

PLANNING STATEMENT

**LAND OFF MILL LANE
WETLEY ROCKS**

JUNE 2022

Site Address:

Land off Mill Lane, Wetley Rocks, Staffordshire, ST9 0BW

Applicant:

Mr. A. Burgess

Proposal:

Erection of stable block

Planning Statement:

Date Issued: 21st June 2022

Job Reference: RDP/2022/057

Report Prepared By:

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. A. Burgess to seek full planning permission for the erection of a stable block on a parcel of land located to the southeast of Mill Lane, Wetley Rocks.
- 1.2 The proposed stable block is to be located along the southern boundary of the field and will replace an existing stable block that exists on the site that has a somewhat ramshackle appearance, constructed from corrugated metal.
- 1.3 The proposed stable block will occupy a floor area of 64 square metres and stand to a maximum height of 3.8 metres. The building will provide two stables, a hay store and a tack / feed store.
- 1.4 The building is to be constructed with horizontal feather edged timber boarding to its elevations, finished with a forest green wood stain, and have a black corrugated sheet roof. On the southeast roofslope it is proposed to install 8no. photovoltaic panels to provide a renewable source of electricity to serve the site.
- 1.5 Access to the site is to be provided via the existing access track that connects with Mill Lane to the northwest. No alterations are proposed to the access track.

2 Site & Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and comprises a parcel of land located on the southeastern side of Mill Lane, accessed via an existing track that connects with the public highway. The site extends to some 2.3 acres and has an existing poor quality stable block located along its southern site boundary which has a somewhat ramshackle appearance, constructed from poor quality corrugated sheeting. Historic aerial photographs show that there was also another building located alongside that building and the footings for that building remain visible. The site is enclosed by post and wire fencing along its northern and western site boundaries, with hedgerows enclosing the southern and eastern site boundaries. Public Footpath Cheddleton 52 runs along the existing access track, and then along the western and southern perimeters of the site.

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*
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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.*

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 policies, *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 and is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment section below.

5 Planning Assessment

Green Belt

- 5.1 The application proposes the erection of a stable block on a parcel of land that is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt. Paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that there is a presumption against the erection of new buildings within the Green Belt. It nevertheless identifies a number of exceptions, which includes:

“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”

“d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces”

- 5.2 There is an existing building located on this site which I am informed was historically used for stabling. It has a somewhat ramshackle appearance, constructed from poor quality corrugated sheeting. Alongside that building there is also evidence of a further building that I am also informed was used for stabling, the footings for which are still in existence. The presence of those two buildings can be confirmed by reference to historic aerial photographs of the site.
- 5.3 The original buildings occupied a collective footprint of approximately 52 square metres and were sited alongside the southern site boundary. The proposed stable block will be within the same use as those previous

buildings, and with a footprint of 64 square metres, will not be materially larger than those original buildings. The proposal can therefore be taken to constitute an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt under paragraph 149(d) of the NPPF.

- 5.4 The proposal nevertheless also amounts to an appropriate facility for outdoor sport and recreation which by virtue of its limited footprint, its diminutive scale, and the fact that it replaces existing buildings of not dissimilar footprint, will not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the five purposes of including land within it. The proposal can therefore also be concluded to constitute an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt under paragraph 149(c) of the NPPF. The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable and meets the requirements of policy SS10 of the Local Plan.

- 5.5 It is also noted that in terms of need, the British Horse Society recommends that 1 – 1.5 acres of land should be provided for each horse. The applicant's land holding extends to some 2.3 acres and thus is capable of accommodating up to 2 horses in line with the aforementioned guidance. The stable block proposed in this application does not exceed those provisions (2 stables).

Visual Impact

- 5.6 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 on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Its dark green stained finish will help to further soften the impact of the development on the surrounding area. In overall design terms the stable block is considered to be uncontroversial as it is very much in keeping with buildings of this type, which are commonplace throughout the District.

- 5.7 The siting of the building has been influenced by the existing / previous buildings on the site and will not have any materially greater impact on the character and appearance of the area than those existing / previous buildings.
- 5.8 The proposed stable block will be visible from the public domain, as Public Footpath Cheddleton 52 runs along the existing access track, along the western site boundary, before turning eastwards to run along the southern boundary of the site.
- 5.9 In views from the Public Footpath on approach to the site from Mill Lane, the stable block will be viewed against the backdrop of existing mature vegetation and the rising landscape that lies beyond. Its diminutive scale and muted palette of materials will further serve to reduce the visual impact of the development in such views. On approach along the public footpath from the east, the rising nature of the landscape beyond the site will serve to minimise the impact of the development, providing a green back drop against which the building will be seen.
- 5.10 The application also takes the opportunity to replace the existing poor quality building on the site with a new building that is of a scale, massing and design that is commonplace within the rural areas, and which has a simple, muted palette of materials. The proposed development will therefore not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and meets the requirements of policies SS1 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

Residential Amenity

- 5.11 The nearest residential property to the proposed stable block lies approximately 250 metres to the northwest of the site (Ladyfields Farm), and consequently will not be adversely affected by the siting of the stable block

or its use for equestrian purposes. The proposal consequently meets the requirements of policy DC1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Public Footpath

- 5.12 Footpath Cheddleton 52 is acknowledged to run along the existing access track serving the site and along the western and southern boundaries of the field. The submitted proposal does not propose any alterations to the alignment of the public footpath or works to the footpath itself and will be kept clear throughout the construction and operational phases of the development.

Highway Safety

- 5.13 The application site benefits from an existing vehicular access direct off Mill Lane serving the site. The proposed development will be used for private purposes, and as such will not have any greater impact on highway safety than the previous equestrian use of the site. The proposed development will therefore not derive any severe residual impacts to highway safety, and thus meets the requirements of paragraph 111 of the NPPF.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposed stable block will amount to an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt on the basis that it constitutes a replacement building that is not materially larger than the ones being replaced, and that it also amounts to an appropriate facility for outdoor recreation that will not materially detract from the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the five purposes of including land within it. The scale, massing, design and layout of the proposed development will not give rise to harm to the character and appearance of the area, and there will be no adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity or highway safety.
- 6.2 The proposed development is therefore considered to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.