

Rob Duncan  
Planning  
Consultancy



# **PLANNING STATEMENT**

**LAND AT DOUBLE GATES NURSERY  
BROWN EDGE**

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

**Site Address:**

Land at Double Gates Nursery, Sytch Road, Brown Edge, ST6 8QX

**Applicant:**

Mr. A. Beardmore

**Proposal:**

Retention of stable block comprising of 3no. stables and 2no. tack rooms

**Planning Statement:**

**Date Issued:** 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**Job Reference:** RDP/2020/127

**Report Prepared By:**

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. A. Beardmore to seek full planning permission for the retention of a stable block that has been constructed on land at Double Gates Nursery, Sytch Road, Brown Edge.
- 1.2 The stables were erected in July 2019 with the applicant believing that they did not require planning permission. Upon being notified of the need for planning permission by the Local Authority, the applicant has sought to regularise the situation by submitting this application.
- 1.3 The stable block is located some 205 metres to the southwest of its vehicular access with Sytch Road and is enclosed along its northern and western boundaries by a mature field hedgerow. Two additional stable blocks are located to the immediate south, which are subject of a separate planning application. The building is orientated so that its long axis runs broadly east / west and has its stable and tack room doors facing south towards an existing courtyard area.
- 1.4 The building is constructed from timber, and encompasses a typical stable design, with front overhanging canopy. The building stands to a maximum height of 3.1 metres and occupies a total floor area of 49 square metres. The stable building is used for DIY livery purposes.

## **2 Site & Surroundings**

- 2.1 The application site is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt, with the main settlement of Brown Edge located to its northeast, east and southeast. The site is flat in nature and is enclosed along its northern and western boundaries by mature field hedgerows. Two existing stable blocks are located to the immediate south.
- 2.2 Further mature hedgerows enclose the eastern site boundary, beyond the existing vehicular access track which connects the site with Sytch Road to the north. A public footpath (Brown Edge 15) follows the route of this existing vehicular access, continuing on in a southeasterly direction.
- 2.3 The land to the south of the site remains flat for a short period, before dropping away in a southerly direction. To the northeast of the site, approximately 135 metres away, lie two small brick and tile buildings that are used for livery purposes, having been granted consent for such purposes under application SMD/2010/1120.

### **3 Planning Policy**

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for this area comprises the recently adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan relates to ‘Development Principles’ and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- *a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, including starter homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities*
- *quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers;*
- *easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community;*
- *increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce;*

- *a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment;*
- *development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings;*
- *development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations.*
- *support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.*

3.3 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. It goes on to state that the Council will continue to exercise strict control over inappropriate development, allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

3.4 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should:

1. *be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;*
2. *be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance;*
3. *create, where appropriate, attractive, active, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate public spaces, green infrastructure including making provision for networks of multi-functional new and existing green space (both public and private), landscaping, public art, 'designing out crime' initiatives and the principles of Active Design;*
4. *incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the impact of the development;*
5. *protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, overbearing development, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution;*
6. *promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate;*
7. *provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use;*

8. *require new developments to be well integrated for car, pedestrian and cycle use as well as other sustainable transport links;*
9. *ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available, and where necessary enhanced, to enable the development to proceed;*
10. *ensure, where appropriate, equality of access and use for all sections of the community;*
11. *be served by high speed broadband (>30mbps) unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with Next Generation Access Network providers that this would not be possible, practical or economically viable. In all circumstances during construction of the site sufficient and suitable ducting should be provided within the site and to the property to facilitate ease of installation at a future date.*

#### **4 Other Material Considerations**

##### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out guidance, inter-alia, in respect of safeguarding the Green Belt and securing high quality design. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application and is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment section below.

##### **SMD/2013/1081 – Land at Clough Lane, Werrington**

- 4.2 This application granted consent for the construction of a stable block on land within the Green Belt on the edge of Werrington. The conclusions of the Local Authority in its assessment of that application are material considerations in the assessment of this application and are discussed within the Planning Assessment section below.

##### **SMD/2018/0061 – Springs Cottage Farm, Bagnall**

- 4.3 This application granted consent for the erection of a stable block and manege on land within the Green Belt on the edge of Bagnall. The conclusions of the Local Authority in its assessment of that application are material considerations in the assessment of this application and are discussed within the Planning Assessment section below.

##### **SMD/2018/0796 – Land at Baileys Bank, Biddulph**

- 4.4 This application granted consent for the erection of a stable block and manege on land within the Green Belt on the edge of Gillow Heath. The conclusions of the Local Authority in its assessment of that application are material considerations in the assessment of this application and are discussed within the Planning Assessment section below.

## 5 Planning Assessment

### Green Belt

- 5.1 The application seeks consent to retain the existing stable block that has been constructed on this site. The stable block comprises of 3no. stables and 2no. tack rooms, is used for DIY livery purposes, and occupies a total floor area of 49 square metres. The site is located within the Green Belt wherein there is a presumption against the erection of new buildings. Paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework nevertheless identifies a number of exceptions, which includes:

*“b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it”*

- 5.2 The stable block the subject of this application is considered to constitute an appropriate facility for outdoor recreation. Whilst its use for livery purposes could be considered in some circumstances to be commercial in nature as it generates income, it is important to note that these stables operate on a DIY livery basis. Consequently, the people using the stables are the individual owners of the horses themselves, who are using the stables to keep their horses in order to pursue their hobby of horse riding on the surrounding land.
- 5.3 Paragraph 145 of the NPPF makes **no distinction** between appropriate facilities for outdoor recreation for private or commercial use, and had it intended that such facilities should be restricted to private outdoor sport and recreation then it would have said so. However, it plainly does not, and given

that the building is used for the keeping of horses, by the owners of the horses themselves, the stable block is considered to constitute an appropriate facility for outdoor recreation. The British Horse Society recommends that 0.4 hectares of land should be provided for each horse. The applicant's land holding extends to some 8 hectares, and thus is capable of accommodating up to 20 horses in line with the aforementioned guidance. The stable block subject of this application (3 stables), coupled with the existing livery stables to the north (4 stables) does not exceed those provisions.

- 5.4 In order to constitute appropriate development, the stables must also be found to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it (paragraph 145b of the NPPF refers). The stable block is sited tight up to its northern and western boundaries which comprise of mature field hedgerows. These hedgerows serve to significantly reduce the visual impact of the development. The stable block also has a good visual relationship to the main built up area of Brown Edge, with views of the development from the nearby public footpath viewing the development in the context of the built-up area behind. With an overall floor area of 49 square metres, and a maximum ridge height of 3.1 metres, the development is considered to be small-scale in nature, and will not materially detract from the openness of the Green Belt of the five purposes of including land within it.
- 5.5 In consideration of this matter I draw attention to a number of other stable developments permitted elsewhere within the Staffordshire Moorlands, where similar conclusions were reached. These are discussed in turn below:

### **SMD/2013/1081 – Clough Lane, Werrington**

- 5.6 This application granted consent for the erection of a stable block with a floor area of 101m<sup>2</sup>, comprising of 6no. stables and large tack room arranged in an ‘L’ shaped form. The building was located adjacent to a single storey clubhouse, and was found to constitute an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt, the Local Authority concluding that:

*“The essential stabling of horses within the Green Belt in connection with an outdoor sport or recreation use would not be inappropriate in principle, provided that it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The proposal for six stables and a tack room expressed as a more modest loosebox arrangement is considered to be commensurate with the 8.5ha landholding and overcomes previous concerns in respect of the substantial massing of the American Barn style of development. Consequently, the proposal is considered to be appropriate development within the Green Belt to accord with Saved Local Plan Policy N2 and the NPPF”*

- 5.7 The site at Clough Lane is readily visible from the both Clough Lane to the east and Ford Hayes Lane to the south, whereas the current application is afforded much better screening, and is only visible from the adjacent public footpath, with no adverse views from any of the nearby roads. The approved scheme at Clough Lane was also of a considerably larger size (101m<sup>2</sup>) than the stable building proposed in this application (49m<sup>2</sup>) and yet was found to constitute appropriate development within the Green Belt. The Local Authority’s approval of application SMD/2013/1081 is therefore considered to weigh in favour of the proposed development.

**SMD/2018/0061 – Springs Cottage Farm, Bagnall**

- 5.8 This application granted consent for the erection of a stable block with a floor area of 91.5m<sup>2</sup>, comprising of three stables and a tack room. The stable block was located within a field, distant from nearby surrounding development, and was found to constitute an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt, the Local Authority concluding that:

*“The stable block is also considered to be relatively modest in size and as the Agent points out is similar in size to one approved by the Council in a similar position in 2011 under reference 11/00870 but never built. Maneges are generally held to be appropriate in the Green Belt. Although this manege is unusually large it does nevertheless generally preserve openness. Overall the judgement is that the scheme does preserve openness and does not conflict with the purpose of including land in the Green Belt. It is appropriate development, in accordance with Policy SS6c and the NPPF. It is acceptable in principle”*

- 5.9 The approved stable block at Thorney Edge Farm was of a larger footprint than the building proposed in this application and no less visually prominent and was found to constitute an appropriate form of development. The Local Authority’s approval of this application reinforces the assertion that the proposed stable block amounts to an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt and weighs in favour of the proposed development.

**SMD/2018/0796 – Land at Baileys Bank, Gillow Heath**

- 5.10 This application granted consent for the erection of a new stable block with a floor area of 45.6m<sup>2</sup>. The stable block was located alongside an existing stable block, in a highly conspicuous location visible from the existing

vehicular access running along the western boundary of the site. In granting consent the Local Authority concluded that:

*“Stables are regarded as appropriate for equestrian uses on the land and I consider the principle of the proposal is therefore appropriate and would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt”*

And that:

*“The amended proposal showing a complete timber stables structure is not inappropriate in the Green Belt and would not harm either the rural character and appearance of the area or Green Belt openness”.*

- 5.11 The approved stable block at Baileys Bank was far more visually conspicuous than the building the subject of this application, with no meaningful boundary vegetation to minimise its visual impact. It was also of a broadly comparative size to the stable block which is subject of this application. The Local Authority’s approval of this application is therefore considered to reinforce the assertion that the proposed stable block amounts to an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt.
- 5.12 Having regard to the considerations set out above it is considered that the stable block will not materially detract from the openness of the Green Belt or the five purposes of including land within it, and that consequently the proposal amounts to a sustainable form of development in accordance with the provisions of policy SS10 of the Local Plan and paragraph 145 of the NPPF.

### **Visual Impact**

- 5.13 The scale, massing and design of the stable block is typical of this kind of development, and has a muted, low-key impact. The siting of the building adjacent to the existing hedgerows that form the western and northern boundaries of the site help to soften its visual impact and anchor the development into its surroundings. The stables are visible from the public footpath that runs to the immediate east of the building, but they are features which one regularly sees within the rural area, and do not appear intrusive or incongruous.
- 5.14 On approach along the public footpath from the north, the existing boundary hedgerow provides an effective softening of the stables, which by virtue of its timber construction, assimilates well with the surrounding vegetation. On approach along the public footpath from the south the stable building is largely obscured by the presence of an adjacent stable block which is the subject of a separate application. However, even if that stable block were not present, in views from the south the stable block is seen against the backdrop of the existing dwellings along Sytch Road to the north, which lie at a higher level to the application site, and which are also predominantly two storey in nature.
- 5.15 The applicant is furthermore agreeable to undertaking additional planting to provide an indigenous hedgerow screen along the southern edge of the most southerly stable block in order to soften the impact of the development on the character of the area. Such landscaping can be secured by way of a suitably worded planning condition, and in doing so the development will meet the requirements of policies SS1 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

### **Residential Amenity**

- 5.16 Owing to the location of the stable block some 160 metres from the nearest residential properties to the east, the development will have no adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers by virtue of noise and general disturbance. The development gives rise to the coming and going of vehicles associated with the DIY Livery use of the site, but this has not be substantially increased to a point where it causes material harm to the amenity of residential properties on either side of the vehicular access where it meets Sytch Road. The development is therefore consistent with the relevant provisions of policy DC1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

### **Highway Safety**

- 5.17 The application site benefits from an existing vehicular access direct onto Sytch Road which serves the applicant's existing livery buildings, as well as the proposed stable block. The access benefits from good visibility in both directions on egress and is wide enough for two vehicles to pass one another at the point of entry off Sytch Road. Within the site itself is ample room for the parking and manouvering of vehicles, and consequently the proposed development will not give rise to any material harm to highway safety in the locality, and thus is in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 108 and 109 of the NPPF.

## **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 The stable block constructed on site is considered to constitute a sustainable and appropriate form of development within the Green Belt on the basis that it amounts to an appropriate facility for outdoor recreation that does not materially detract from the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the five purposes of including land within it. The building is of a scale, massing, design and type of construction that is firmly in keeping with the rural character of the area within which it is located, and the development will not detract from the character and appearance of the area or the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers. The proposal is also acceptable from a highway safety perspective.
- 6.2 The development is therefore considered to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to support the proposal and grant planning permission to retain the stable block as constructed.