

# DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**Proposal:** Proposed Stables

**At:** The Lodge Bungalow, Office Street, Wheatley Hills, Co. Durham, DH6 3QR

## Introduction

This design and access statement has been provided to assist with the determination of this planning application. The statement has been produced so that its scope and complexity is proportionate to the development i.e. the construction of a new stable block on land to the east of The Lodge Bungalow within an existing paddock used for grazing and keeping of horses.



## **Amount Proposed**

Construction of a 19m x 12m stable building within an existing paddock currently used for the keeping of horse.

The existing stables are shown on the image on page 1 with photographs of the building below. The existing stables are in a poor state and have been suffering from damp and decay which is leading to a unhealthy environment for the keeping of the applicants horses. This has been verified by the applicants VET who strongly advises that the horses are moved our of this building for health reason and that a new stable block that has better ventilation away from the road and in an area that has more daylight.

The proposals involve 5 loose boxes and a tackroom to replicate that which exists at present. The building would be of traditional L-shape design akin to most stable buildings.

The building would sit on a concrete pad around the footprint of the building with an access gate into the field. Having this building within the field that the horses use is more appropriate and allows for better health conditions for the horses.

In terms of the existing buildings these would be retained but would be used purely as a storage area for many of the rollies, carts, field machinery and fencing materials that are currently outside in the open.

## **Scale & Appearance**

The proposed menage is of typical size and appearance and would sit well within the field relatively close to the existing access. The field is well screened by hedgerows to the south and east, and given it is at a lower level there would be no visibility from the highway. The site is effectively self contained.

The building would be constructed from block work with a light buff brown render finish.

## **Access**

Means of access to and into field will remain as existing with no alterations, via an existing access off the main road. There would be no increase in this regard as the applicant lives on-site at the Lodge.

## **Landscaping**

No additional landscaping is proposed as the field is already suitable screened by existing hedgerows

## Local Plan Policy



The site is not allocated for any type of development and has no land use restrictions or designations that apply. In light of this general policies apply that are applicable to development in the countryside and equestrian development.

### **Policy 10**

#### **Development in the Countryside**

Development in the countryside will not be permitted unless allowed for by specific policies in the Plan, relevant policies within an adopted neighbourhood plan relating to the application site or where the proposal relates to one or more of the following exceptions:

#### **Economic Development**

Development necessary to support:

- a. an existing agricultural or other existing rural land-based enterprise or associated farm diversification scheme, including the provision of new or the extension of existing building(s), structures or hard standings required for the functioning of the enterprise;
- b. the expansion of an existing business falling beyond the scope of a rural land based enterprise, where it can be clearly demonstrated that it is, or has the prospect of being, financially sound and will remain so;
- c. the establishment of a new agricultural or other rural land based enterprise which clearly demonstrates an essential and functional need for that specific location and where it can be clearly demonstrated that it has the prospect of being financially sound and will remain so; or
- d. the undertaking of non-commercial agricultural activity which is located within or directly adjoining the applicant's existing residential curtilage which is of a scale commensurate to the incidental enjoyment of that existing dwelling.

In all instances the resulting development must be of a design, construction and scale which is suitable for and commensurate to the intended use. In respect to (a), (b) and (c) any resulting building(s), other structure(s) and hard standing(s) must be well related to the associated farmstead or business premises unless a clear need to ensure the effective functioning of the business for an alternative location can be demonstrated by the applicant.

### **Infrastructure Development**

Development necessary to support:

- e. essential infrastructure where the need can be demonstrated for that location;
- f. the provision of new, or the enhancement of, existing community facilities; or
- g. development of a new, or the enhancement of, an existing countryside based recreation or leisure activity which will improve access to the countryside for all in terms of walking, cycling, horse riding and sailing without giving rise to adverse environmental impacts.

### **Development of Existing Buildings**

Development necessary to support:

- h. the change of use of an existing building or structure which:
  - 1. already makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area and is capable of conversion without complete or substantial rebuilding, disproportionate extension or unsympathetic alterations;
  - 2. results in an enhancement of the building's immediate setting;
  - 3. does not result in the unjustified loss of a community service or facility; and
  - 4. in the case of a heritage asset, represents the optimal viable use of that asset consistent with their conservation.
- i. the intensification of a use through subdivision;

- j. the replacement of an existing dwelling in the same location with one of a comparable footprint and mass where this is clearly justified; or
- k. an extension of an existing dwelling or other householder development within the existing curtilage which is incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling, including proposals to facilitate home working.

### **General Design Principles for all Development in the Countryside**

New development in the countryside must accord with all other relevant development plan policies and by virtue of their siting, scale, design and operation must not:

- l. give rise to unacceptable harm to the heritage, biodiversity, geodiversity, intrinsic character, beauty or tranquillity of the countryside either individually or cumulatively, which cannot be adequately mitigated or compensated for;
- m. result in the merging or coalescence of neighbouring settlements;
- n. contribute to ribbon development;
- o. impact adversely upon the setting, townscape qualities, including important vistas, or form of a settlement which cannot be adequately mitigated or compensated for;
- p. be solely reliant upon, or in the case of an existing use, significantly intensify accessibility by unsustainable modes of transport. New development in countryside locations that is not well served by public transport must exploit any opportunities to make a location more sustainable including improving the scope for access on foot, by cycle or by public transport;
- q. be prejudicial to highway, water or railway safety; and
- r. impact adversely upon residential or general amenity. New development in the countryside must also:
  - s. minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to impacts arising from climate change, including but not limited to, flooding; and
  - t. where applicable, maximise the effective use of previously developed (brownfield) land providing it is not of high environmental value.

### **Planning Justification Against Policy 10**

These proposals relate to equestrian development and there is a specific policy that applies to such developments. That said Policy 10 does state that development in the countryside will not be permitted unless allowed for by specific policies in the Plan. Equestrian uses are accepted as countryside uses and as such are acceptable in principle.

Other elements of Policy 10 that would apply is the general design principles which seeks to ensure that new development in the countryside is appropriate in siting, scale, design and doesn't give rise to unacceptable harm to the heritage, biodiversity, geodiversity, intrinsic character, beauty or tranquillity of the countryside. These proposals given their nature accord fully with these requirements.

There would be no intensification of the use as it is for personal use only by the applicant as exists at present, and as such these proposals would not significantly intensify traffic or be prejudicial to highway safety.

## **Policy 13**

### **Equestrian Development**

Equestrian development will be considered an appropriate countryside use and will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- a. stables are of an appropriate size, design and construction for their intended use and the number of stables reflect the amount of grazing land available;
- b. the proposal involves the appropriate conversion of existing buildings or, where proposals involve new permanent buildings, these are located as part of, or close to, an existing farmstead or other building grouping;
- c. the proposal would not, by virtue of their siting, design, scale, materials or layout, lighting or through the inappropriate intensification of existing bridleways, routes and land, unacceptably affect the character, heritage or nature conservation value or the locality, either individually or cumulatively with other development;
- d. the proposals provide appropriate measures for screening buildings, hard standings, arenas and storage areas with trees or hedges;
- e. the proposal is supported by details of appropriate waste storage, management, end disposal and surface and ground water drainage;
- f. the proposal would not adversely impact on the general amenity of neighbouring properties and the wider area; and
- g. safe and suitable access can be achieved, and in the case of commercial establishments are located close to existing bridleways or other routes suitable for trekking or hacking out where this forms part of the business.

New equestrian development in the Green Belt will normally be regarded as inappropriate development. Where the proposal involves limited infilling relating to an existing use, small scale stables will be permitted where they do not harm the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the purposes for which the land was included in the Green Belt.

In all cases, applicants will be expected to demonstrate adequate provision for the proper care of horses, including stabling, grazing and exercise, in accordance with the Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines<sup>(55)</sup> and the British Horse Society Standards<sup>(56)</sup> .

Equestrian development commercial establishments need to be located sufficiently close to existing residential accommodation to allow for appropriate levels of supervision. Proposals for a residential use associated with the equestrian development will be determined against Policy 12 (Permanent Rural Workers' Dwellings).

## **Planning Justification Against Policy 13**

Policy 13 supports equestrian uses in the countryside providing new stables are of an appropriate size, design and construction for their intended use and the number of stables reflect the amount of grazing land available. The policy also makes it clear that applicants will be expected to demonstrate adequate provision for the proper care of horses, including stabling, grazing and exercise, in accordance with the Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines(55) and the British Horse Society Standards(56). It is entirely for this reason that the applicant wishes to re-stable his horses as the existing stables are not suitable and are having a detrimental impact upon the health of his horses.

The applicants passion for his horses and their upkeep is part of the tradition of his traveller up bring and this part of Co. Durham is well known for its travelling roots and heritage with horses and equine uses being an established sector of the local economy.

The building is of good traditional design and would be well screened and is entirely appropriate to this rural location.

Storage areas for waste manure would not change to what exists at present.

## **Conclusion**

These proposals involve suitable and low impact development on a small scale for the applicants personal use and are entirely appropriate at this location and supported by local plan policies.

THIS IS THE LAST PAGE