



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 August 2025

by N Duff BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N3020/W/25/3361750

284 Longdale Lane, Ravenshead, Nottinghamshire NG15 9AH

- 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 Mr Simon Rood of Rowntree Equine Therapy Limited against the decision of Gedling Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/0517.
 - The development proposed is new two-storey equestrian teaching facility for the disabled adjacent to an existing manege.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a new two-storey equestrian teaching facility for the disabled adjacent to an existing manege at 284 Longdale Lane, Ravenshead, Nottinghamshire NG15 9AH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2024/0517, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues of the appeal are:
 - Whether or not the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
 - The effect on the openness and purposes of the Green Belt;
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - Whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

3. The site is an existing equestrian development accessed via a private gated access road off Longdale Lane, a reasonably busy main road. The site has a belt of woodland separating it from the main highway therefore the site is not easily visible from the highway.
4. The appeal site is open and flat and includes existing paddocks divided by post and rail fencing and a large manege. An existing car parking area, turning circle, two existing small stable blocks exist to the west of the site, and a residential property no. 284 are within the main site as outlined in blue.

5. The existing main buildings on the site are located along the peripheries of the site, with the centre of the site having an open character which is occupied by the manege and paddocks.

Whether the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt

6. The appeal site is located within the Green Belt where there is a presumption against inappropriate development. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out exceptions whereby development would not be inappropriate.
7. The proposal would be for the development of a teaching facility for the disabled for horse riding, which would be located adjacent to the existing manege on the site. The building would be two storey, and would include 4 stalls, hay store, food store, tack room, WC/shower room and horse solarium at ground floor level, and a large viewing area, WCs, classroom, meeting room and office at first floor level with an accessible lift. Together with ancillary car parking area, minor alteration to the existing access and landscaping.
8. Notwithstanding the presence of a classroom, meeting room and office in the proposed building, I am satisfied based on the information before me, the proposal would be in connection with equestrian development, with certain rooms ancillary to the use as a teaching facility, such as the classroom and office. I am satisfied that the proposal is for the provision of an appropriate facility (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport or recreation. Therefore, it follows that paragraph 154 b) of the Framework is applicable here.
9. In that context, Policies LPD 25 and LPD 47 of the Gedling Borough Local Planning Document Part 2 Local Plan (GLPD) do allow for small stables and rural businesses in the Green Belt, subject to certain criteria. In addition, Policy 3 of the Broxtowe Borough Gedling Borough Nottingham City Aligned Core Strategies Part 1 Local Plan (September 2014) (ACS) states that the principle of the Nottingham Derby Green Belt will be retained.
10. Policy LPD 25 of the GLPD states that planning permission will be granted for the keeping of horses for recreational purposes and the construction of associated small stables or development connected with equestrian activities, providing that it would be in accordance with Green Belt Policy and would not conflict with the purpose of including land within the Green Belt, together with other development specific criteria. Similarly, Policy LPD 47 of the GLPD requires rural/employment businesses to accord with Green Belt policy and be part of a rural diversification project. However, the test regarding the scale of a proposal in Policy LPD 25 does differ to that in the Framework which does not set out a size but just that the proposal be for the provision of an 'appropriate facility'.
11. I am satisfied that the proposal would constitute an appropriate facility, including buildings, for outdoor sport or recreation, as it would be for a teaching facility for the disabled in connection with horse riding, which is for the purposes of outdoor sport or recreation, and would be in connection with an existing equestrian use of the land.

12. It follows that I find that the proposal would fall within the definition of an appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport or outdoor recreation.

Openness and purposes of the Green Belt

13. In order for the proposal not to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it must preserve openness and not conflict with the purposes for including land within the Green Belt, in accordance with paragraph 154 b) iv of the Framework.
14. Openness has both spatial and visual aspects. The proposed building would be two storeys in height, in part, with a monopitch roof. The building would have a large glazed central area to the front of the building which would give the building a vertical emphasis. The proposed viewing area would be a very large raised roof terrace area with an equivalent floor area to the stables directly below it. Due to the design and scale of the building, which is substantial, including its height, bulk and mass, together with its location near the middle of the site which has an absence of built development, I consider that the building would not preserve openness. Having regard to the car park, whilst this would introduce hardstanding, due to the nature of the proposed development with set hours of operation, this is unlikely to be permanently occupied by vehicles, therefore I am satisfied that this element would preserve openness.
15. The building and associated car parking would be unlikely to be glimpsed from public vantage points especially along Longdale Lane, due to the presence of the woodland belt which provides very good screening, together with screening around the site and from other built development from buildings on the site and from the neighbouring property.
16. Nevertheless, for the reasons given above, I do not consider that the facility would preserve openness.
17. The Green Belt serves five purposes which are set out at paragraph 143 of the Framework. Due to the remote rural location of the building, I do not find paragraphs a, b, d or e, to be directly applicable to this case. However, having regard to paragraph c), due to the curtilage of the proposed building being within the confines of the paddock area towards the centre of the site far from its boundaries, with the access road and woodland belt forming defensible boundaries around the proposed building and car park. I am satisfied that the proposal would not encroach beyond the existing equestrian development. Therefore, would assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and therefore would not conflict with the purposes for including land within the Green Belt.
18. The Council and appellant have stated in their evidence that grey belt could be relevant here. Paragraph 155 of the Framework states that the development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where certain criteria apply. In this case, for the reasons given above, I am satisfied that the proposal would not conflict with the purposes for including land within the Green Belt, therefore the proposal would meet criterion a) of paragraph 155 of the Framework.
19. Turning to criterion b) of paragraph 155 of the Framework, some information has been included in the appellant's statement of case relating to the site, how it is

unique and would provide a level of teaching for those with wide ranging disabilities, which would not just include horse riding but caring for the horses. The evidence goes on to state that whilst other equestrian facilities exist that provide riding for the disabled, they do not provide the same service that would be provided from the proposed development. Whilst this may be the case and the proposed development would provide an important service, the information provided does not adequately demonstrate to me that there is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed here. Therefore, in this case the proposal would not meet criterion b) of paragraph 155 of the Framework.

20. Therefore, it serves no purpose to assess the proposal against the remaining tests in paragraph 155 of the Framework and accordingly this does not affect my conclusion with regard to the acceptability of the development within the Green Belt.
21. Consequently, for the above reasons, the proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would therefore conflict with Policies LPD 25 and LPD 47 of the GLPD which seek to ensure that equestrian development and rural businesses accord with Green Belt policy. Accordingly, the proposal would also fail to accord with paragraph 154 b) of the Framework.

Character and appearance

22. The proposed building would be substantial and would stand alone in the middle of the site, with an associated car parking area and landscaping.
23. The site is rural in character and the proposed use, for the keeping of horses and as a riding school facility, would complement this setting. However, the proposed design and scale of the building, particularly due to its intended functionality, including offices and a classroom at first floor level, has a contemporary appearance, not typical of equestrian buildings, but more of a commercial or domestic building. This is particularly true of the proposed front elevation, where the central glazed section emphasises the contemporary appearance of the proposed building. As a result, the overall design, combined with its height would appear at odds with the rural character of the area.
24. The design and access statement states that the building would be timber cladded, I am satisfied that this would be acceptable facing material for the proposed development. Further, the proposed car parking area and grasscrete area would be acceptable and proportionate to support the proposed development.
25. Nevertheless, due to the proposed design of the building, I find that it would appear incongruous within this rural setting. Therefore, would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, and would fail to accord with Policy 10 2 (d and e) of the ACS which seeks to ensure that development will be assessed in terms of its treatment of massing, scale and proportion, and materials, architectural style and detailing.

Other Considerations and Very Special Circumstances

26. I have had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which sets out the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected

characteristic and people who do not share it. Under the PSED disability is a protected characteristic.

27. The proposed development would provide a specialist equine therapy facility, which would provide an arena, four resident horses and expert Riding for the Disabled Association and British Horse Society qualified coaches, supporting those with a protected characteristic. The provision would allow for the teaching of 4 people at any one time. The facilities would provide support for people with a wide range of disabilities. The planning statement states that emotional wellbeing, mindfulness and inclusion will be at the centre of all Animal Assisted Intervention education programmes at the proposed facility.
28. The planning statement states that the primary user of the facility would be Portland College located approximately 3 miles from the site, which is a specialist college and centre of excellence for autism. The proposed development would therefore provide a social and recreational facility for disabled people which, in my judgement, would enhance the social sustainability of the community. I therefore consider this to be a significant benefit of the proposed development.
29. Having regard to my duty, I have concluded that for the above reasons, to dismiss the appeal would have the potential to have an adverse impact on persons with a protected characteristic who could use the facility and deprive those persons of the benefits a facility such as this could bring. Accordingly, the PSED considerations would attract substantial weight in this case.
30. The proposed development would create employment for 2 full time staff members and volunteers which would rise to 5 full time staff within 5 years who would be employed to care for horses and provide equine coaching. The employment generated by the proposed development would provide an economic benefit in the local area. However, given the modest number of proposed employees this would only attract limited weight in this case.
31. The proposed development would provide biodiversity enhancements, comprising the creation of a traditional orchard, native species rich hedgerows or shrub planting and wildflower grassland or enhancement of existing grassland. The proposed development would provide a biodiversity net gain (BNG) for both hedgerow and area habitats. Area habitats would achieve an overall net gain which exceeds statutory 10% BNG requirement. Given the relatively small scale of the site, this benefit to biodiversity would attract limited weight in this case.
32. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Substantial weight is given to the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness due to the impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
33. Having considered all matters raised in support of the proposal, as set out above, including the PSED considerations, benefits to the local economy through employment and benefits to biodiversity, these considerations, in combination, would amount to the substantial weight required to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and other harm identified to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, the very special circumstances required to justify the development exist in this case and the proposal is compliant with the requirements of the Framework.

Other Matters

34. The Parish Council has commented that facilities already exist for the proposed use in the locality, including the Papplewick RDA centre on Nottingham Road, Fairview Farm on Main Road, Blidworth Equestrian Show Centre on Longdale Lane, Little John Paddocks on Main Road, Kirkfields Equestrian Centre and Cross Lane Stables. However, I do not have the full circumstances of the operational status of these sites or the services they provide, nor do I have the details of their context and setting. Therefore, I cannot be certain that they are wholly comparable to the scheme before me. Nevertheless, each case is determined on its own merits, and therefore, in this case, the presence of other sites does not lead me to a different conclusion.
35. The Council has raised policies LPD 32, LPD 57 and LPD61 of the GLPD in their statement of case, I am satisfied that based on the evidence before me and my observations that the proposed development would not have an adverse effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers or on highway safety. Furthermore, that the proposal would be acceptable with regard to car parking subject to a condition relating to a car parking plan.

Conditions

36. The Council has suggested conditions that both parties have had the opportunity to comment upon and which I have considered against advice in the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. As a result, I have made some amendments for consistency and clarity purposes.
37. In addition to the standard time limit condition, in my judgement a condition is necessary to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
38. A condition is necessary to ensure that the development is carried out in appropriate materials. The Council has suggested this be a pre-commencement condition however I am satisfied for these details to be provided prior to the commencement of above ground works.
39. A condition is necessary to set out the car parking layout for the site, in order to ensure that the car parking area is used as effectively as possible. The Council has suggested this be a pre-commencement condition, however I am satisfied for these details to be provided prior to the commencement of above ground works and implemented prior to the first occupation of the site for the approved purpose.
40. A condition relating to the submission of a landscaping scheme is necessary to ensure that the proposed landscaping is sufficient in the interests of character and appearance. The Council has suggested this be a pre-commencement condition, however I am satisfied for the details to be submitted to the Council prior to the commencement of above ground works. A second condition is necessary to set out the details of implementation of the landscaping scheme which includes a requirement for hard landscaping to be implemented prior to first occupation of the site, which I consider to be reasonable.
41. The Council has suggested condition in relation to the submission of a biodiversity gain plan and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) in order to ensure that the proposed biodiversity net gain (BNG) is achieved post-

development. The submitted details indicate that BNG beyond the minimum required can be achieved subject to further details. However, it is not necessary to impose a condition requiring the submission of a biodiversity gain plan (BGP) or HMMP because the deemed biodiversity gain condition, under paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), ensures that the development cannot commence until a BGP has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.

Conclusion

42. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

N Duff

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 permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - LLRN-BSP-XX-XX-D-S-0001 (P02) – Proposed Site Access Arrangements
 - 2835-JMF-ZZ-001-DR-A-1000-PR (P1) – Existing Site Location Plan
 - 2835-JMF-ZZ-001-DR-A-1001-PR (P4) – Proposed Site Location Plan
 - 2835-JMF-ZZ-001-DR-A-1002-PR (P3) – Proposed Site Plan
 - 2835-JMF-ZZ-001-DR-A-1003-PR (P3) – General Arrangement Proposed Floor Plans
3. No development above ground level shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
4. No development above ground level shall commence until a car parking plan, is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The parking shall then be implemented prior to occupation of the approved building and retained thereafter in perpetuity.
5. Prior to the commencement of above ground works, a scheme of landscaping showing the location, species and size of specimens to be planted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
6. All soft landscaping comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the first occupation of the building(s) or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner; All shrubs, trees and hedge planting shall be maintained free from weeds and shall be protected from damage by vermin and stock. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All hard landscaping shall also be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

END OF SCHEDULE