
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 February 2025

by **M Clowes BA (Hons) MCD PG CERT (Arch Con) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/24/3350099

Scott House, Green Moor Lane, Ribchester PR3 2YR

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Laura Proos against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 3/2023/0720.
 - The development proposed is described as 'stable block.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters and Main Issue

2. In December 2024, the Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Although some sections and paragraph numbers have changed, the revisions do not relate to anything that is fundamental to the main issues in this appeal. The parties would not therefore be prejudiced by reference to the revised Framework.
3. The second reason for refusal on the Council's decision notice relates to concerns regarding the impact of the proposal on protected species. Further to the provision of an up-to-date bat survey with the appellant's appeal documentation, the Council has confirmed that it no longer seeks to defend this reason for refusal¹. Based on all that I have seen and read, I see no reason to take a different view.
4. The main issue of this appeal is therefore the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a dwelling, various outbuildings including an existing stable block, a lodge and a manege. The surrounding area is rural in character with rolling countryside predominating built development limited to sporadic farm steadings and dwellings. The majority of buildings at Scott House are of a traditional form with dual pitched roofs and/or traditional materials (with the exception of the lodge), such that they contribute positively to the rural character of the area.
6. The proposed stable building would replace an existing outbuilding that appeared from site observations to lie outside of the residential curtilage but was in use for limited domestic storage. It lies slightly separate to other buildings at the appeal

¹ As set out within paragraph 1.6 of the Council's statement of case and its email to the Planning Inspectorate dated 3 February 2025.

site but not significantly so and it is seen in relation to the existing manège. Constructed in traditional materials of timber cladding and slate it has a low asymmetrical roof form which helps the building to nestle into the appeal site, particularly in views from the public right of way (PROW) to the north-east.

7. Policy DMG2 advises that outside of the defined settlement areas development must meet one of six criteria. The parties dispute whether the proposal can be considered as a small-scale recreational development appropriate to a rural area. My attention has not been drawn to any definition of small-scale for the purposes of this policy. It is therefore a matter of judgement.
8. I am content that the keeping of horses could be considered as a recreational development appropriate to a rural area. The appellant has 4 horses housed in 3 stables and a makeshift stable in a tack room in a building that lies opposite the dwellinghouse. It is unclear what would happen to this building were the proposed stable block to be allowed and in the absence of any evidence to the contrary it is reasonable to determine that it would remain. Even allowing for the future prospect of additional horses for the appellant's children, the provision of 9 stables in total would not be an insignificant amount of stabling for private use.
9. Nevertheless, I must assess the proposed building. This would be more than double the footprint of the existing building and not dissimilar to the footprint of the dwellinghouse. However, there is no specific size restriction within Policy DM2, other than the requirement for the development to be considered small-scale. I note that no evidence has been presented to indicate that the proposed stables are the minimum size necessary for the type and size of horses kept, or that the amount of internal circulation or storage space is reasonably required, relative to the specific equine needs. The ambiguity in the evidence presented does not give me confidence that the proposal could be reasonably considered as small-scale in this instance.
10. Even if I could consider the proposed stable building to be small-scale, Policy DM2 requires development within the open countryside to be in-keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting.
11. It is not unusual to see stables within countryside locations and I do not doubt the importance of providing shelter for horses. However, the proposed building would not have a typical equine appearance. Numerous UPVC casement window openings would be a highly unusual feature of a stable block. They, along with the unusually shallow pitched roof would give the building a squat, unfamiliar appearance that would be neither equestrian nor domestic but a strange hybrid of the two. It would not therefore appear characteristic of the rural environment in which it would be located.
12. It appears from the plans submitted that the existing hedgerow to the north-east of the existing building would be removed to accommodate the larger footprint of the proposed building. This, along with the greater scale and form of the proposal would render it more conspicuous than the existing building in views from the PROW. If internal lighting was to be provided within the building, light spillage through the proliferation of windows would exacerbate the presence of the building, particularly in hours of darkness or inclement weather. I find that the increased scale and particular appearance of the building would be harmful in

views from the PROW. However, I am satisfied that the proposed building would not be unduly prominent in views from Green Moor Lane due to its set back position and mature landscaping.

13. For the above reasons, the proposal would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. Conflict is therefore found with Policy DMG2 as set out above and Policy DMG1, which requires all development to be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials. Conflict is also found with the Framework's aim to ensure that development respects the character of the countryside.

Other Matters

14. My attention has been drawn to a previous appeal decision that allowed the partial demolition of an existing stable block and its replacement with a new building to be used as a café/wine bar, elsewhere within the borough². Moreover, its size, location and design was considered to not be uncharacteristic of its surroundings. It is therefore a materially different proposal to that before me.
15. The appellant is willing to accept a condition limiting the proposed building for private equestrian use. However, this would not overcome or mitigate the harm identified to the character and appearance of the area through the proposed building's form and appearance. Such an approach would not therefore be reasonable or relevant to the development permitted. The circumstances of the previous appeal decision are sufficiently different to those before me that a different outcome would not be irrational.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given, having considered the development plan and all other considerations, the appeal should be dismissed.

M Clowes

INSPECTOR

² Appeal decision APP/T2350/W/22/3290586.