
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2025

by **O Tresise MSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/T3725/W/25/3367812

**Lower Norton Farm, 20 Henley Road, Lower Norton, North Lindsey,
Warwickshire CV35 8RB**

- 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 J Rose against the decision of Warwick District Council.
 - The application Ref is W/24/0560.
 - The development proposed is alterations and relocation of stables, retention of machinery - dry store and manege.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In the heading above, I have taken the description of development from the application form, but I have removed superfluous text in the interests of conciseness.
3. I observed that the development has already been carried out and appears to accord with the plans before me. I have therefore considered the appeal on the basis that the development has taken place.
4. A further appeal, Ref: APP/T3725/W/25/3369102, has been submitted by the appellant, however it has not been considered alongside with this appeal development, as these appeals concern different sites and are of a distinctly different nature.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:
 - i. whether the appeal development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework); and any relevant development plan policies including the effect upon the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - ii. whether any harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the appeal development.
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Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

6. The Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The Framework, in paragraph 154, sets out that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of several exceptions apply. Those exceptions include that relating to (b) the provision of appropriate facilities, including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
7. Policy DS18 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 (Local Plan) states that the extent of the green belt is defined on the Policies Map and the Council will apply national planning policy to proposals within the Green Belt. Neither policy DS18 of the Local Plan nor the Framework defines what constitutes an 'appropriate' facility. Furthermore, for the proposal to not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt in accordance with the exceptions specified above, it needs to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Openness may have both spatial and visual elements and is a matter of planning judgement to be assessed in light of the specific circumstances of the case.
8. The appeal site comprises a stable, a storage building and an outdoor manege. It is located in countryside. The site is largely surrounded by fields.
 - (i) *Stable building*
9. The stable building was designed to accommodate 12 horses together with a range of associated facilities. The building is used for the private stabling of the appellant's horses, and it also incorporates a number of ancillary rooms, including feed, rug and tack rooms, together with a utility area and a washroom for staff and visitors. The building adopts a cross-shaped internal layout, with a wide central walkway and stabling bays arranged to either side, resulting in a structure of considerable width and depth.
10. Whilst the provision of stabling for horses may not, in itself, amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, the building is substantial in its overall scale, height and floorspace. The inclusion of utility area, additional facilities for staff and visitors, and the wide cross-layout walkway materially increases the bulk and permanence of the structure. These elements go beyond what would normally be regarded as appropriate for private equestrian use. They contribute to the perception of the building as a large and complex facility rather than a modest stable structure.
11. In spatial terms, the building introduces a significant amount of built form due to its considerable footprint and volume, and this would reduce the openness of the land, which is one of the essential characteristics of the Green Belt. Visually, despite its equestrian purpose, the building is bulky in form and large in scale, and its excessive height further creates a prominent feature within the landscape. The cumulative effect of these characteristics erodes the sense of openness that the Green Belt designation seeks to protect.

12. I appreciate the appellant's intention to provide accommodation to meet or exceed the guidance and recommendation set out in the Code of Practice for the welfare of horses, ponies, donkeys and their hybrids, the Animal Welfare Act, and the British Horse Society. The appellant's veterinary statement indicates that the average size of these stables is not disproportionate. It also states that the height space is suitable for horses, and that provides good ventilation. Notwithstanding that, welfare requirements can often be met through a range of building sizes and configurations. Therefore, it carries limited weight in the overall planning balance.
13. The appellant contends that the ancillary facilities are required for staff and visitors, and the veterinary statement also echoes the appellant's claim. However, the provision of such facilities does not in itself justify the overall scale or bulk of the appeal development in a green belt location. The need for welfare facilities does not automatically warrant a building of this substantial scale, particularly in a location where strict policy control applies and where any new structure must be clearly justified in terms of essential need rather than convenience.
14. I therefore conclude that the stable building, by reason of its scale and the extent of its built form, conflicts with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Therefore, the stable would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and it would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

(ii) Machinery and dry store

15. The store building is substantial in size and that introduces a significant volume of built form into the Green Belt, reducing the openness of the land. The appellant contends that the storage building would help to protect the landscape by keeping hay, straw and machinery within the building. However, haylage and agricultural machinery are commonly found within the countryside. Whilst I note the need to keep hay and straw in dry condition, such materials can be adequately protected through other means, including weather-resistant coverings.
16. The barn may be intended to store hay cut from the site, there is no quantification of the volume of hay or straw to be stored, nor any details of floorspace required for this purpose. Likewise, the extent and type of machinery needing coverage storage has not been specified. Therefore, I am not satisfied that the size of the barn is justified or that the level of built form is the minimum necessary to support the equestrian activities on site.
17. I therefore conclude that the machine and dry store, by reason of its scale, conflicts with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Therefore, the store would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and it would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

Other material considerations

18. The appellant states that the manege provides a safe environment for a horse to exercise regularly, and that there is no prescribed standard size for such a facility. I note the Council acknowledges that the construction of the manege would retain the land being open and have a negligible effect on the openness of the Green Belt. Be that as it may, this consideration does not alter my overall conclusion.

19. I note that the Council raise no objection to the appeal development in terms of character and appearance, living conditions of adjacent properties, ecology and protected species, however, the compliance of this respect is a neutral factor.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

20. Paragraph 153 of the Framework is clear that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. I have found that there would be harm to the Green Belt by reason of the development's inappropriateness due to its effect on openness. I have found that the degree of harm would be significant.
21. The Framework states that the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the development must be clearly outweighed by other considerations for planning permission to be granted. The other considerations, including the welfare for horses and the provision of ancillary facilities for staff and visitors within the building, are not sufficient to constitute the very special circumstances necessary to justify this appeal development.
22. The appeal development therefore conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations, including the Framework, and there are no material considerations that outweigh the identified harm. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

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INSPECTOR