

1309 Proposed Tourist Accommodation at Creswellford Farm, Dilhorne Lane, Dilhorne, ST10 2DX

Design Access Statement

Use

The existing use is equine. There is an existing single-storey building accessed via a long driveway off Dilhorne Lane. The building is predominantly blockwork construction up to eaves level with timber cladding above. The existing building is adjacent to a group of residential outbuildings to the east with an agricultural unit to the north.

Amount

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing building on the site and construction of a new building to provide tourist accommodation. To provide market flexibility, the proposed building is split into two units which can be separately let. The larger unit provides 3 bedrooms and associated living space, while the smaller unit provides 2 bedrooms and associated living space.

The site area is 2268m² and the total existing building footprint and volume are 510m² and 1904m³ respectively. The total resultant building footprint and volume on the site following the proposed development would be 269m² and 1344m³ respectively. This corresponds to a reduction in building footprint of approximately 48% and a reduction in building volume of approximately 30%.

The proposals therefore result in significant reduction in area and volume. Furthermore, the amount of hardstanding would be reduced by approximately 650m².

Layout

The proposed building has two entrances which correspond to the two tourist units. The smaller unit is accessed via a small courtyard to the north of the proposed building. This also provides a parking and turning area for guests. The larger unit is accessed via a covered entrance on the west elevation with provision for cars to park and turn to egress the site. Both units enjoy private south-facing garden areas which are accessed directly via the principal living areas which open out on to open views over the surrounding countryside.

The habitable rooms have been positioned to optimise the views with service accommodation being located on rear/internal elevations. The building has simple gable forms to reflect the agricultural vernacular and all accommodation is on the ground floor to facilitate access for all age groups.

Scale

The proposal has a ridge height which is approximately 600mm higher than the existing equine building which is required to facilitate the use of Staffordshire Blue clay roofing tiles. However, the scale of the proposed building is significantly less than the existing building as the form of the development is less bulky and much more articulated. The roof has a much smaller span as required for a residential type of accommodation and the smaller tourist unit is set back behind the larger unit.

Landscaping

There is significant opportunity to landscape the development on the South, East and West boundaries. To the North, the site has a boundary to Alsager Golf Club beyond which the ground starts to slope up and is densely planted– the site therefore already has substantial off-site screening along this edge.

The driveway and paths around the building would be resin bound aggregate and there are planters to either side of the entrance porch to further soften the impact of the development.

Access

The existing vehicular access off Dilhorne Lane has been retained. We have not sought advice from a highway consultant or Staffordshire County as we understand that the vehicular movements associated with the proposed tourist accommodation would be significantly less than that generated by the existing equine use. Four car parking spaces have been shown on the plans (two for each unit).

By road, the site is well connected to The Staffordshire Moorlands, The Peak District, and other tourist attractions such as Alton Towers and the Churnet Valley Railway.

Appearance

The existing building is bulky, tired and unattractive. However, the proposed dwellings would be constructed from handmade weather-struck bricks, cedar and clay tiles. The proposed windows and rainwater goods are aluminium.

The building is traditional in form with pitched roofs and generally regular windows. However, the larger south-facing living spaces have glazed gables to enhance the views and provide good levels of natural light and higher ceilings. The larger unit also has a projecting roof canopy which provides cover and depth to the elevation as well as offering some additional privacy for the occupants.

Boundary treatments would be formed via hedges to preserve the agricultural feel.

Climate change mitigation and biodiversity

The proposed dwellings would be extremely thermally efficient with high levels of insulation in the floors, walls and roof along with triple glazed windows and doors.

The proposed pitched roof profiles are ideal to accommodate solar PV to generate electricity or solar thermal panels to provide hot water. An air source heat pump would provide space heating and electric car charging would also be provided adjacent to the parking areas.

The wider site is significant and provides a good habitat for birds and other wildlife to thrive. The application is accompanied by an ecology report which sets out the broader context.