

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan Ref. Expiry Date
Philip Brookes 'A'	Erection of stable block / tack shed; change of use from agricultural to equine recreational (as augmented by plans received on: 26.07.2007) - Part field no. 1530 adj. Poolhouse Far, Hockley Brook Lane, Belbroughton	GB LPA	B/2007/0777 23.10.2007

RECOMMENDATION:

- (i) that **DELEGATED POWERS** be granted to the Head of Planning and Environment Services to determine the application on expiry of the publicity period (minded to refuse); and
- (ii) that Members authorise appropriate action to secure the removal of the unauthorised track and delegate authority to the Head of Planning and Environment Services, in consultation with the Head of Legal, Equalities and Diversity, to select the most appropriate course of action.

Consultations

Belbroughton Consulted on: 26.07.2007. No response.
WCC (HP) Consulted on: 26.07.2007. No response.
ENG Consulted on: 26.07.2007. No response.
Publicity Site notice posted on: 30.07.2007 (expires on: 20.08.2007).
Press notice posted on: 31.07.2007 (expires on: 21.07.2007).

The site and its surroundings

This application site refers to a plot of land which is located in a designated Green Belt and Landscape Protection Area. The site is accessed from Hockley Brook Lane via an existing hard standing track and forms one of a number of field divisions. This site would be approximately 165 metres away from Pool House Farm.

Proposal

This is a retrospective application for the proposed erection of a stable block and tack shed, and this would involve a change of use from agricultural to equine recreational. The stable block would measure approximately 9.7 metres (length) x 3.6 metres (width) x 3 metres (height) and the tack shed would measure approximately 1.8 metres (length) x 2.4 metres (width) x 2.3 metres (height).

Relevant Policies

WMSS QE3
WCSP CTC.1, D.38, D.39
BDLP DS2, DS13, RAT2, RAT16, RAT17, C1, C4
Others PPS1, PPG2

Relevant Planning History

(These fields have been subdivided and applications have been submitted for many of the individual sites). There is no previous history for this particular field division.

Notes

The main issue to take into consideration is whether the proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, if so, whether any 'very special circumstances' exist to clearly outweigh the harm caused. In addition, it will be necessary to establish whether the proposed development would have a materially detrimental effect on the Landscape Protection Area.

N.B. This application will be dealt with in four parts: the change of use, the stable, the hard standing and the shed.

Change of Use

This application would involve a material change of use of the land from agricultural to equestrian pursuits which would be acceptable development in principle as defined in paragraph 3.2 of PPG2 - Green Belts which states that a material change of use in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it maintains the openness / visual amenity of the Green Belt. Equestrian pursuits would maintain openness in principle and would therefore be acceptable in this instance.

Proposed stable and design

The proposed stables would measure 9.76 metres (length) x 3.6 metres (width) x 3.03 metres (height) and would be of a wooden construction.

Policy RAT17 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan (BDLP2004) highlights the criteria against which stabling and associated development will be considered. This policy states new buildings should be kept to a minimum necessary and consist only of essential facilities (for example, small stables) genuinely required for a parcel of land which preserves the openness of the Green Belt.

Policy RAT17 refers to the fact that the design, materials and landscaping treatment must be of a high standard and sensitive to its surroundings of the rural area in order to protect the visual amenity of the surrounding area and to ensure the integration of any buildings into the rural setting. This policy also states that new stabling should be large enough for the safety and comfort of the horse and meet the Councils standards, and the proposal would satisfy this criteria.

Paragraph 3.5 of PPG2 refers to essential outdoor recreational facilities such as stables and equestrian pursuits being appropriate development in the Green Belt, including small scale stables which would be the case in this instance providing that it complies with paragraph 3.12 of PPG2. This aspect of the policy states that a material change of use in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it maintains the openness / visual amenity of the Green Belt and, given the nature of the proposal, it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable development.

In addition, the stables would be of a size, design and scale that would be suitable for this site and would comply with Council policy and guidance, as well as national planning policy under PPG2 - Green Belts. It would also be easily accessed from the existing track which is lawful and therefore no concern is expressed with this aspect of the proposal.

Proposed hard standing area

The proposed hard standing area would measure approximately 192m² which is considered to be an excessive amount. Policy DS2 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan sets out the instances where development is considered appropriate in the Green Belt as stemming from PPG2 and reflects paragraph 3.1 and 3.2 of PPG2.

Paragraph 3.12 of PPG2 states that engineering operations and the making of material changes in the use of land are inappropriate development unless they maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The purposes of including land in the Green Belt include checking unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas and assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment as set out in paragraph 1.5 of PPG2.

It is acknowledged that the hard standing itself does not damage the openness of the Green Belt but it is considered that the laying of the hard standing to form a permanent and established area around the stable would lead to further encroachment on the countryside and Green Belt by urbanising part of the existing field. By definition this would unduly harm the visual amenity of the Green Belt as defined in paragraph 3.15 of PPG2 and would conflict with the purposes and provisions of including land within the Green Belt, contrary to the advice in paragraph 1.5 of PPG2. No very special circumstances have been put forward to outweigh the harm caused and by virtue the proposal would also prejudice the purposes and provisions of including land within the designated Landscape Protection Area.

Proposed shed

This would measure 1.83 metres (width) x 4.44 metres (length) x 2.36 metres (height) and would be used as a tack room, independent from the main stables.

The main concern with this aspect of the proposal is that the tack room would be divorced from the main stables and would create unnecessary clutter in the field which would unduly harm the openness / visual amenity of the Green Belt. Whilst a tack room is not considered inappropriate development in principle, it should be integrated within the existing stables, rather than simply appearing as a 'shed' adjacent to the stables. Therefore it is considered that in this instance the proposed tack room would be an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt and no very special circumstances have been put forward to outweigh the harm caused.

RECOMMENDATION:

- (i) that **DELEGATED POWERS** be granted to the Head of Planning and Environment Services to determine the application on expiry of the publicity period (minded to refuse)

- (a) The proposed tack room would be divorced from the main stables as a separate entity and would not be integrated within the existing stables. The shed would therefore constitute inappropriate development and would unduly harm the openness / visual amenity of the Green Belt and would materially harm the purposes and provisions of including land within the designated Landscape Protection Area. No very special circumstances have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority to outweigh the harm caused which would be contrary to policy QE3 of the West Midlands Spatial Strategy, policies CTC1, D38, D39 of the Worcestershire County Structure Plan, Policies DS2, DS13, C4, RAT2, RAT16 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and the general provisions of PPG2 - Green Belts.
 - (b) The proposed hard standing would lead to the urbanisation of the existing field resulting in unnecessary erosion of the countryside and Green Belt. This would unduly harm the visual amenity of the Green Belt and would materially harm the purposes and provisions of including land within the designated Landscape Protection Area. No very special circumstances have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority to outweigh the harm caused which would be contrary to policy QE3 of the West Midlands Spatial Strategy, policies CTC1, D38, D39 of the Worcestershire County Structure Plan, Policies DS2, DS13, C4, RAT2, RAT16 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and the general provisions of PPG2 - Green Belts.
- (ii) that Members authorise appropriate action to secure the removal of the unauthorised track and delegate authority to the Head of Planning and Environment Services, in consultation with the Head of Legal, Equalities and Diversity, to select the most appropriate course of action.