



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 February 2024

by Samuel Watson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/W/23/3327864

Lower Grange Farm, Oakamoor Road, Cheadle, Staffordshire ST10 4QR

- 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 Miss. Lorna Hurst against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
 - The application Ref is SMD/2023/0176.
 - The development proposed is the change of use of existing equestrian facilities from private use to riding school. A total of 7 permanent stables (at least 4 will remain as private use only), a 20x40m riding arena and a room (I refer to it an Equi-gym) housing an equisimulator.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the change of use of existing equestrian facilities from private use to riding school. A total of 7 permanent stables (at least 4 will remain as private use only), a 20x40m riding arena and a room (I refer to it an Equi-gym) housing an equisimulator at Lower Grange Farm, Oakamoor Road, Staffordshire ST10 4QR in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref SMD/2023/0176, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the appeal site is suitable for a commercial equestrian use with particular regard to its location and relationship to public transport.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located off Oakamoor Road some distance away from Cheadle, it contains a dwelling along with two stable buildings and a menage. The site is primarily surrounded by fields, although I noted dwellings adjacent to the site. Moreover, I noted a large commercial site and a caravan park between the appeal site and Cheadle. At the time of my visit there were horses in some of the stables and there was exercise equipment and an equisimulator present in the gym. The proposal would open three of the existing seven stables, the gym and the menage for commercial use as part of a riding school.
4. I have not been provided with any substantive details on public transport links near the site. However, from the Council's submissions and mindful of its location, it is unlikely that there are any nearby bus stops or services practical for the site. Future clients would therefore be reliant on private motor vehicles to reach the site. The Council consider it likely that, without restrictions, this

- use could generate around 80 vehicular movements a week, but that this number could double if the clients were dropped off and picked up.
5. It is unlikely that all clients would be picked up and dropped off, and it is possible that some clients may carshare. Moreover, if some clients participating in the Rider Camps were to stay on site, this would further reduce the number of journeys associated with the use. Nevertheless, these variables cannot be relied upon and so I consider the Council's initial suggest of around 80 movements a week to be realistic.
 6. Although some clients may stable their horses at the site, as there would only be three public stables, other clients would likely need to bring their horses to and from the site for each session. Therefore, as horses can't travel on public transport, even if the connections were better it is unlikely that there would be a significant reduction in vehicular movements. Mindful of this, I find a degree of vehicular movements would be expected no matter its location. I am also mindful that the Framework accepts that the opportunities for making the most of sustainable transport will vary between urban and rural locations.
 7. In all, whilst the proposal would result in an increase of vehicular movements to and from the site, I do not find this increase to be substantial. Mindful of the number of journeys estimated by the Council, I also do not find it necessary to reduce this through a condition limiting the number of clients to six per day. Furthermore, although the proposal would not be well served by public transport, for the reasons set out above I do not find that this transport is particularly viable to the type of proposal before me.
 8. The location of the appeal site would not result in an unacceptable increase in vehicular movements or conflict with the Council's strategy for public transport. The proposal would therefore comply with Policies SS10 and C2 which, amongst other matters, seek to limit developments that generate a substantial number of trips and are not well served by transport infrastructure. The proposal would also comply with the Framework, including Section 9 and Paragraph 109

Conditions

9. I have had regard to the conditions suggested by the Council and the advice on planning conditions set out by the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance. In the interests of clarity and enforceability, I have made some changes to the wording.
10. For certainty, I have set out the timescale for the commencement of development. A condition is also necessary, for certainty and enforceability, requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
11. As the proposal would increase the use of the existing access, in the interests of highway safety it is necessary to impose a condition requiring the creation, and maintenance, of visibility splays. The proposed commercial use would likely also lengthen the effective hours of operation and the desire for external lighting. In the interests of protected species, a condition is necessary restricting the use of external lighting. In order to protect nearby water courses and bodies, as well as the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers from the

increase in waste produced on site, a condition is necessary controlling the storage and removal of this waste.

Conclusion

12. There are no material considerations that indicate the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Samuel Watson

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 01147 AL(0)01, 01147 AL(0)02, 01147 AL(0)03 Rev A, 01147 AL(0)04, and 01147 AL(0)06.
- 3) Prior to the use of the development hereby permitted, the visibility splays shown on drawing No 01147 AL(0)06 shall first be provided. The visibility splays shall thereafter be retained and maintained with no features over a height of 900mm above the adjacent carriageway for the lifetime of the development.
- 4) No exterior lighting shall be provided in association with the development hereby permitted, unless it is under the canopy of the stable block or in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Engineers document "Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting" (2005) and the Bat Conservation Trust's "Artificial Lighting and Wildlife Interim Guidance: Recommendations to Help Minimise the Impact of Artificial Lighting" (2014).
- 5) Manure generated from the use hereby permitted shall be collected and stored in a dedicated storage area and managed in accordance with the recognised Best Available Technique outlined in the Protecting our Water, Soil and Air, A Code of Good Agricultural Practice for growers and land managers (DEFRA, 2009). The storage area shall have sufficient capacity for 6 months' worth of manure, have an impermeable surface capable of containing, or facilitating the collection of, all manure generated leachate and be sited at least 50 metres from all neighbouring residential properties. The manure shall not be burned as a means of disposal.