

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan Ref. Expiry Date
MR. & MRS. MONK 'B'	Part-field no. 9727, adj. Pool House Farm, Hockley Brook Lane, Belbroughton - Static field shelter and food store on concrete base for grazing camelids	GB LPA	B/2007/1145 10.12.2007

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **REFUSED**.

Consultations

Belbroughton PC	Consulted on 17.10.2007. Objection received 07.11.2007.
WCC (HP)	Consulted on 17.10.2007. No response.
ENG	Consulted on 17.10.2007. No response.
EA	Consulted on 01.11.2007. No objection received on 16.11.2007.
Publicity	Site notice posted on 18.10.2007 (expires 08.11.2007). No response received to date.

The site and its surroundings

This application site is located on the eastern side of Hockley Brook Lane on a triangular shaped piece of land and lies within a designated Green Belt and Landscape Protection Area. This site forms one of a number of agricultural plots of land which have been subdivided and sold off for equestrian pursuits. Access to the site is gained via the main track which runs adjacent to Pool House Farm for approximately 260 metres, then on the right hand side lies another route which runs approximately 146 metres in a downward south-easterly direction to the application site.

Proposal

This application refers to the proposed change of use of the land from agricultural to leisure / recreational and a proposed field shelter and combined food store on a concrete base for grazing camelids. The term **camelids** refers to both camels and llamas and the applicant would like to keep 2 llamas and 1 camel or two camels only on site for recreational purposes. The field shelter would measure approximately 6.7 metres by 3.6 metres, with a maximum height of approximately 2.9 metres. The proposed building would be located on a concrete base and, therefore, the 'static' nature of the proposal would offer some degree of permanence on site and would not be considered as a mobile field shelter.

Relevant Policies

WMSS	QE3
WCSP	CTC.1, D.38, D.39
BDLP	DS2, DS13, RAT2, RAT16, RAT17, C1, C4, TR11
Others	PPS1, PPG2, PPS7

Relevant Planning History

None

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.

Is the proposed building and use of the site appropriate development in the Green Belt?

Para 3.4 of PPG2: Green Belts states that "*the construction of new buildings inside a Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for essential facilities for a number of purposes, including outdoor sport and outdoor recreation. These uses must preserve the openness of the Green Belt and must not conflict with the purposes of including land in it as well as being genuinely required for uses of the land.*"

This part of the application should be divided, and assessed in two parts. The first should be for the grazing of the animals on site and the second should be for the use and location of the proposed building to provide shelter for the animals.

Grazing of animals: The applicant has indicated that the keeping of these animals would be for recreational use only and not for farming in any way. This is of fundamental importance in the assessment of this application and it is therefore considered that the grazing of llamas and / or a camel on agricultural land would constitute a leisure use and would require a change of use of the land to that effect as identified in paragraph 3.12 of PPG2: Green Belts. The grazing of these animals would not unduly harm the openness / visual amenity of the Green Belt and, by definition, it is considered that the proposed change of use would be acceptable in principle.

The proposed building: A stable in the Green Belt may be considered as an appropriate form of development as defined in paragraph 3.4 of PPG2: Green Belts and, whilst it is acknowledged that a camel would not fall into the definition of equestrian pursuits, it is noted that fundamental similarities exist between the two animals in terms of feeding and necessary shelter from the weather. Therefore, the general provisions of policy RAT17 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan would be applicable.

Contained within this policy are three sub-sections, points (a), (g) and (j, 22.6) which are considered pertinent to this proposed building and each one will be assessed in turn.

Point (a) states that "*new buildings should be kept to a minimum necessary and consist only of essential facilities (for example, small stables) genuinely required on a parcel of land which preserves the openness of the Green Belt. Save in exceptional circumstances, they will only be permitted where they are closely related to existing farm buildings or other groups of buildings.*"

By virtue of size, scale and design, it is considered that the proposed building would be kept to a minimum and its appearance would be reasonably required for its intended use. Unfortunately, when referring back to point (a), the isolated position of the proposed building would not be closely related to other existing rural buildings and would therefore be contrary to this aspect of the policy.

Part (g) of the same policy states that "*the impact of the proposal including the cumulative impact with other equestrian related development or development for which there is planning permission must not be such as to harm the openness of the Green Belt.*" Again it is considered that the proposed building would be divorced from other rural buildings to such an extent as to be an isolated feature. This is therefore considered to be an unsustainable location and the cumulative impact of the proposed building and access route would lead to further unnecessary erosion of the Green Belt and countryside which is also contrary to this policy.

Part (j, 22.6) of this policy says that "*generally, stabling for horses on a limited scale (horses owned for recreational use) where carefully integrated with existing farm or other groups of buildings, will be acceptable. Conflict with Green Belt policy is most likely to arise when the development of isolated stabling and ancillary buildings is proposed. Demand for such isolated stabling away from any farm or housing may stem from the tendency towards fragmentation of farm units, resulting in the purchase of small parcels of land by horse owners, often without existing buildings. The individual and cumulative impact of such development in the countryside can erode its open character and be detrimental to the visual amenities of the Green Belt.*"

In light of the above policy, this proposal generates some cause for concern for a number of reasons. To begin with, the position of the proposal would be located approximately 146 metres away from the existing, main access track off a further access route which may need further investigation to establish whether planning permission is required or not. This is important because the cumulative impact of a purposely constructed route and building could lead to activities that may result in further and unnecessary erosion and encroachment on the Green Belt; that is, vehicles travelling and parking on the field. However, whilst it is acknowledged that this route does not form part of this application, it is important to acknowledge its presence when assessing this application and how the applicants will access the site.

Secondly, the design of the proposed building would involve the use of a hard standing base and this would ensure some degree of permanence on the site which, again, will further infringe on the openness / visual amenity of the Green Belt.

Are there any 'very special circumstances'?

No supporting documentation has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority to support this case and it is the Council's view that no 'very special circumstances' exist in this instance to outweigh the harm caused to the openness / visual amenity of the Green Belt.

Landscape Protection Areas

Policy C4 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan highlights *development will not be permitted where it will have a materially detrimental impact of the landscape, in particular within Landscape Protection Areas*. When assessing the effect on the landscape, special attention will be given to a number of criteria. One of these refers to prominent slopes or ridge lines.

The application site lies towards the bottom of a sloping field. Whilst it is accepted that the proposal would not be located on a prominent slope or ridge line, the isolated position of the proposed building would be materially more harmful than the current open, rural site which is considered contrary to this policy.

Conclusion

The material change of use of the land and the proposed field shelter would be located in an isolated and unsustainable position away from other rural buildings. Therefore, the cumulative impact of the proposals and the access route would result in further and unnecessary erosion and encroachment of the Green Belt, countryside and would also materially harm the Landscape Protection Area to a greater extent than its current use. Therefore, by definition, the cumulative impact of the proposals would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. No 'very special circumstances' have been put forward to outweigh the harm caused and, for the following reasons, it is concluded that permission be refused.

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **REFUSED**.

1. The cumulative impact of the isolated building, change of use of the land and access route would unduly harm the openness / visual amenity of the Green Belt to a greater extent than its existing use. This would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and no very special circumstances have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority to outweigh the harm caused. By allowing this development would lead to further and unnecessary erosion and encroachment on the Green Belt, countryside and would also materially harm the Landscape Protection Area. This would also set a precedent for other similar schemes in the future and would be contrary to policy QE3 of the West Midlands Spatial Strategy, policies CTC.1, D.38, D.39 of the Worcestershire County Structure Plan, policies DS2, DS13, RAT2, RAT17, C1, C4 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan, and PP2: Green Belts and PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.