

Ref: AS/SA

Date 04/04/2024



21 Southernhay West, Exeter, Devon, EX1 1PR
planning@stags.co.uk | 01392 439046 | stags.co.uk

New Forest District Council Planning Department
Beaulieu Road,
Lyndhurst,
Hampshire
SO43 7PA

ERECTION OF STABLE BLOCK FOR EQUINE BUSINESS USE

The application (the Application), made by Moortown Farms Limited (the Applicant) seeks planning permission for the erection of a timber clad stable block of circa 17.4m by 7.4m providing 4 horse places and a tack room for equestrian business use.

At the same time as this application is made (the Application) for additional stables, the Applicant has made an application for permission for a temporary (3 year) residential mobile home. The point to note, however, is that the need for the proposed residential mobile home and the financial sustainability of the equestrian business, which has already operated successfully for over 17 years, is not dependant on the additional stables sought by the Application. What the Application is about is the business plan, which has been in the making now for some time, to further expand the equestrian business to make it even more sustainable financially and to maximise the use of the site. Whilst the additional stables might not be needed immediately, they will provide an opportunity going forward and with the attention currently focused on the site and its' future the Applicant considered now was the obvious and sensible time to have the future option confirmed.

The following information accompanies this submission:

- Site Location Plan
- Block Plan
- Elevations and floor plans
- Statutory declaration of Richard Pierson
- Statutory declaration of Sally-Anne Pierson
- Statutory declaration of David Corsellis

The Site is located within the Green Belt and is within the 'open countryside' but sits adjacent to the edge of Ringwood and in area characterised by built development and which has been used lawfully for equine business and storage uses. The specific site that this the subject of this application has been lawfully used for commercial storage with a number of containers located on the site and it has been previously confirmed by the Council this use is lawful. It is also of note that the Council have previously supported equestrian business development, including the erection of stables, on the same wider site under applications 06/88791 and 08/92993.

CHARTERED SURVEYORS | PROPERTY AGENTS | AUCTIONEERS

Barnstaple | Bideford | Bridport | Dartmouth | Dulverton | Exeter | Honiton | Kingsbridge | Launceston | Okehampton
Plymouth | South Molton | Taunton | Tavistock | Tiverton | Torquay | Totnes | Truro | Wadebridge | Wellington | Yeovil | London

FOR A LIST OF PARTNERS, ASSOCIATE PARTNERS AND ASSOCIATES VISIT STAGS.CO.UK

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) provides that planning decisions shall be taken in accordance with the Development Plan (DP) unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The DP in this case comprises:-

- Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy (2020)
- Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management (2014)
- Core Strategy (2009)
- New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration (2005)

Material considerations include amongst other matters the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Local Plan 2016-2036 Strategic policies SO6: *Economic opportunities* and SO8: *Rural areas and tourism* both support economic development whilst looking to manage environmental impacts. Policy SO9: *Climate change and environmental sustainability* specifically looks to “*prioritise the beneficial reuse of previously developed land*”.

Policy STR3: *The strategy for locating new development* states as follows:

“The strategy is to locate and direct new development to accessible locations that help to sustain the vitality and viability of the towns and villages of the Plan Area as the focal points of commercial activity and community life,....” (own underlining)

Policy STR4: *The settlement hierarchy* confirms that as a town Ringwood lies within the top of tier of the settlement hierarchy and states as follows with regard to development in such locations:

“They are the most sustainable locations for large-scale residential, retail, leisure, cultural and business development to improve their self-containment and to support and consolidate their local service offer...” (own underlining)

Policy STR6: *Sustainable economic growth* states as follows:

“The Council strategy for sustainable economic growth is to maintain and enable a vibrant and prosperous local economy offering a diverse range of local employment opportunities, where existing businesses continue to thrive and new businesses have sufficient and suitable opportunities to form and grow in appropriate locations.....”

With regard to locations outside of settlement limits Policy STR6 sets out support for

“...a sustainable rural economy including low environmental impact businesses and tourism”

Policy ECON1: *Employment land and development* states as follows:

“i. Proposals for the development, redevelopment or intensification of employment uses will be supported on existing employment sites, and on other suitable sites within defined town centre boundaries, provided that:

- a. Safe and suitable access can be provided for pedestrians, cyclists and for the types of vehicles likely to visit the site; and*
- b. The proposal would not unacceptably impact on the environment, the landscape, or on the amenity of nearby residents; and*
- c. The proposal would not have a significant detrimental impact on the operation of other businesses in the locality; and*
- d. the use proposed is proportionate in scale for the location with regard to the settlement hierarchy”*

The explanatory text to Policy ECON1 defines employment uses as being those within B1, B2 and B8 (now replaced in part by Use Class E) but also ‘*sui generis*’ uses of a similar character.

Saved policy CS21 *Rural economy* of the Core Strategy states:

The strategy for the rural economy is to:

- (a) encourage agricultural, horticultural and forestry enterprises and farm diversification projects where this would be consistent with maintaining and enhancing the environment, and contribute to local distinctiveness;*
- (b) keep existing employment sites, and encourage improvements and redevelopments that will help maintain and enhance the environment, and contribute to local distinctiveness;*
- (c) allow small-scale built development for employment purposes in rural settlements (CS9, Level 3 settlements);*
- (d) support local business development through the conversion of existing buildings, with particular encouragement of enterprises that have little adverse environmental impacts (e.g. design/research activities);*
- (e) support the local delivery of services and the retention of local shops and pubs;*
- (f) work with the New Forest National Park Authority and other neighbouring authorities to protect essential back-up grazing land to support commoning; and*
- (g) allow developments essential to support a rural workforce, including agricultural workers dwellings and rural community facilities*

In this case the Site is 'at' Ringwood, a first tier settlement where growth is to be focused, it is also already within a business (employment generating) use and that it is not excluded from the definition of previously developed land and has previously been subject to physical change having had a number of containers placed on it. On this basis and given the limited physical impacts of a small stable block the proposals are considered to be compliant with Development Plan policy.

With regard to the Green Belt Policy ENV2: *The South West Hampshire Green Belt* confirms that development will be determined in accordance with national policy.

In-line with national policy in general, a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are set out within the NPPF and related practice guidance:...

“(b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it; ”

(own underlining).

It is clear that an equine use of the wider land adjacent to the site, both through express grant of consent and the passing of time and that equestrian activity falls within the definition of 'outdoor recreation', it is also plain that the erection of small stable block in lieu of the use of land for container based commercial storage will have no impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

It is also relevant that the Council have previously supported equestrian built development on the wider site and in terms of Green Belt Policy there has been no material change in circumstances since.

As indicated above, the Council must consider the Applicant's fall-back position. For a fall-back position to be taken seriously and given significant weight, it must be something likely to happen. The Council will appreciate, therefore, that whilst the Applicant does not want its' fall-back position to be seen as a threat, it is necessary for the Applicant to spell out what its' fall-back position is and what will, or certainly could, happen if the Permission is refused. The fall-back position in this case is the ongoing lawful use of the application site for container based commercial storage.

Given the well-established equine use across the wider site, and existing use of the land it is considered that the erection of a timber stable block for commercial equine use will have no additional impacts in terms of highways, residential amenity and flood risk matters.

Whilst the Applicant would contend that there should be no restriction on the nature of the equine business use (a matter set out in other applications on the wider site) if the Council consider it necessary the Applicant would accept a condition preventing the use of the stables for DIY livery purposes.

Yours sincerely



Alister Smith BSc (Hons) PGDip MRICS
Professional Partner
Professional Services
a.smith@stags.co.uk
01392 439046