
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 September 2025

by **D Ellis MPlan MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/W/25/3368591

White House Lodge, Hare Street, Hertfordshire SG9 0DX

- 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 Chris Rixon against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 3/025/0249/FUL.
 - The development proposed is new stable block and sand turnout area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for new stable block and sand turnout area at White House Lodge, Hare Street, Hertfordshire SG9 0DX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 3/025/0249/FUL, subject to the following 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 drawing nos 1279.25.2, NWA-18-025-30, NWA-18-025-31, and NWA-18-025-LOC-ST_P Rev B.
 - 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in the materials shown on the planning application form and drawing nos 1279.25.2 and NWA-18-025-30.
 - 4) All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the completion of the development; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.
 - 5) The stables shall be used for the private use of horses incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house known as White House Lodge and shall not be used for livery or any commercial purpose.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Chris Rixon against East Hertfordshire District Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issue is whether the site is a suitable location for equine development, including having regard to the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is in an area designated as Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. Policy GBR2 of the East Herts District Plan October 2018 (EHDP) allows for equine development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt as long as it is compatible with the character and appearance of the rural area and in accordance with EHDP Policy CFLR6.
5. Policy CFLR6 sets out a series of criteria that proposals for equine development have to meet, including that the proposal is sited or landscaped to minimise visual intrusion. Under the policy it must be demonstrated that where new buildings are proposed, the existing structures cannot be re-used and that the siting, scale and design of the proposal would be in keeping with the character of the area.
6. The appeal site forms part of a field within the ownership of White House Lodge. The field is bounded by trees, hedges and fencing, is surrounded by other fields on three sides. It is currently free of any structures. Consequently, the field contributes positively to the open and rural character and appearance of the area.
7. The proposed stable block would be situated in a corner of the field with dense vegetation on two sides which, together with additional proposed landscaping, would restrict public views of the building and the sand turnout area. The stable block would take up a very small part of the field, and the materials would be appropriate within the rural setting. The new building would therefore not have a significant effect on the openness of the field or wider area and would not result in the encroachment of an urban form of development into the countryside.
8. Although details of the 'modified grassland' have been provided on the submitted Landscape Proposals, this matches the description of the existing grassland in the field as shown on the Baseline Habitats drawing. The Landscape Proposals drawing confirms that roadstone would be used for the access track and that a 1.2 metre post and rail fence would be erected. Such materials and fencing are in keeping with those currently used on the appellant's land and would be compatible with the rural setting.
9. The proposal would re-use materials from the existing stable buildings. As such no additional stabling facilities would be created, as one or more of the existing stable buildings would have to be dismantled in order to build the proposed stables. As there would be no increase to the amount of stabling I am not persuaded that there would be an overprovision. Furthermore, the existing stables would need to be demolished as part of a planning permission for three dwellings¹ on the site of the stables, should this permission be implemented.
10. Although the proposed access route to the field and new stable block would be unusable should the approved dwellings be built, the extant permission includes the construction of an alternative access track along the southern edge of the site of the new dwellings. Whilst this falls outside the red line boundary of the appeal

¹ Planning application ref. 3/23/1819/FUL

site, the new track is conditioned to be provided with the approved dwellings, which would ensure continued access to the proposed stable block.

11. For these reasons it has been demonstrated that the existing structures could not be reused in the event the construction of either or both of the new stable block and the new dwellings, and that the proposal would minimise visual intrusion and be compatible with the character and appearance of the rural area. Consequently, the appeal site would be a suitable location for equine development, and it would be acceptable for the proposed development. The proposal would therefore accord with EHDP Policies GBR2 and CFLR6, as well as EHDP Policy DES3 which requires development proposals to demonstrate how they will retain, protect and enhance existing landscape features.

Other Matters

12. The eastern end of the access to the appeal site runs adjacent to two Grade II listed buildings, White House and White House Lodge, which are both historic buildings. White House is a 19C house with elaborate stucco Renaissance classical detailing, while White House Lodge is a 19C octagonal gate lodge. The historical nature and architectural detailing of these buildings contribute strongly to their significance. The proposed stable would be located a significant distance from these buildings and would be screened by existing vegetation on the boundary of the field. As such the proposal would not affect the setting of the listed buildings.
13. The Council expressed concern that inadequate facilities would be present to support the welfare of the horses once the existing stables have been demolished. However, in its statement of case the Council confirms that this did not form a reason for refusal. This matter is therefore not determinative in this case.

Conditions

14. The Council has suggested a series of conditions, which I have considered against the tests set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. In some cases, I have edited the suggested condition to improve precision and enforceability.
15. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have attached a condition specifying the approved plans to provide certainty.
16. The submissions of details of the external materials of the stables is not necessary, as the existing stables will be reused to construct the new stable block. However, a condition securing the reuse of the existing materials is necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.
17. Details of the hard surfacing materials and proposed landscaping have been supplied on the submitted Landscape Proposals (drawing no 1279.25.1), and as such it is not necessary to attach conditions requiring the submission of these details. However, a condition would be necessary to secure the implementation and retention of the approved details.
18. To safeguard the rural setting, a condition is necessary which restricts the use of the stables to the private use of horses incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house known as White House Lodge. A commercial use could raise additional issues and for this reason it would need to be assessed under a fresh application.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions listed above.

D Ellis

INSPECTOR