

Miss H McCartney
Planning Services
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
BB7 2RA



28 August 2019

Ref: 038002/L003

Dear Miss McCartney,

PROPOSED EQUESTRIAN/AGRICULTURAL FACILITIES AT ELMRIDGE FARM, ELMRIDGE LANE, CHIPPING, PR3 2NY – 3/2019/0690

Further to our recent meeting to discuss the development proposals under planning application reference 3/2019/0690, we write to provide the additional information to justify the scale of the proposed agricultural/equestrian building. We also take the opportunity to respond to local concerns that have been expressed.

Internal Space for Equestrian Use

As advised, the Applicant owns four horses, three of which are competition standard horses trained for national dressage competitions. As competition horses, they cannot be left to graze pasture for long periods of time in order to control their diet. As a result, the horses tend to be stabled. Further, these animals are large (up to 17.2HH) and more skittish than a typical horse. The internal space, therefore, needs to be sufficient for the animals to display their nature behaviour, such as lying down to sleep, rolling on the ground, kicking out etc.

It is also relevant that the Applicant periodically breeds from a mare. The size of an individual stable needs to be sufficient to accommodate the mare and foal.

In response to these factors, the Applicant has proposed individual stables that are 1.5m longer than the minimum recommended size for larger animals. The scale of the individual stables is not excessive or unreasonable, especially when considering the size of the animals concerned, and remains the minimum that the Applicant considers is necessary for the welfare of its valuable animals. The individual stables also benefit from separate internal and external access points to support and enhance the multi-functional use of the proposed building.

In addition, the competition horses are fed on imported haylage and feed, with grass forming only a small proportion of their diet. Accordingly, the amount of storage space required for feed is larger than that of a typical domestic stable. The Applicant typically imports large round bails to feed the horses (and sheep over winter), which are too large to store in the proposed feed store.

The proposed building, therefore, needs to be fit for purpose to meet the Applicant's particular equestrian requirements.

Internal Space for Agricultural Use

As previously advised, the Applicant has a flock of sheep that will graze the 2.0ha of land and manage the grass (so the horses do not over-eat). The flock currently includes 14 ewes, but this number has been reduced to a more manageable number pending the relocation of the flock to the application site.

Once on site, it is the Applicants intention to grow the flock up to approximately 40 ewes before then sending around half the flock to market and starting the growth cycle again. The Applicant has been operating in this manner from its existing site for many years. It is, therefore, requested that the Applicant's intentions to grow the flock are taken into consideration to remove the need to pursue applications to deliver additional agricultural floorspace in the future.

Lambing will be undertaken within the proposed building, which will also accommodate the flock over winter. Sufficient space for sheep pens is, therefore, required, alongside an area to accommodate hay/straw for feed and bedding.

Equipment Storage Space

The submitted additional agricultural information sheet lists the various items of agricultural equipment to be stored within the proposed building. The height of the barn is the minimum required to allow the tractor to access the building with the loader in the down position.

The building will also accommodate equipment associated with the equestrian use, which, in addition to the equipment stored in the tack room, comprises a leveller for the proposed menage and a horsebox trailer.

Menage Lighting

As confirmed at our meeting, the Applicant agrees in principle to a condition restricting the hours of use of the menage flood lighting. It is proposed that the use of the lighting be permitted between the hours of 0700 and 2200 only on any day.

Whilst the submitted section drawing indicates that the lighting columns will be 6m high, the Applicant has confirmed that 5m high columns may be sufficient. It is proposed that the details of the lighting scheme be agreed by condition prior to installation.

Revised Drawings

As requested, the Proposed Site Layout plan has been revised to include reference to the erection of stock fencing around the menage to protect the perimeter hedge whilst it becomes established. The

area of hardstanding around the proposed building has also been extended to include the muck midden and access to it. The Section drawing has also been updated to reflect this and lower lighting columns for the menage.

Following our discussion, the barn elevations have also been revised to provide a block wall at lower level below the timber cladding.

Local Comments

The Applicant has discussed the proposal directly with neighbours and was aware of the concerns that have now been formally raised. Whilst the Applicant is amenable to revising the proposal, where possible, in response to local comments, it is the case that the matters raised cannot be addressed without resulting in a greater impact on the AONB or other important features, as detailed below.

The scale of the building is the minimum that is necessary to support the proposed agricultural and equestrian use. The intention is to deliver a single building to meet a wide range of needs in order to reduce the visual impact of the proposal in the AOAB. Reducing the scale of the building would ultimately result in the Applicant having to submit further planning applications in the future for additional floorspace, which is not the approach they wish to take. Alternatively, disaggregating the proposal in to two or more buildings would spread the buildings over greater area of the site and result in a greater overall mass/volume of buildings, to the detriment of the visual amenity of this sensitive location. The proposed approach was agreed with the Council through pre-application discussions.

The height of the building is dictated by the need for it to be accessed by a tractor. The proposed height is the minimum required and, we note, is substantially lower than other nearby agricultural buildings. Furthermore, the Applicant intends to set the floor level of the building as low as is reasonably possible into the site without creating conflict with existing features. Setting the floor level any lower would conflict with the neighbouring underground septic tank and/or would harm the roots of trees located around the site perimeter. Accordingly, to set the building lower, the footprint would have to be brought further south, away from the trees and septic tank but into the line of sight from the neighbour's property.

With regard to the location of the building, a range of options have been considered by the Applicant prior to the submission of this planning application, with the views of the Council also sought at pre-application stage. Positioning the building on the land to the north of Elmridge Farm was considered in detail. However, the conclusion was drawn that siting it between the farmhouse and Elmridge Lane in an area that currently accommodates a number of former chicken coops would result in unacceptable harm to multiple veteran/ancient trees, which make an important contribution towards the character of the AONB. Further, positioning the building to the north of the farmhouse would result in it occupying the highest part of the site where it would be widely visible and could have an unacceptable impact on the AONB. Accordingly, it was concluded that the

optimum location to deliver the proposed development would be on the lower parts of the application site, as proposed.

The proposed building is located approximately 60m to the east of the objector's property, at the closest point. This distance is substantial and significantly exceeds standards for minimum interface distances between buildings. Further, the proposed building has been positioned so that it is not within a 45 degree line of sight from the windows on the front elevation of the objector's property. The Applicant has taken care to ensure that the proposal will not dominate views, create over-shadowing or overlooking or result in a loss of light for neighbouring properties.

The Applicant has adopted a considerate approach towards the proposals that seeks to minimise the impact of the proposal on the immediate neighbours whilst also minimising wider impacts proposal on the AONB. The proposed scheme strikes this balance.

Conclusions

The scale of the proposed building is fully justified in terms of the multi-functional use it needs to perform as stabling for competition horses and to support the Applicants flock of sheep. The scale of the proposal has, nevertheless, been kept to the minimum required by the Applicant to successfully operate from the site.

It has also been demonstrated that the Applicant has taken a considerate and balanced approach towards the design and layout of the proposals, with their being genuine planning reasons why it is unable to acquiesce to the local concerns expressed. It is, however, the case that the proposed building will be located over 60m from neighbouring properties and will not result in an unacceptable impact on residential amenity.

We trust that the above and enclosed provides the required detail to allow the application to now be positively determined, but pleased be in touch if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Smith

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