DELEGATED AGENDA NO

PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE 2 SEPTEMBER 2009

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

08/3620/COU

Stables Shed 2, Ouston Moor Farm, Darlington Back Lane Permanent change of use from skinning shed to Horse breaking, training, stud and livery yard.

Expiry Date 9 February 2009

SUMMARY

Planning permission is sought for the permanent use of land as buildings in connection with an equine business. The site was previously granted temporary approval for a similar business operation, now expanded, although this earlier approval lapsed and the site is currently operating without the benefit of planning permission.

Several objections have been received in respect to this and another application on the same site for the erection of a residential dwelling. Objections relevant to this proposal mainly relate to the business proposal not being viable, to the previous application being lapsed, to previous conditions associated with the site not being addressed and to the general statements made in respect to the nature of the business.

No objections have been raised from the Councils Environmental Health or Urban Design Teams subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

The proposal relates to the permanent use of the site and associated buildings in connection with the equine business. Equine related businesses are generally supported by both local and national planning policy within rural locations as they relate to a land based use which can contribute to the rural economy. The buildings on site (in part) already have as a permanent presence as a result of earlier approvals and as such their impact on the countryside is accepted.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning application 08/3620/COU be Approved subject to the following conditions:-

01 Approved plans

The development hereby approved shall be in accordance with the following approved plan(s); unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Plan Reference Number Date on Plan

SBC0001 15 December 2008 0883/02 15 December 2008 15 December 2008 15 December 2008

Reason: To define the consent.

02. No burning of waste

There shall be no burning of waste at the site except in accordance with a scheme of waste burning to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the occupants of nearby properties in accordance with the requirements of saved Policy GP1 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

03. Removal of unauthorised structures

Within 2 months from the date of this approval the 2 no. static caravans located at the site which did not form part of previous planning application ref: 03/2978/COU shall be removed from the site. Should the static caravans not be removed within this timeframe then the use of the site hereby approved shall cease immediately and no further use of the site shall occur until the caravans have been removed from the site to the written satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to remove unauthorised structures from the site and adequately control the level of development at the site in accordance with saved Policy GP1 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan and PPS 7 (Sustainable development in rural areas).

04. Access improvement works

Within 3 months from the date of this approval a scheme shall have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority in writing detailing access improvement works at the junction of Drovers Lane and the site access track. The scheme shall include details of achievable sightlines.

- a) If acceptable to the Local Planning Authority, the Local Planning Authority shall agree this in writing within 8 weeks from the date of the schemes submission and the approved scheme shall have been implemented on site within 8 weeks following the written agreement being issued by the Local Planning Authority.
- b) If unacceptable to the Local Planning Authority, the Local Planning Authority shall have advised the applicant in writing within 8 weeks following its submission. Should no further scheme be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority within 21weeks from the date of this approval then the use on site shall cease immediately and no further use of the site shall occur until such a scheme has been both agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and implemented on site to the written satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensue adequate highway safety is achieved in accordance with the requirements of saved Policy GP1 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

The proposed scheme has been considered against the policies and documents identified below. It is considered that the scheme accords with these documents as the proposal is of an appropriate use type for its location, will diversify the rural economy and relates to the reuse of an existing building. Furthermore it is considered that adequate parking and access can be provided and that the use would not lead to a loss of privacy or amenity for the nearest residents. There are no material planning considerations, which indicate that a decision should be otherwise, therefore the application is recommended for approval.

Stockton on Tees Local Plan

GP1 General Principles, EN13 Limits to Development, EN11 Cleveland Community Forest and EN20 Reuse of Rural Buildings

PPS 7: Sustainable development in rural areas

BACKGROUND

- 1. \$1775/82 - Erection of stock rearing building. Approved.
- 2. 92/0344/P - Change of use of part of agricultural building to warehouse grading selection salting and packing of cattle hides and sheep skins. Application submitted by the Hambleton Hide and Skin Company. Approved on the 15th May 1992 subject to conditions, including the following:

Condition 03

The existing access to Redmarshall Lane C138 shall be improved within 4 months of this consent in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Condition 04

Sightlines of 3 metres by 120 metres shall be provided within 4 months of this consent at the junction of the point of access with the highway and shall remain unobstructed at all times with no structure or planting being placed or positioned between the line of the visibility splay and the highway.

3. 92/0345/P - Change of use of part of agricultural building to warehouse for sorting and packing of sheep skins and wool. Application submitted by Yarmpel Ltd. Approved on the 15th May 1992 subject to conditions. Appeal made in respect to conditions 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in respect to a temporary permission; improvement works to the access onto Redmarshall Road and Drainage of the site. The appeal was in part successful in that the conditions relating to the access and drainage works were amended to allow an increased time period for their implementation. The amended conditions in respect to access works read as follows:

Condition 03

The existing access to Redmarshall Lane C138 shall be improved within 6 months of this consent in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Condition 04

Sightlines of 3 metres by 120 metres shall be provided within 6 months of this consent at the junction of the point of access with the highway and shall remain unobstructed at all times with no structure or planting being placed or positioned between the line of the visibility splay and the highway.

- 4. 03/1686/P - Change of use from storage / parking of animal skins to livery and residential care stables for the breaking and training of horses and associated. Application submitted by Miss A Dobinson. Withdrawn 15th October 2003.
- 5. 03/2978/COU - Change of use from skinning shed to horse breaking / training and associated livery yard and residential static caravan (revised application), Shed 2. Applicant A Dobinson. Approval granted 02.04.2004 subject to the conditions including:

A scheme detailing improvements to the sight-lines onto Drovers Lane which includes a programme for their implementation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by and thereafter implemented to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

This consent is granted for a temporary period of 3 years from the date hereof, which unless a renewal of consent is sought and granted the use shall cease and the land reinstated to its former condition.

Reason: The building is not considered suitable for permanent retention on this site.

The occupation of the static residential caravan hereby approved for a temporary period of three years shall be limited to a person solely working with the associated horse riding/breaking/livery facilities and to any resident dependants.

Reason: The site of the proposed dwelling is in an area where the Local Planning Authority consider that new residential development should be restricted to that which is essential in the interests of agriculture or forestry unless exceptional circumstances otherwise prevail.

(See appendix ref. 1 for application details and delegated report).

There are no details on file which indicate that any conditions were discharged on this application.

6. 08/3621/FUL - Application submitted for permanent workers dwelling. This application was not determined within the target date and the applicant has appealed against the non determination of the Local Planning Authority. This matter is now being considered by the Planning Inspectorate. (Hearing scheduled for the 6th October 2009). The Local Planning Authorities Hearing Statement for this application considers the application for a dwelling should be refused as in the main; as there is a lack of evidence to adequately demonstrate that its need is essential on site as required by national policy.

PROPOSAL

- 7. Planning permission is sought by Miss A Dobinson for the permanent change of use of the former animal skinning shed to a shed used in connection with Horse breaking, Training, Stud and a Livery Yard. The application has been submitted alongside another application for a workers dwelling on the site.
- 8. The application has been submitted with supporting information indicating that the business operates a stud enterprise as well as foaling mares, alongside a livery for the breaking and schooling of horses, including horses with behavioural problems and that the site also offers a fostering service as well as a horse sales service in respect to care, presentation and public viewing.
- 9. The submission indicates a future development plan which seeks to expand by purchasing the adjacent Ouston Moor Equestrian Centre which would increase livery opportunity by 25no (current numbers) up to 40 liveries and would provide a full sized outdoor and indoor arena, 2.9 miles of bridleways and it is intended a cross country course would be added. This adjacent operation and site does not fall within the application site boundary being considered.
- 10. The application forms indicate;
 - There are 10 car and 2 light goods parking spaces on site which will be retained.
 - That varying quantities of horse manure are stored on site and spread on the fields as organic fertiliser.
 - The business currently has 1 full time and 1 part time employee and intends this to increase to 2 full time and 1 part time employee.
 - The equine business operates 7am 9pm 7 days a week.

See appendix ref. 2 for Application details.

CONSULTATIONS

Consultations were notified and comments received are set out below:-

Parish Council (summarised)

- 11. Strongly opposes the application.
- 12 The original application was granted for a temporary period as the building was not considered suitable for permanent retention on this site. No renewal application was submitted and the land should therefore be reinstated to its former use.
- 13 The previous approval did not relate to stud and horse sales and the applicant has therefore been working outside of the previous approval.
- 14 The site is too small for the proposed activities unless intensive feeding is undertaken. The adjacent Ouston Moor Equestrian centre has not been purchased to date and may not happen. There is no evidence that the business is viable long term.
- 15. The development is too large for a small unsustainable village given that workers, visitors and all deliveries and other essentials have to travel via unclassified roads. The access onto Drovers Lane is at a particularly poor position. The size of the development is not in keeping with the existing unsustainable rural development in Redmarshall and is contrary to the Future of Rural Villages in Stockton on Tees's recommendations.
- 16. It is indicated that there is a low usage at the site, but on several occasions recently in excess of 6 cars have been noted at the site.
- 17. The development would increase traffic flow on an already dangerous route.
- 18. The use would not economically benefit the village whilst the lack of sustainability has also been cited by inspectors when refusing appeals. The application does not evidence a viable business case as there are 3 livery yards within 2km of the site.

Campaign to Protect Rural England (summarised)

Their statements advise that they have been trading for over 5 years as a stud and horse sales business which is something they have never had permission for. In recent years six stable / stud blocks have been erected within the locality and we consider this history should not be used to further justify inappropriate development in open countryside.

Urban Design Engineers

20. Drovers Lane is subject to the national speed limit of 60 mph at this point and improved junction sight lines of 2.4m x 215m looking south east and 2.4m x 160m looking north west are required. This may require the removal of a small section of hedgerow. Therefore, I have no objections subject to the requisite sight lines being achieved.

Environmental Health Unit

No objection in principle to the development, however, I do have some concerns and would recommend the conditions as detailed be imposed on the development should it be approved.

Open burning

Spatial Plans Manager

22. Original application 03/2978/COU identified that the consent be granted for the Change Of Use to a Horse breaking, training, stud and livery yard for a temporary period of three years as the building 'was not considered suitable for retention on the site. Consideration should be made whether these comments are still relevant.

23. No Objections

PUBLICITY

- 24. Five letters of objection have been received in respect to the application from the following;
 - A.W. Evans, 1 Coniston Crescent Redmarshall,
 - Mr & Mrs Lambert, Barford Cottage, Redmarshall,
 - Mrs D Bell, 6 Derwent Close, Redmarshall,
 - Mr S Bell, 6 Derwent Close, Redmarshall,
 - Mr J Turnbull, 9 Derwent Close, Redmarshall

Some of these comments received relate to an associated application (08/3621/FUL) for a workers dwelling at the site which is currently being considered by the Planning Inspectorate. Comments received which relate to this proposal for a change of use from skinning shed to horse breaking, training, stud and livery yard are summarised as follows;

- Three year temporary approval was granted under 03/2978/COU for horse breaking
 / training and associated livery yard and siting of a residential static caravan on the
 2nd April 2004 not 2003 as stated by the applicant and not for stud or horse sales
 business. Therefore, has this business been trading without permission.
- The conditions of the previous approval related to the following;
 - Condition 2 of the approval related to approved plans,
 - Condition 3 required sight line improvements onto Drovers Lane
 - Condition 4 3 year temporary approval
 - Condition 5 Restricted residential occupation to those working in association with the business.
- Query is made as to whether condition 3 was implemented and whether a renewal
 consent was sought in 2007 following the expiry of the 3 year temporary permission
 and if not why was the land not reinstated in accordance with the requirements of
 the condition. What confidence can the public have that conditions would not be
 flouted were approval granted.
- It is estimated that only 10 horses could be located within the shed as a result of its size and that far more horses being stabled in the shed without approval and the storage of feed and bedding is taking place in the other shed.
- With 8 stallions standing, horses for sale and 25 liveries the current operation appears to be far in excess of the development permitted on the 2nd April 2004.
- Were permission to be granted, conditions are clearly not appropriate as they were not discharged in respect to application 03/2978/COU.
- Of the 3.77 acres shown for the site, 3.52 acres is the access track and only
 0.25acres lies alongside the sheds. The land that is owned by the applicant is
 insufficient to adequately support the number of horses that are in the application
 unless intensive feeding is undertaken. The applicant states that she intends
 buying part of the adjacent Ouston Moor Equestrian Centre. The land for expansion
 should have been bought first and then the plans submitted whilst the Ouston Moor

Equestrian Centre is not adjacent (being 1.2km away) and the sale may not happen. It is illogical to make a business case for something which is not owned.

- There is no evidence that the business is viable long term and the functional need was not established in 2004.
- The original temporary permission was given for a business that was supposed to be developing and which expected profits from hiring out a carriage for weddings. This has proved to be a failed business case. This case meets the criteria for allowing development within the countryside.
- Parking areas are approximately 1000sqm not the 1400sqm as stated.
- There are 6 existing stud / stable blocks within 1500m radius of Redmarshall which have been built over the last few years and it is believed the majority are trying to get development in the open countryside. Farmers are also building sheds away from their existing sheds, no doubt with the aim of getting a workers dwelling built in the future. The application does not evidence a viable business case as there are 3 livery yards within 2 miles.
- PPS7 requires strict control of such development suggesting there should be adequate guidance to indicate that the proposed business would be financially sound and that it should be scrutinised thoroughly with the aim of detecting attempts of abuse. This is a recreational activity; it is not for farming, forestry or agriculture and it is highly likely that trade will reduce as a result of the recession. There is no evidence that this proposal will support the local economy, meet the needs of the local community or be financially sound.
- The site is outside of the development limits for Redmarshall whilst the use would not economically benefit the village only to the applicant / owner. The lack of sustainability has also been cited by Inspectors when refusing appeals. This is not a suitable area for a stud business and it is not for farm diversification.
- Some of the letters of support as submitted by the applicant seem very strange. Some are from stable owners who are trying or have succeeded in getting houses on their own sites whilst one is from Lewes on the south coast whom has advised they have sent many horses over the years. Others profess to sending horses to what is a very small business with abysmal conditions for horses when more suitable facilities are likely to be closer to them. There are 6 British Horse Society establishments within the area (this is not one of them) and this business has been reported to the RSPCA a number of times. The British Horse society recommend 1 - 1.5 acres of pasture for every horse and the establishment has about 3 acres and therefore the maximum no of horses which can be kept here humanely is 3, hence horses are left all day in a waterlogged field. As the majority of these letters of support (submitted by the applicant) are not local to Redmarshall this proposal does not constitute meeting a local need.
- It is requested that this unsustainable application be refused and that the land be reinstated to its former condition.
- Drovers Lane is an extremely dangerous road with accidents occurring on a regular basis. This proposal will result in long and awkward to manoeuvre vehicles entering and existing the site and any increase in activity will exacerbate this with disastrous consequences and.

PLANNING POLICY

Where an adopted or approved development plan contains relevant policies, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permissions shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan(s) for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant Development Plans is the Stockton on Tees Local Plan (STLP), Tees Valley Structure Plan (TVSP) and the Regional Spatial Strategy (RRS).

The following planning policies are considered to be relevant to the consideration of this application:-

Policy GP1 – General Principles

Proposals for development will be assessed in relation to the policies of the Cleveland Structure Plan and the following criteria as appropriate:

- (i) The external appearance of the development and its relationship with the surrounding area:
- (ii) The effect on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties;
- (iii) The provision of satisfactory access and parking arrangements;
- (iv) The contribution of existing trees and landscape features;
- (v) The need for a high standard of landscaping;
- (vi) The desire to reduce opportunities for crime;
- (vii) The intention to make development as accessible as possible to everyone;
- (viii) The quality, character and sensitivity of existing landscapes and buildings;
- (ix) The effect upon wildlife habitats;
- (x) The effect upon the public rights of way network.

Policy EN11 – Cleveland Community Forest

The planting of trees, of locally appropriate species, will be encouraged within the area indicated on the proposals map as community forest. In considering applications for planning permission in the community forest area, the Local Planning Authority will give weight to the degree to which the applicant has demonstrated that full account has been taken of existing trees on site, together with an appraisal of the possibilities of creating new woodland or undertaking additional tree planting. In the light of the appraisal the Local Planning Authority will require a landscaping scheme to be agreed which makes a contribution to the community forest.

Policy EN13 – Limits to Development

Development outside the limits to development may be permitted where:

- (i) It is necessary for a farming or forestry operation; or
- (ii) It falls within policies EN20 (reuse of buildings) or Tour 4 (Hotel conversions); or In all the remaining cases and provided that it does not harm the character or appearance of the countryside; where:
- (iii) It contributes to the diversification of the rural economy; or
- (iv) It is for sport or recreation; or
- (v) It is a small scale facility for tourism.

Policy EN20 – Reuse of Rural Buildings

The conversion, adaptation and re-use of rural buildings for commercial, industrial, tourism, sport and recreational uses will be permitted providing that:

- (i) The proposed use can largely be accommodated within the existing building, without significant demolition and rebuilding; and
- (ii) Any alterations or extensions are limited in scale, and do not adversely affect the form and character of the existing building, and
- (iii) There is no adverse effect on the character of the area: and
- (iv) Where the building has been constructed under permitted development rights, it has been legitimately used for agricultural purposes; and

- (v) Access, manoeuvring space and parking provision for the new use can be accommodated without being intrusive; and
- (vi) There is no adverse effect on any safe refuge of protected species such as bats or barn owls.

Policy TR15 - Highway Design and Parking

The design of highways required in connection with new development and changes of use will provide for all the traffic generated by the development while the provision of off street parking will normally be required to accord with the standards set out in the Stockton on Tees Borough Council Design Guide and Specification, Edition No. 1.

PPS 7: Sustainable development in rural areas - August 2004

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 25. The site is located approximately 0.8km to the south of Redmarshall Village, served off a long access track which connects the site to Drovers Lane.
- 26. The site is made up of 2 large sheds, a large open car park area adjacent to the buildings and a field to the north of the buildings. At the time of the case officers site visit, the 2 large sheds were being used as a stable building and a hay / store building. Other structures on site included 3 no static caravans.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 27. The application seeks a permanent change of use from a skinning shed to Horse Breaking, training stud and livery. The application has been submitted alongside a proposal for a permanent residential dwelling (08/3621/FUL) which is now being considered for determination by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 28. The previous approval for the sites use (03/2978/COU) has now lapsed as it was granted for a temporary period of 3 years. In addition, National Guidance has changed and this proposal is therefore required to be considered against the current Planning Policies and guidance.
- 29. There are several key issues to consider relating to the principle of the development, the business status of the proposals, the impact on the countryside and surrounding properties, highway matters and other ancillary issues. These are considered as follows;

Principle of development

- 30. The site lies outside of the limits of development as defined within the Stockton on Tees Local Plan. Within such areas, Local Plan Policy EN13 guides new development, indicating that new development in such areas may be permitted where it is necessary for farming or forestry, relates to the reuse of an existing building (with additional restraints), it contributes to the diversification of the rural economy or it is for sport or recreation. The only relevant criteria of policy EN13 relates to whether the proposal would contribute to the diversification of the rural economy.
- 31. PPS7 guides on development within the countryside. It is considered that PPS 7 is only supportive of equine related development where it can be justified to be a business operation which has a specific requirement to be located at a given location i.e. a functional test. Furthermore, PPS 7 requires strict control of such development suggesting that there should be adequate evidence to indicate that the proposed business would be financially

- sound. Without this, question is raised with respect to the ability for the business to operate and therefore its impact on the countryside.
- 32. Policy EN20 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan allows for the reuse of existing rural buildings for commercial purposes providing that the uses can be largely accommodated within the building, extensions are limited, there is no adverse affect on the character of the area, access and manoeuvring is adequate and there is no impact on protected species (bats and owls). Whilst the building is considered to have a detrimental impact on the character of the surrounding area, it is an existing building with no extensions being proposed. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with the principles of this policy.
- 33. The proposed change of use relates to existing buildings and an established business. Whilst objection has been raised to the previous temporary approval for a similar use having expired, the facts remain the same in this regard. The financial statements submitted with the proposal relating to the permanent residential dwelling on the site suggest that the business has operated with profit within the last 3 years. In view of the proposal demonstrating it contributes to the rural economy and it being an appropriate land based use, it is considered that the principle of the use accords with both Local and National Policy.

Impact of the building

- 34. Whilst PPS 7 guides on the impact of buildings within the countryside, this proposal relates to the change of use of an existing building, being an existing landscape feature, and as such, the appearance of the building has already been established within this location. Whilst the building is not of a high quality appearance and unlikely to be suitable were it being proposed as a new build construction, it will serve a functional need.
- 35. The reasoning for the previous temporary approval was due to the 'The building is not considered suitable for permanent retention on this site'. This previous application was submitted for the change of use of the buildings as well as the siting of a static caravan and it is considered that the reference to the unsuitability of the building as a permanent fixture related to the caravan and not the 'shed 2'. In their initial permission, there is no requirement for the sheds to be removed upon cessation of their use. In view of these matters it is considered that the reuse of the building would be in accordance with the requirements of PPS7.

Residential Amenity

36. The nearest residential property is a significant distance away (approx. 0.7km) whilst it is considered that the nature of the use is unlikely to have any impacts which would be significantly detrimental to residential amenity.

Traffic and highway safety

37. The previous temporary approval was granted with a condition attached relating to the implementation of a highway improvement scheme at the point of access onto Drovers Lane. It would appear that this condition was not discharged and the use had therefore effectively been operating without addressing this matter. This aside, this proposal relates to a similar business to that considered before and using the same point of access onto Drovers Lane. The Head of Technical Services requested additional information in respect to vehicles accessing the site and the opening times of the livery yard, which has been submitted and considered accordingly. Based on the additional information submitted, no objection has been raised subject to control over sight lines being achieved.

Other Matters

- 38. The Councils Environmental Health Officer has raised no objections to the application although has advised that a condition should be imposed to prevent open burning of waste at the site.
- 39. There are currently 3no. Static caravans located on the site, for 2 of which, no approval has been previously granted. These do not relate to any part of the current planning application and there is no apparent justification for the siting of these 2 no. static caravans. As such, their removal is being required by condition.
- 40. Buildings within the countryside are allowed under special circumstances and justification. Were there no justification then buildings would not be permitted. In order to ensure removal of buildings from such locations in instances where they no longer have a suitable use, it would be appropriate to require the buildings to be removed upon cessation of use. However, these are existing buildings and as such, it is considered that such a requirement would be excessive to impose on this proposal which relates to the use of the site as against the erection of the buildings.

CONCLUSION

- 41. The proposed change of use relates to an established business and use (albeit associated with a lapsed temporary approval) and an existing buildings. The use has a need for buildings of this nature and is considered to be a land based activity which will contribute to the rural economy.
- 42. The proposal has adequate parking on site, and subject to imposition of conditions controlling burning of waste on site and a highway improvement scheme, is considered to be acceptable.
- 43. As such, the permanent use is considered to accord with saved Policies GP1, EN13 and EN20 of the Local Plan and guidance contained within PPS 7.

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Financial Implications – As report

Environmental Implications – As report

Legal Implications – As report

Community Safety Implications – As report

Human Rights Implications –

The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report

Background Papers

Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas Adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan (June 1997)

WARD AND WARD COUNCILLORS

Ward Western Parishes
Ward Councillor Councillor F. G. Salt,