

PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT

APPLICATION TO REUSE EXISTING BUILDING AND ERECT NEW BUILDINGS TO USE AS A CATTERY

AND STABLES, USE OF LAND FOR A MANEGE AND MUCK STORE AND IMPROVED ACCESS

LAND ADJACENT TO FOUR ACRES, PENDLETON RD, WISWELL, CLITHEROE BB7 9BZ

REVISION AND RESUBMISSION OF APPLICATION 3/2015/0571

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 to continue their private stabling and small scale livery 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. The new building will be on the site of a former stable block removed some years ago and will incorporate photovoltaic solar panels to improve its sustainability.

1.3 To the south west of these buildings it is proposed to construct a manege 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.

1.4 A similar application for this development (ref. 3/2015/0571) was refused on 16th December 2015 for one reason only as follows: "The proposed building and illuminated manege, which is elevated above the level of the land which slopes down to the west, would result in a development which is unsympathetic to the character and appearance of the countryside contrary to policies DMG1 and ENV2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy Adopted Version."

1.5 In addition to the refusal notice the application decision was explained in a Delegated Item File Report which gives a more detailed explanation of the reasoning behind the decision. The applicants have considered the decision notice and the report and now submit a revised proposal to overcome the objections to the original proposal.

2 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

2.1 Prior to the formal submission of the first application the applicants 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 to the first application submission and was

not, generally, well received. The scheme which was subsequently submitted as the first application was amended to take account of the advice and these considerations have been carried forward into this resubmission.

2.2 The main issues were addressed by the pre-application advice. Whilst noting that the Core Strategy was generally supportive of a 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 schemes. Comment was also made about improvements to the existing access track and these form part of this application.

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.

3.2 Access to the houses is directly from Pendleton Road which is a 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 gazing for one 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 0.675 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 first application reduced the visual impact significantly 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. In this, resubmitted application, the visual impact of the buildings and the manege has been further reduced.

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 and enhancement 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. The refurbishment and strengthening of the hedge along the western edge of the applicant's grazing land will also substantially improve the screening of the proposed development.

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 will provide a local service in the immediate area to replace a much missed and oversubscribed cattery in Wiswell which has recently closed. The proposal will also contribute to the local rural economy as it is envisaged that there will be two full-time equivalent employees from people who live locally. The nature of the work would be suited to older employees and people who may have physical limitations as the work will be gentle and not overly physically demanding.

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 schemes.

4.3 Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity, have also been a key influence on this application proposal. Although not affected by any nominated site of importance the applicants have commissioned ecological and arboriculture studies to ensure the development effects are minimal and new planting will enhance the setting. Similarly the current application via these studies has been designed in accordance with Policy DME1; Protecting Trees and Woodlands, and DME2; Landscape and Townscape Protection. The specific measures which form part of this application accord with these policies.

4.4 The pre-application advice raised three specific concerns relating to Policy DMG1; General Considerations. One concern related to the choice of materials, the second to the amount of comings and goings and the third to residential amenity. These concerns were addressed in the first application and it is noted that they did not form part of the reason for refusal.

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." This application is for a small scale use, appropriate to the countryside, which will provide a local service and create economic benefit.

5 COMMENTS ON THE REFUSAL OF APPLICATION 3/2015/0571

5.1 As mentioned the first application was refused for one reason only related to the visual impact of the proposed building and the illuminated manege. In this revised application the size of the buildings has been considerably reduced and the illumination of the manege has been removed. As well as the reason for refusal considerations relating to the application were explained in the Delegated Item File Report. The comments in this report are now discussed.

5.2 In considering the Principle of Development the report concluded that there is no objection to the proposal subject to consideration of the following main issues; Impact of the proposed building on the character and appearance and its setting in the landscape; - Impact on the local highway network; - Impact on residential amenity; - Flood risk implications; - The effect on trees, hedgerows and wildlife. These issues are considered in turn.

5.3 Character and appearance / landscape. The report raises two main areas of concern stating that "The proposed stable and cattery building together with the manege would be located on open land to the rear of a short row of properties fronting Pendleton Road. Whilst the proposed building and manege would benefit from some screening from the houses they would still be visible in views north east from Wiswell and from the public footpath to the west." This revised application has addressed this concern by significantly reducing the size of the building and removing the manege illumination. It also introduces photographic evidence which shows that the application site is not visible from views north east from Wiswell. These views are screened by existing hedgerows. The enhancement of these hedgerows will further ensure that the site is well screened. With regard to views from the footpath to the west the reduction in the size of the building by about one third and the changes to the manege will significantly reduce the visual impact of the scheme. However the Delegated Report does not mention that the proposal introduces substantial new native hedgerow planting to the west of the development. This planting will substantially soften the landscape impact of the development. In addition, the application site is well screened by the existing hedgerow along the western boundary of the applicant's land. This hedge is to be reinforced and enhanced so that the application site will not be readily visible from the footpath.

5.4 Also on the issue of character and appearance the Delegated Report makes the following comment; "Whilst it is not unusual to see stables and a manege within a rural setting the extended buildings are quite large and, together with the elevated, illuminated manege they would significantly change the character of the simple rural setting of the site, characterised by open fields. Whilst the applicant and some of the representations have highlighted that there would be some economic benefit from the proposals these are not quantified by the applicant and should be given limited weight." In the revised application the size of the buildings has been substantially reduced and the manege illumination has been deleted from the scheme. The new plans also confirm that the manege is not elevated above the land on its western boundary which also incorporates a new hedge. The revised application also provides further information on the economic benefits.

5.5 The second key issue relates to highways and parking. It confirms that the Highway Authority have no objections to the proposal providing the sight lines can be contained within the applicant's ownership. This issue is demonstrated on the application site plan. The Delegated Report is also content with the parking arrangements and concludes that the proposal complied with Policy DMG3 and was acceptable.

5.6 With regard to Residential Amenity the report considers the impact on the amenity of nearby dwellings. In all respects it finds that the scheme is acceptable. This view is confirmed by the Environmental Health Officer.

5.7 On the issue of Flood Risk and Drainage the report finds that the proposal is satisfactory.

5.8 On the issue of Trees, Hedgerows and Wildlife the report makes reference to the Arboricultural and Ecological Impact Assessments submitted by the applicants and concludes that in these respects the proposal is in accordance with Policy DMG1. These reports form part of the revised application which also confirms the applicants' intentions to improve and enhance the existing hedgerows.

5.9 Overall the Delegation Report finds only one area of objection, ie impact on the character and appearance of the countryside, and it is this issue which forms the sole reason for refusal. The revised application has addressed these concerns to overcome the objection.

6 THE REVISED APPLICATION PROPOSAL

6.1 As indicated above the Council's objection to the proposal rests on the size of the building and the elevation and illumination of the manege. In this revised scheme the overall length of the buildings, including the existing building will be 17.2m compared to 26.7m in the refused scheme, an overall reduction in the length of more than one third. This has been achieved by making better use of the existing building so that the total length of the new building is now only 10.6m. The height of the proposed building is determined by the height of the existing building. Together the two buildings will accommodate ten pens. The building then steps down to provide two stables at a lower level which will have a width of 7.9m., a reduction compared with the first application. The effect of these changes is to substantially reduce the mass of the building and, as such, to significantly reduce the visual impact when viewed from the footpath to the west.

6.2 With regard to the manege, the revised application has withdrawn the proposal to illuminate this area thus raking away any objection to the proposal during the hours of darkness. As the revised plans now show the manege will take its surface level from the land immediately to the west and, as such it will not be elevated. The fence has been reduced to two rails which will further reduce the visual impact.

6.3 The Council's objections, as expressed in the Delegated Report, centre on view towards the site north east from Wiswell and from the footpath to the west. As part of this revised application the applicants are providing photographic evidence (incorporated into the Design and Access Statement) that shows that the views from Wiswell are effectively screened by the existing hedgerows. This screening will be improved when these hedges are enhanced. From the footpath, the views are from over 150m distance and the existing hedgerow allows only occasional views of the application site. Again this is shown in the submitted photographic evidence. This hedge, along the footpath, will also be improved to further screen views of the proposed development and to reduce any adverse visual impact.

6.4 An additional point raised by the Delegated Report refers to the absence of information relating to the economic benefits of the scheme. The applicants envisage that the cattery will provide two

full time equivalent posts when fully operational. As explained in paragraph 4.1 (above) these jobs, probably split on a part time basis, would be suited to the local demographic population and, as such, will benefit people in the local community who are seeking work. The proposal will also provide a local service in that the cattery will replace one further along towards Pendleton which has been closed recently to facilitate the building of a substantial house.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 This revised application is for a similar development on the same site submitted by the same applicants and is, therefore, submitted on a free-go basis. It has however, been revised to overcome the objections raised to the first application. In addition new evidence is put forward which is relevant to the refusal. As such it deals with the limited reason for refusal and has drawn on the Delegated Item File Report to further substantiate the revised scheme.

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