

Name of Applicant	Proposal	Expiry Date	Plan Ref.
Mrs Johan Johnson	Change of use from grazing to equestrian use / grazing. Erection of Eight stables, wood construction upon a concrete base with adjoining store & tack room. Land At Hollow Tree Lane, Targebigge, Bromsgrove, B60 1PR	20.06.2018	18/00488/FUL

Councillor Whittaker has requested that this application be considered by Planning Committee rather than being determined under delegated powers.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be **Refused**

Consultations

Tutnall And Cobley Parish Council

Tutnall and Cobley Parish Council have met with the applicants and support this planning application.

NWWM

No objection

Arboricultural Officer

No objection to the proposed development subject to conditions regarding:

1. Retention of trees
2. No dig ground Support Material
3. No dig method of construction specification and plan.
4. Specification and plan for hedge management and replacement hedging.

Highways - Bromsgrove

No objections subject to conditions relating to:

1. Vehicular viability splays
2. Access gates
3. Development shall not be brought into use until access, turning and parking facilities has been provided

Consultation comments

16 Neighbour notification letters sent 18.05.2018

3 letters of objection received expressing concern regarding:

- damage to existing hedgerow
- impact on the local environment both aesthetically and environmentally
- open views would be impaired
- concern regarding unsightly storage
- waste from horses
- drainage

- decreased highway safety as a result of the increase in traffic
- proximity to existing housing
- impact on amenity

Councillor Whittaker

- Policy encourages the provision of stables in this Green Belt location. Stables cannot be located in an urban location;
- The applicant is being relocated from their existing location, which is also in the green belt;
- There is scope to include landscaping into the scheme, this will screen the development and protect the Green Belt;
- The granting of permission would not set a precedent;
- The applicant could erect an agricultural building on this site without planning permission; and
- There are other matters to consider that would be worthwhile discussing at committee.

Relevant Policies

Bromsgrove District Plan

BDP1 Sustainable Development Principles

BDP4 Green Belt

BDP15 Rural Renaissance

BDP19 High Quality Design

Others

SPG 5 Agricultural Buildings Design Guide

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

Relevant Planning History

No relevant planning history.

Assessment of Proposal

Site

The application site is approximately 5.6 ha (14 acres) in size. Presently, the site is open agricultural fields, which were formally part of the Tarncroft estate. The site is located within the Green Belt, outside of an identified settlement area. The surrounding area is rural in character, with sporadic residential development opposite the site and along Hollow Tree Lane.

Proposed Development

The stables are proposed to accommodate the applicant's existing 8 horses which require new stables due to their existing stables on Foxlydiat Lane, Redditch being no longer available due to redevelopment.

The proposal seeks to provide two stable blocks, each containing four stables and a store. Each stable block will be 18m in length, with a height of 3m, the stables will be 3.6m deep and the store room 7.2m deep. The stables will measure 155.52 sq m in total, excluding a 0.9m overhang to the stable door elevation. The application also proposes the construction of gravel hardstanding for the stable yard and a parking. The total area of the gravel hardstanding and stables is 840 sq m. The proposal would result in the change of use of the land from agricultural to equestrian.

The stables are proposed to be built out of softwood timber cladding with black onduline roofing sheets.

The principle of development and the impact on green belt

The Framework indicates that the construction of new buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt save for certain prescribed exceptions. One such exception includes provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, as long as those structures preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Policy BDP4 of the District Plan also endorses that approach.

The Framework identifies the protection of the Green Belt as a core planning principle. It says one of the fundamental aims of the Green Belt is to keep land permanently open, and openness and permanence are its essential characteristics. Inappropriate development is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Substantial weight must be given to any harm to the Green Belt, and very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

In this instance, the size of the proposed stable buildings, and in particular the footprint of the development, would be a significant incursion into an area of Green Belt. It is considered that the proposed development would result in a considerable erosion of the openness of the Green Belt.

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, as set out in paragraph 79 of the Framework, is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The proposal would locate buildings on the site where there is currently none, it would materially reduce openness thereby failing to preserve it. The scale of the structures is significant. The proposal would also conflict with the purposes of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. It would not accord with the Framework or with BDP4 and BDP15.

Character and Appearance

As outlined in Policy BDP15, the Council will support proposals that satisfy the social and economic needs of the rural communities by encouraging new buildings associated with equine development where new buildings are kept to the minimum necessary and consist only of essential facilities, genuinely required on a parcel land, which preserves the openness of green belt. Unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated, these developments should to be sited within close proximity to existing rural buildings.

The proposed stables are considered as appropriate and characteristic buildings suited to its purpose. Stables and the keeping of horses is an activity commonly found in rural areas and the use of the application site for these purposes would not be inappropriate given its location. The level of vehicle parking associated with the stables would not be unduly significant.

However, there are no buildings on the site currently and the development is not sited within close proximity to existing rural buildings. No exceptional circumstances have been presented in this matter and therefore there would be an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area conflicting with BDP15 and BDP19, SPG5 and paragraph 58 of the Framework which seek, amongst other things, high quality design that does not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

Highways

It is noted that the proposal is for a non-commercial activity only. The proposal is therefore unlikely to generate a significant amount of traffic to the site.

Worcestershire Highways has assessed the access and no objections have been raised in terms of the impact on highway safety, subject to planning conditions.

Trees

The Councils arboricultural officer has considered the proposal and has no adverse comments to make subject to appropriate conditions.

Drainage

NWWM do not object to the proposal. They indicate that the proposed development will increase the amount of hardstanding as a result of the stable blocks and therefore the amount of surface water runoff. The development should consider levels so water doesn't flow off the access track towards properties and drainage assets should be located at appropriate points such as low spots.

Amenity

The proposed stable buildings would be sited approximately 30m from the nearest residential property at The Highlands. Due to the degree of separation, it is not considered that there would be an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of the property. Other properties in the area have a greater degree of separation and as a result would experience no unacceptable impact on amenity.

Storage of waste straw and manure

Details have been submitted in relation to the storage and recycling of manure. This could be conditioned to satisfactorily protect public health and safety and in order to protect the natural environment and prevent pollution.

Justification for the Stables

The considerations put forward in the applicant statement are as follows:

- The proposed development is required due to their existing stables being displaced from an existing green belt site in Redditch. Their existing site has been rented over 30 years.
- Welfare of the horses that need a dry stable for protection during the winter months.
- The location of the Hollow Tree Lane sites has been chosen because it provides easy access to nearby bridle paths and quiet country lanes which are well suited to horses.
- The land at Hollow Tree Lane will be preserved and carefully managed and maintained.
- Existing areas of Green Belt used for grazing /equestrian are rapidly declining and being used for other uses and the equestrian community needs the support from the local council to reallocate land for displaced horses.
- The safety and health of their horses is also in question. This is supported by two letters from vets regarding two of their horses.
- Economic benefits of horses and the employment of many professions including farriers and vets.
- Ecological benefits of horses, including maintenance of bio-diversity, horses supporting local ecosystems, provision of wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge and soil conservation.

The applicants' need to find a suitable site does carry some weight in favour of the proposal. However, members should note that harm to the openness of the Green Belt carries substantial weight in accordance with paragraph 88 of the Framework. In weighing up the impact of the development in respect of the Green Belt and the conflict with the development plan, the matters put forward by the applicant do not amount to very special circumstances which would outweigh the harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Conclusion

Whilst the principle of a stable building in connection with outdoor sport could represent appropriate development within the Green Belt, the proposed development would not preserve, and would harm the openness of the Green Belt. The development is therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The proposed development would also cause harm to the character and appearance of the site and the wider open countryside. The other circumstances suggested by the appellant do not clearly outweigh the substantial weight attached to Green Belt harm, and subsequently do not warrant the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be REFUSED

Reasons for Refusal

1. The proposed development by virtue of its scale and resultant spread of development on what is currently an undeveloped site would fail to preserve the openness of the

Green Belt and would harm its visual amenity. The very special circumstances which have been submitted by the applicant are not sufficient to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. As such, the proposed development would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which by definition is harmful. The application would be contrary to policies BDP1, BDP4 and BDP 15 of the Bromsgrove District Plan 2017 and the NPPF.

2. The proposed development, by virtue of its size and prominent position on an undeveloped plot, together with its large area of associated hardstanding and access drive would be an incongruous and urbanising addition to the area and would be harmful to its character and the its appearance. The application would therefore be contrary to BDP15 and BDP19 of the Bromsgrove District Plan 2017, SPG5 and the NPPF.

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