



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 May 2024

by Hannah Guest BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/W/23/3334046

Land Off Mill Lane, Haddenham, Bucks, OX9 3SA

- 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 Cyril Lewis against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 21/03609/APP.
 - The development proposed is described as metal storage container for storing horse tack, rugs etc. for our own horses living in the field. Also, for the ride on mower which is essential for the maintenance of the field. It will be covered in black wooden cladding on the back and side which are visible from the road. The other long side is obscured by natural hedge and the front is only visible from the inside of our field.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for metal storage container at Land Off Mill Lane, Haddenham, OX9 3SA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/03609/APP, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) Within two months of the date of this decision the black timber cladding shall be erected in accordance with the following approved plan: (unnumbered) Side Elevation and thereafter retained for the lifetime of the development.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: (Unnumbered) Field Plan; (Unnumbered) Field Plan 2; (Unnumbered) Side Elevation; (Unnumbered) Floor Plan.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall not be used for any other purposes other than for storage in connection with the equestrian use on site.
 - 4) No external lighting shall be installed on site or fixed to the container hereby permitted until details of such lighting have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include location, illuminance level, direction of lights and hours of operation. The lights shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the approved details.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the address set out on the appeal form in the banner heading above, as it more accurately sets out the location of the proposal.
3. The description of development in the formal decision has been amended to metal storage container, as this is a more concise description than that set out on the application form.
4. I saw on site that the metal container is already at the appeal site. However, the black wooden cladding referred to in the description of the development

has not yet been attached to the back and side of the container visible from the road. For the avoidance of doubt, I have determined the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans and details set out in the application form.

5. On 19 December 2023, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published. Those parts of the Framework most relevant to this appeal have not been significantly amended. As a result, I have not sought further submissions.

Main Issue

6. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the metal storage container on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

7. The appeal site is located within the open countryside. It is a reasonably small paddock surrounded by further paddocks and open fields. Thus, it has an open and green character, albeit trees and hedges demarcating the field boundaries provide a degree of enclosure and restrict any long-distance views across the wider countryside. The appeal site is used for the keeping of horses for private recreation and there is an existing relatively modest stable block on the site associated with this use. When I visited there was also a horse box on site.
8. Policy C2 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 – 2033 (2021) (Local Plan) explains that when considering proposals for horse-related development, the Council will seek to ensure, among other things, that the scale, construction, and appearance of the proposed development, including the entrance and boundary treatment is designed to minimise adverse impact on the immediate locality, landscape character and residential amenity. It does not specifically refer to storage buildings associated with private equestrian use and there is no policy requirement to justify the need for these types of buildings or that the scale of the building or structure is reasonably required.
9. In any case, the metal storage container would be used to store items associated with the upkeep and use of the horses on the appeal site, including a ride on mower, hay and hard feed, tack for the horses, rugs, and other items. While the existing stable block has a separate storage room, it looked relatively small and, from my observations on site, it appeared that it would be difficult to accommodate all the items that require storage, particularly the larger items, such as the ride on mower, in this existing room.
10. The storage container would be smaller than the existing stable block and, from the evidence before me, a reasonable size to store the required items. If the private equestrian use ceased, it would also be fairly easy to remove. Although it would be positioned close to the entrance of the site and would be readily visible from Mill Lane, it would also be sited adjacent to a field boundary comprising dense hedging and trees.
11. The sides of the storage container that can be seen from Mill Lane would be covered in black timber cladding, which is typically associated with agriculture and countryside locations. The Council contends that, in this case, timber cladding is not found in the nearby area. However, I saw on my visit that there is a group of houses and agricultural buildings at the entrance of Mill Lane, which comprise black timber cladding. The appearance of the container from Mill Lane would therefore be in keeping with these other buildings.

12. The other two sides of the container would remain as green coloured corrugated metal. While this material is utilitarian and would not be in keeping with the rural setting, its green colour would moderate any visual intrusion by helping the container blend into its surroundings.
13. For the reasons above, the container would respect and complement the site, its surroundings and the local distinctiveness and vernacular character of the locality in accordance with Policies C2 and BE2 of the Local Plan. It would also accord with Policy NE4 of the Local Plan, which seeks to ensure that development considers the characteristics of the landscape character by, among other things, minimising impact on visual amenity.
14. The appellant in his statement refers to adding climbing plants to the storage container with the intention of completely covering it so that it would blend into the environment and keep the contents cool in summer. It may be that the climbing plants would help to further integrate the storage container into its surroundings. Nonetheless, I have no details of these climbing plants before me, and they are not included on the submitted plans. In any case, I do not consider them necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms and the appellant would not require permission to add them.

Other Matters

15. Interested parties have raised concerns regarding the impact of the development on parking and traffic. However, the use of the appeal site has already been established and it is unlikely that the storage container would result in an intensification of this use or an increase in vehicular traffic. I am therefore of the view that the appeal proposal would not result in unacceptable effects in this regard.

Conditions

16. The Council has suggested that, in the event the appeal was allowed, 4 conditions be imposed on any grant of permission. In imposing conditions, I have had regard to the approach in the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance. I have accordingly modified the wording or form of certain conditions without altering their fundamental aims.
17. In the interests of certainty, a condition specifying the plans that are approved and that the development shall be undertaken in accordance with them is required. For this reason and to protect the character and appearance of the area, conditions are also necessary to ensure that the black timber cladding is installed within 2 months of this decision and that the storage container is not used for any other purpose. Also, to protect character and appearance, as well as to protect local wildlife, a condition is required to ensure that details of any external lighting to be erected is submitted to and approved by the Council.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons above, having had regard to the development plan as a whole, and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions set out above.

Hannah Guest INSPECTOR