



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 June 2023

by Stewart Glassar BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 JUNE 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/23/3314867

LAND LYING TO THE WEST OF CROOKSBURY ROAD, RUNFOLD, FARNHAM, SURREY, GU10 1QF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Lylie Searle against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref WA/2022/00293, dated 15 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a stable and storage building in association with the keeping of horses.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a stable and storage building in association with the keeping of horses on land lying to the West of Crooksbury Road, Runfold, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 1QF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref WA/2022/00293, dated 15 September 2021, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. Between the Council's decision and the appeal coming before me the Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002 was fully replaced by the Waverley Borough Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 and the Waverley Borough Local Plan (Part 2) 2023. Therefore, Policy RD13 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002, which is referenced in the reason for refusal, is no longer saved. The Council has confirmed that there is no specific replacement policy and I have made my decision on this basis.
3. In undertaking the site visit, I was unable to gain access to the site itself. I was, however, able to view the site, including the existing stables and areas of hardstanding from the public bridleway which runs adjacent to the site. I have based my decision on the totality of the evidence from the appellant and the Council, along with what I observed from the site visit.
4. I have omitted the reference to the site's location within the description of development in the banner heading above, as it is not an act of development.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area and its landscape.

Reasons

6. The appeal site comprises an existing stable building, hardstanding and access. The site is set to the south-west of some existing dwellings that front onto Crooksbury Road. The houses themselves are not prominent features in the landscape when stood at the site entrance or when walking towards them from the North Downs Way and along the bridleway. The site, together with the adjacent field to the south, are surrounded by mature planting and trees. All of this gives the site a pleasant, rural character that accords with the area's wider designation as an Area of Great Landscape Value.
7. As with the existing stable building, the proposed stables would have a brick base but be finished largely in timber, with a plain tiled roof. Set away but at 90° to the existing building, it would create something of a courtyard around the existing hardstanding and onto which both buildings would face.
8. Both buildings would be single storey and would clearly be seen within the landscape as stable buildings. The site is already in use as stables and there were horses grazing on the adjacent field at the time of my site visit. The proposal would not therefore alter the equestrian character of the site.
9. The site and buildings would be visible from the nearby bridleway but views of stable buildings around a courtyard are not uncommon in rural areas. Wider views of the site, the buildings and adjacent field would be limited given the favourable land levels and mature trees and planting around them. As such, any effect from the additional stable building on the landscape would be limited and not unduly harmful.
10. The Officer Report notes that a previous proposal for an additional but larger stable building at the site was referred to the Council's agricultural consultants. Although that scheme was considered to be too large and was refused by the Council, the advice from the consultants was that a building of the size and nature now proposed, would be commensurate with the site's requirements and activities. There is no new or additional substantive evidence before me to suggest that this is no longer the case. Accordingly, there is no basis on which to conclude that the proposal would be too large for the land or the equestrian activities it would serve.
11. Overall, I find that this proposal would be of an appropriate appearance and size and would not harm the character or appearance of the area and its landscape. Accordingly, it would accord with Policies RE1 and RE3 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1 (2018) and Policies FNP1 and FNP10 of the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that the character of an area and its landscape are conserved.

Other Matters

12. Access to the site and existing stables requires the use of the public bridleway. The distance between the site and Crooksbury Road is not overly long, and the alignment is reasonably straight with good visibility available to all users. Given the existing use of the site, the additional building is unlikely to result in a significant increase in the number of vehicles seeking access to the site. Indeed, the County Council's Rights of Way Officer raised no objection to the previous, larger scheme for the site. The County Highway Authority was similarly satisfied that the larger scheme would not have a material impact on

the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway. The visibility splay at the junction of the bridleway and Crooksbury Road would continue to be controlled by the previous permission. Accordingly, there is no substantive evidence to suggest the proposal would harm the bridleway or other users.

13. Interested parties have raised concerns regarding unauthorised development which may have taken place on the site. This is a matter for the Council to consider and is beyond the remit of this appeal.

Conditions

14. In considering what conditions are reasonable and necessary I have had regard to the conditions set out in the Officer Report.
15. In addition to the standard time limit, a condition is required in the interests of certainty that lists the approved plans. Similarly, given the proximity of the building to the bridleway and the importance of the external materials to be used, a condition confirming them to be as shown on the approved plans is necessary.
16. A scheme controlling vermin, odour and the storage and disposal of manure is necessary in the interests of environmental and residential amenity.
17. A condition to make certain that the vehicular parking and turning areas are maintained is also necessary. This would ensure vehicles are not forced to park on or block the bridleway and are able to exit the site and cross the bridleway in a forward gear.
18. No details of external lighting are provided. Given the site's rural location and character it is both reasonable and necessary for any details to be controlled.
19. For the avoidance of doubt, and to ensure continuity with the existing permission and wider use of the site I have attached conditions limiting: the stables to a private equestrian facility, the installation of horse jumps and the storage of trailers/horseboxes. These are also necessary to limit the effect of the proposal on the wider countryside.
20. The site is within 100m of a former landfill site. An extensive pre-commencement condition was attached to the previous permission regarding the investigation of contamination. I am not aware that these investigations found contamination. Given that the stables would be erected on an existing concrete apron, a condition addressing the unexpected discovery of contamination would be reasonable in this instance.
21. The site is clearly large enough to accommodate the parking and turning of construction vehicles and the storage of materials. Construction traffic would need to traverse the bridleway, but the proposed building is not overly large and so the number of construction vehicles using the access would not be extensive and would be for a relatively short duration. A Construction Transport Management Plan would not therefore be necessary.
22. The provision and maintenance of visibility splays at the junction of the bridleway and Crooksbury Road were a requirement of the previous permission on the site. My decision would not change that and so repeating the condition here would be unnecessary.

23. Given the site's location, some wildlife could be expected to traverse the site or make use of nearby habitat. However, any precautionary approach must be proportionate to the available evidence. In this particular case, the site is used as stables and the land on which the new building would be erected currently has a concrete base. Any construction plant or materials would be likely to be stored on the existing hardstanding or the grass, which appears to be mown and maintained. A Construction Environmental Management Plan would not therefore be reasonable or necessary in this instance.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons given above, I have found that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area and its landscape. The proposal would comply with the development plan taken as a whole. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions below.

Stewart Glassar

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed in the following schedule

Location Plan	- 14_658B_001A
Existing Site Plan	- 14_658B_002
Proposed Site Plan	- 14_658B_003A
Proposed Plans & Elevations	- 14_658B_010
- 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in the materials shown on plan no. 14_658B_010.
- 4) Prior to the building hereby permitted being used, a scheme of works to control odour, vermin or insects associated with the keeping of animals and storage and disposal of manure and other wastes shall be implemented in accordance with details which have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 5) Prior to the building hereby permitted being used, the space shown on the approved plans for the parking and turning of vehicles shall be provided and thereafter permanently maintained for its designated purpose.
- 6) No external lighting shall be installed on the building hereby permitted until a scheme for external lighting has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development should be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 7) The building hereby permitted shall only be used for purposes of a private equestrian use and shall not be used for any commercial equestrian purpose whatsoever, including commercial/DIY liveries or a riding school.
- 8) No jumps shall be used or installed in relation to the building hereby permitted.
- 9) No horse boxes, trailers or vehicles used in the transportation of horses are to be stored overnight upon the land in relation to the building hereby permitted.
- 10) Any contamination that is found during the course of construction of the approved development that was not previously identified shall be reported immediately to the Local Planning Authority. Development on the part of the site affected shall be suspended and a risk assessment carried out and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Where unacceptable risks are found remediation and verification schemes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These approved schemes shall be carried out before the development is resumed or continued.

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