implemented – now part demolished

DET/2016/0057 – GPDO (2015) Schedule 2 Part 3 Class Q prior notice change of use of agricultural building to dwelling – approved and implemented in accordance with a variation through SMD/2017/0605 (below) – now known as Horton Barn

SMD/2017/0047 – conversion of barn to domestic dwelling, alterations to elevations including raising the ridge height, construction of an external spiral staircase and demolition of redundant farm buildings – withdrawn

SMD/2017/0605 – [as DET/2016/0057 (above)] conversion of barn to dwelling and demolition of redundant farm buildings – approved and implemented

DET/2019/0019 – in relation to a further building: GPDO (2015) Schedule 2 Part 3 Class Q prior notice change of use of agricultural building to dwelling – refused

SMD/2019/0753 – erection of agricultural and equestrian building on existing hardstanding/former building – approved – built

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 9th June 2022

Neighbour consultation period ends: 19th May 2022

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Werrington Parish Council – none

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Policy SS10 for the rural areas is 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.

In the Green Belt policy SS10 (6) is that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government Policy.

Government policy is that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt (NPPF 149). However, NPPF paragraphs 149 and 150 set out specific exceptions by which certain forms of development can be considered as being not inappropriate in the Green Belt. One of these exceptions is at NPPF 149:

(b) “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”.

SMD/2019/0753 granted consent for the existing stables building to which this current proposal is related as being in effect a stand-alone extension. In the committee report which led to the approval of the stables building it was noted:

In order to find support for this proposed stables development in the Green Belt in accordance with policy SS6(c) it would be necessary to rely on NPPF 149(b) [then para 145b)]. It appears also that an element of the applicant's activity is simply the 'breeding and keeping of animals' as some 'retired' horses are being kept. This could potentially benefit from the planning definition of agriculture but in this case would seem not to be the main defining activity.

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking, it sets out that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, or where specific NPPF policies indicate otherwise.

In this case policies for the Green Belt are specific NPPF constraints. On the one hand accommodation for horses in association with their grazing land can only best be provided in the countryside. This element of the use may be considered to meet the definition of agriculture and gain Green Belt exemption under 149(a). That the development is also to support necessarily rural recreational pursuits – in this case of the land owner / occupier at Horton Barn, exemption can also be ascribed from NPPF 149(b). However, on the other hand this exception is subject to the facilities being regarded as “appropriate” and preserving the openness of the Green Belt and not conflicting with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

The proposed additional building would incorporate a WC, feed store and a horse wash / drying room. For the 22 acre holding and notwithstanding existing buildings the proposed addition may be considered minor and would seem justifiably related to the existing use and therefore an ‘appropriate’ facility.

In respect of openness, this is generally regarded to mean “freedom from development”. Clearly any building permissible under para 145(b) will result in the land no-longer being entirely free from development and therefore some degree of intrusion of built form is inevitable with any development permitted under this exemption.

Design

The building is plain form and utilitarian using “fair faced concrete blockwork” as in the existing stables with a mono-pitch roof in profiled metal sheeting green/grey again to match the existing building.

The building scales from plan as being 11m x 4m to height 3.4m (high edge) and 2.9m (lower edge). It is positioned in the open corner of the L shaped layout of the existing stables and therefore seen against the backdrop of the existing building which is slightly higher at c. 3.7m.

Amenity

In the context of the previous SMD/2019/0753 development the proposal would be unlikely to seem out of place or intrusive in any views there may be from neighbouring dwellings or when seen from the public footpath which passes nearby and which would afford extended views in the approach from the north. As noted with SMD/2019/0753 there is a risk that outdoor lighting insensitively positioned and managed could cause unnecessary and undue intrusion on both neighbour amenity and landscape character. A condition could be attached to cover this point.

Highway Safety

Existing access – no consequential change to the intensity of the existing use envisaged as a result of this proposal. As with SMD/2019/0753 consent, a condition should be attached to limit to private use of the occupier of Horton Barn.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Taking all of the above into account, overall it is considered that a case can be made that the proposal represents appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation which will preserve the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Beyond Green Belt considerations there are no other technical reasons such as ecology, neighbour amenity or highway safety why permission should be withheld. Consequently, on balance the conclusion and recommendation is to support the application as proposed.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **approve**

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank

Recommendation Date: 9th June 2022

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council