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PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT

APPLICATION TO REUSE EXISTING BUILDING AND ERECT NEW BUILDINGS TO USE AS A CATTERY AND STABLES, USE OF LAND FOR A MENAGE AND MUCK STORE AND IMPROVED ACCESS LAND ADJACENT TO FOUR ACRES, PENDLETON RD, WISWELL, CLITHEROE BB7 9BZ

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The land to the rear of Four Acres is currently used for the grazing and stabling of horses for private use. The stables are currently in an existing building which has an area of some 43sqm. This building is served by an existing access which joins Pendleton Road immediately to the south of Four Acres.

1.2 The owners of Four Acres, who also own the nearby 1 Tithe Barn Cottages, wish to introduce a small scale commercial cattery and a small scale livery use and to continue their private stabling use. Additional space, to house the cattery and new stables is proposed to the north-west of and abutting the existing building which is to be used for administration and storage purposes.

1.3 To the south west of these buildings it is proposed to construct a menage of some 20m by 35m for private use and for use by livery holders. An existing access track which runs from Pendleton Road to the south and west of Four Acres would be improved and four car parking spaces provided. A muck store (midden) is to be sited close to the access road to allow for its periodic clearing as required.

2 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

2.1 Prior to this formal submission the applicant sought pre-application advice on the principle of the proposed uses. This advice was given under reference RV/2014/ENQ/00211 Dated 24th March 2015. The scheme submitted for the pre-application advice was significantly larger and of a different configuration and was not, generally well received. The roofing materials suggested were also criticised. The submitted scheme has been amended to take account of the advice.

2.2 A number of policy issues were also addressed by the pre-application advice. Whilst noting that the Core Strategy was generally supportive or rural business concern was expressed about the cumulative impact of the development and possible visual harm to the landscape character of the area. Concern was also expressed about possible harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents.

2.3 Specific comments were also made by the Highway Authority, by the Countryside Officer and by Environmental Health. These comments have been taken into account in the submitted scheme. Comment was also made about improvements to the existing access track and these form part of this application.

2.4 The scheme as now presented has taken account of the pre-application comments and has been amended to fully respond to the issues raised.

3 THE APPLICATION SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

3.1 The application site and access route lies to the south and west of four residential properties. Four Acres is a detached house and immediately to the north-east of this dwelling is a terrace of three cottages comprising Steps Cottage and 1 and 2 Tithe Barn cottages. The applicants own Four Acres and 1 Tithe Barn Cottage, the latter being currently unoccupied.

3.2 Access to the houses is directly from Pendleton Road which is a narrow country lane linking Wiswell to Pendleton. Access to the application site is via an existing track which joins Pendleton Road to the south of Four Acres. This existing access track currently serves the applicants' existing stable building and the grazing land to the west.

3.3 The application site is situated on the northern edge of Wiswell which is a small rural settlement with a mix of traditional and more modern development. The village is about 2km north-east of Whalley and some 4.5 km due south of Clitheroe. Currently the application site is used for stabling and grazing for the applicants' horse. The existing stable is a red brick structure of some 43sqm situated to the rear of Tithe Cottages. Sloping gently away westward from this area is a grazing field of some 1.7 ha. The western boundary of this field abuts a public footpath some 150m distance. It is from this public footpath that the proposed development is most visible. Compared with the proposal which was submitted for pre-application advice the visual impact has been significantly reduced by reducing the size of the buildings and replacing an L shaped structure with one which presents a gable end similar in size to the existing building.

3.4 The north and south boundaries of the application site and the attached grazing land are characterised by mature hedges and a number of important trees. As the accompanying tree survey and ecological report shows the retention of these features forms part of this proposal. In addition new planting of locally indigenous species will be introduced to soften any visual intrusion particularly when viewed from the western end of the field.

4 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

4.1 The principal source of planning policy for the area is provided by the Ribble Valley Core Strategy which was adopted in December 2014. As such this document may be regarded as up-to-date and fully compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework. The overall vision of the Core Strategy is encompassed by a number of Strategic objectives of which, paragraph 3.14, supports and promotes local business opportunities. This theme is further developed in Key Statement EC1 which supports in principle developments that strengthen the wider rural and village economies. These points are relevant to this application because the proposal involves a small cattery and livery business which, in addition to providing a local service will also contribute to the local rural economy.

4.2 A number of the other Key Statements are relevant to this application. Key Statement EN2: Landscape, is mainly concerned with the protection and enhancement of The Forest of Bowland, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The application site falls just outside of the AONB but

the policy also seeks to protect and conserve the landscape and character of the area and development should be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, features and building materials. This Key Statement and the comments put forward in the pre-application advice have been a main consideration in the design of the application scheme.

4.3 Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity, have also been a key influence on the application proposal. Although not affected by any of the nominated site of importance the applicants have commissioned an arboriculture study to ensure the development effects are minimal and new planting will enhance the setting. Similarly the application scheme, via the study mentioned above, has been designed in accordance with Policy DME1: Protecting Trees and Woodlands, and DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection. Specifically, measures to protect and retain trees and hedgerows accord with these policies.

4.4 The pre-application comments raised three specific concerns relating to policy DMG1: General Considerations, one concern related to the choice of materials another to the amount of comings and goings and the third to residential amenity. The scheme, as now submitted, takes account of and deals with these concerns.

4.5 The final Core Strategy policy to be mentioned is DMG2: Strategic Considerations. This states that in Tier 2 villages (of which Wiswell is one) and outside of defined settlement areas development must meet at least one of a number of defined criteria. These criteria include "5. The Development is for small scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated." The application is for a small scale use, appropriate to the countryside, which will provide a local service and create an economic benefit.

5 THE APPLICATION PROPOSAL

5.1 The application proposal retains both the cattery and a livery use. Compared with the scheme submitted for pre-application advice however, both have been reduced in scale. In addition the application proposal retains the existing stables building but with new roofing and wall cladding. This existing building will be used for storage, administration and staff facilities. The effect of this is to significantly increase the separation of the cattery and stables from the residential uses to the east when compared with the pre-application scheme.

5.2 At the pre-application stage it was envisaged that the cattery and stables would be in two separate buildings, the cattery having a footprint of some 138sqm and the stables some 250sqm. This compares with a combined footprint of some 178sqm for the application scheme which figure includes the retained building. This reduction has been achieved by reducing the number of cat boxes and stables. It is now proposed that ten cat boxes will be provide and three stables, two for livery and one for personal use by the applicants.

5.3 In addition to the reduction in the footprint the overall length of the building will be reduced from 38.6m (the pre-application scheme) to 27.8m (the application scheme). The stables part of the building will also be stepped down the slope to reduce the visual impact of the end elevation when viewed from the footpath to the west. It is also proposed to introduce a screen hedge, using

indigenous species, adjacent to this elevation. This will both reduce the visual impact and improve the ecology of the site.

5.4 The materials proposed for the new building are larch board cladding for the walls and traditional slate roofing. It is considered that these will be sympathetic to the character of the area and have low visual impact.

5.5 A menage is proposed to the south-west of the new building. This will be surrounded by a 1.2m high post and rail fence but, in addition, an indigenous species screen hedge will be planted along the north-west boundary to soften any visual intrusion from this feature.

5.6 Access to the building and menage will be via an existing track linking into Pendleton Road. Car parking for visitors is provided adjacent to the building. A storage area for horse manure is proposed adjacent to this access to allow for periodic removal off site as required. Used cat litter will be stored in a sealed container on site and removed periodically by a waste disposal company.

5.7 With regard to the frequency of visits, it is intended that delivery / collection from the cattery will be on an hours-restricted basis, 8.00 -10.00 and 16.00 to 18.00. A delivery / collection service may also be offered. Typically cats are likely to stay for a week or more and, as such visitors associated with the cattery are unlikely to exceed 12 per week. The livery will be offered on a serviced basis with the applicants doing the morning and/or evening feeds. As such the livery use will typically involve one or two visitor journeys per day.

5.8 An important element of the application proposal is that it will provide a local service and be a source of local employment and economic activity. A large cattery in the Wiswell area has recently closed and the application site will, in part, replace this lost facility. In addition to the applicants the new business will also be a source of employment locally, providing a number of flexible, part-time jobs.

6 RESIDENTIAL AMENITY CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 As mentioned above there is a terrace of three cottages situated to the east of the application site. 1 and 2 Tithe Barn cottages are situated some 21m from the eastern gable of the proposed development but are also some 2.4m higher. The relationship of the end gable and the cottages in this proposal remains unchanged but, as mentioned above, the use of the nearest application building changes from a stable use to that of an administrative / storage use. This will improve residential amenity compared with the current situation.

6.2 At the present time the area between 2 Tithe Barn Cottage and the application site contains significant mature planting, most of it within the curtilage of the cottage. This provides an effective visual screen which will be retained.

6.3 The building which houses the cattery will be over 25m from the nearest dwelling. It is noted that the pre-application advice included comments from the Environmental Health Officer who raises no objection in principle to the proposed scheme. He does request a condition to mitigate any possible noise disturbance and the applicants are happy to comply with such a condition.

7 HIGHWAY CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 A number of comments from the Highway Authority were included in the pre-application advice. These, mainly concerned the visibility splays from the access track to Pendleton Road. The hedgerows which are affected by the visibility splays are within the control of the applicants and the submitted scheme shows these splays and the other requirements requested. The proposal, therefore, complies with the highway officer's requirements.

8 LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, TREES AND VISUAL IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 As part of this application the applicants have commissioned two studies. A comprehensive Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been prepared by Bowland Tree Consultancy. This is a very detailed study of the existing tree and hedge situation on site and contains recommendations on the protection of existing trees and hedges and on measures to secure the future health of these key landscape features. In addition an Ecological Appraisal looks at the flora and fauna implications of the application proposals. Both of these studies are submitted as part of this application.

8.2 Whilst neither report suggests that the proposed development poses any particular threat to the ecology of the site they do contain a number of recommendations which have been fully accepted by the applicants and, where appropriate, they form part of the proposed scheme. The effect of these proposals is to preserve and enhance the existing landscape features of boundary hedgerows interspersed with significant native trees. A limited extension to the existing hedgerows has been introduced to the field side of the proposed building and menage. This will have the effect of softening and partially screening the development when viewed from the public footpath. It will also enhance the ecological value of the existing hedgerows.

9 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 This proposal relates to the introduction of a small commercial business appropriate to this countryside area. It will provide a local service which is needed following the closure of an existing cattery between Wiswell and Pendleton. It will also provide a source of economic activity and employment in a rural area and, as such, is supported by planning policy at both national and local level.

9.2 In preparing the application advice was sought from the Council. The advice received raised a number of points relating to the size and scale of the development, the materials proposed, residential amenity, landscape impact and the access arrangements. As this Statement explains the advice has resulted in significant changes to the original scheme and these changes deal in detail with the concerns expressed at the pre-application stage.

9.3 The key changes are a reduction in size of both the cattery and stable buildings which results in the overall size of the built development being reduced by about a third. The proposed materials have been changed to reflect local materials appropriate to this countryside area. The retention of the existing building and the existing planting to the rear of the adjacent houses ensures that residential amenity is not affected. Existing trees and hedges will be retained and enhanced and new planting will help to reduce any landscape impact arising from the new development. Taken together these changes result in a small scale development, appropriate to the countryside, which has only minimal impact on the landscape of the area.

9.4 This Statement demonstrates that the application proposal as now envisaged complies with planning policy and that it will have no adverse impact on residential amenity. The access arrangements are safe and any landscape and ecological impact is acceptable and mitigated by the proposed planting arrangements. As such the proposal is in accordance with the development plan and should be approved.

PREPARED BY:

Andrew Walker, BA, FRICS, FRTPI

The Planning and Development Network

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