

3/08/1752/FP – Erection of New Detached Stable Block and manège at Land at Cauthery Lane, Great Amwell, Hertfordshire for Mr Martin Berry

Date of Receipt: 6.10.08

Type: Full

Parish: GREAT AMWELL

Ward: GREAT AMWELL

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Three Year Time Limit (IT12)
2. Samples of Materials (2E12)
3. External Timberwork (2E16)
4. Lighting Details (2E27)
5. Tree Retention and Protection (4P05)
6. Hedge Retention and Protection (4P06)
7. Landscape Design Proposals (4P12)
8. Landscape Works Implementation (4P13)
9. Private Use of Stables (5U11)
10. Conservation Area (Clearance of Site) (8L13)

Directives

1. Other Legislation (01OL)
2. You are advised to contact the Environmental Health Unit at Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford. Tel: 01279 655261 with regard to the storage and disposal of stable waste.

Summary of Reasons for Decision:

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular policies GBC1, ENV1,

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ENV2, BH4 and BH6. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that permission should be granted.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The site comprises a large open grassed field of irregular shape, amounting to approximately 5 acres in area and situated between Pepper Hill and Catherly lane in Great Amwell. There is an existing building on the site, constructed in timber with corrugated iron sheeting externally. This is believed to have been formerly used for stabling and associated storage, while the remainder of the site is open grazing land. The application site is shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.2 The application seeks permission for the construction of five stables, a tack room, feed store and further storage room to replace the existing building.
- 1.3 The site is located within the Great Amwell Conservation Area and within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

2.0 Site History

- 2.1 There is no recent planning history for the site. In 1958 permission was refused for residential development (3/58/0902/FP) on the site, and infilling of the old gravel workings was approved in 1972 (3/72/1930/FP).

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 Hertfordshire Highways have advised that if the scheme is simply a like for like replacement, there is no justifiable reason to raise concerns in a highway context. If the use is for the personal use of the applicant, then traffic movements would be minimal, but if the development is to be used as a commercial enterprise with livery and/or a riding school, then the traffic generation could be quite significant. In the absence of any further information, any permission granted should be conditional upon the site not being used for any commercial activity but restricted to the personal enjoyment of the applicant.
- 3.2 The Environmental Health Unit does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

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- 3.3 The Council's Landscape Officer has no objection in principle to the erection of stables as proposed. He does however raise concerns in respect of adequate protection of the trees, and the provision of hardstanding around the stable block. He also recommends that conditions be imposed on any permission granted to ensure the provision of a new landscaping scheme.
- 3.4 The Council's Conservation Officer has confirmed that he has no objection to the proposal. He has concerns with respect to the roof materials proposed which can be overcome by way of planning condition.

4.0 Parish Council Representations

- 4.1 Great Amwell Parish Council considers the proposal to be unacceptable as it represents a potential commercial use of this site. They argue that the size of the site is not sufficient to accommodate the number of stables, horses and associated facilities (e.g. hay storage). The Parish Council therefore recommends that the planning application be refused.

5.0 Other Representations

- 5.1 The application was advertised by means of a site notice and neighbour notification letters.
- 5.2 Representations have been received from the nearest adjoining occupier at The Cottage, Cautherly Lane (Councillor Janet Mayes) on her own behalf as well as the local district councillor. She indicates that, since at least 1974, the field has been used either to graze cattle or other animals and she expresses concern that the proposed buildings will not be in character as agricultural use within the Green Belt. Additional concern is expressed around the possibility of extra visitors and traffic to the site, which is not in keeping with agricultural use. While it is accepted that the field is large enough for four or five horses to graze, the fact that stables are required would indicate an activity of business proportions, not in keeping with farming.

6.0 Policy

- 6.1 The relevant policies of the East Hertfordshire Local Plan Second Review are:

GBC1	Appropriate Development in the Green Belt
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV2	Landscaping

BH4	Demolition in Conservation Areas
BH6	New Developments in Conservation Areas

6.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 'Green Belts' and Planning Policy Statement 7 'Sustainable Developments in Rural Areas' are also relevant.

7.0 Considerations

7.1 The determining issues in this case related to the principle of the development in the Metropolitan Green Belt; its impact on the openness, character and appearance of the surrounding Conservation Area; highway safety and neighbour amenity

Principle

7.2 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and although Great Amwell is defined as a Category 2 Village within the Local Plan, this site is not considered to be within the built up part of the village and policy OSV2 does not therefore apply.

7.3 Green Belt policy GBC1 indicates that the construction of new buildings will be inappropriate development unless required for certain specified circumstances. One of those circumstances relates to the provision of essential small scale facilities for outdoor sports and recreation.

7.4 In this case, the proposed building is understood to be required for essential stabling and storage on the site for the applicants own horses. It would provide accommodation for 5 horses and is considered to be small scale in accordance with that policy. It is therefore considered, in principle, to be appropriate development within the Green Belt

Impact on openness/character of the Conservation Area

7.5 In this case, it is proposed to replace the existing corrugated iron building with an 'L' shaped stable block incorporating five stables, a tack room, feed store and a further storage room. The proposed stables are of standard design, no more than 3.5 metres high and would be of a higher standard of appearance than the building which they would replace. In this respect the proposal would satisfy the requirements of Policy ENV1 which requires that all development proposals will be expected to be of a high standard of design and layout and to reflect local distinctiveness.

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- 7.6 It would appear that the existing building on the site was previously used for stabling. It is a corrugated iron building of poor design, poor construction and repair. It makes no positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Green Belt or Conservation Area while the replacement structure can be considered to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area. In this respect the proposal to demolish the existing building would satisfy the requirements of Policy BH4 regarding demolition in Conservation Areas.
- 7.7 There would be an increase in footprint from 120 square metres to 132 square metres. However, there will be a reduction in height from 4.5 metres to 3.5 metres, which would reduce the impact of the new stables within this large site. This would ensure that the proposed building has a reduced impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.8 The new building would be constructed of timber weather boarding with a clay tiled roof, materials which would be sympathetic within a Conservation Area.
- 7.9 In terms of scale, height, proportion, form, materials and siting, I consider that the proposed building would satisfy the requirements of Policy BH6 which refers to new developments within Conservation Areas.
- 7.10 The application is accompanied by a tree survey. The arboriculturalist acting for the applicant concluded that the proposed building and manège would not impact adversely on existing trees provided that adequate measures are undertaken to protect them.
- 7.11 The Council's Landscape Officer has no objection in principle to the erection of stables as proposed. He agrees with the arboriculturist's view that the new stable block can be installed without placing trees at risk. The Landscape Officer has further concerns in respect of the adequate protection of the trees, the provision of hardstanding around the stable block and the submission of a satisfactory landscaping scheme, all of which can be satisfied by condition.

Neighbour Amenity & Highway safety

- 7.12 The Parish Council and local resident/district councillor consider that the proposed development is unacceptable as it represents a potential commercial use of this site. However, it should be noted that planning permission has not been sought within this application for any commercial use of the site and the local planning authority should not therefore consider possible future uses which would, in any event, require further planning permission.

- 7.13 Officers consider that stables are normally required for the keeping of horses for private leisure purposes. It is also understood from the applicant that his daughter wishes to use the site for her own horses and that she wishes to train for the 2012 Olympics, hence the need for proper stabling for several horses and the requirement for a manège. A condition has also been recommended to ensure that the building and manège are only used for private purposes. As such, the development would be appropriate in this area and furthermore, the Highway Authority is satisfied that any traffic generation would be minimal and that the proposal would not, therefore, be detrimental to highway safety in the area.
- 7.14 Provided that the site is only used for private stabling/exercising purposes, Officers are satisfied that there would not be any significant impact on nearby residential properties.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 In summary, the proposal is considered to be appropriate small scale leisure/recreational development in the Green Belt which would not have a detrimental impact on the openness of the surroundings or on the character or appearance of the Conservation area.
- 8.2 The replacement building will be of a standard of design appropriate to its purpose, constructed of materials which will be sympathetic to its semi-rural surroundings and the Conservation Area in accordance with policies ENV1, BH4 and BH6 of the East Herts Local Plan.
- 8.3 The construction of the building will not impact adversely on existing trees, provided that adequate measures are undertaken to protect them in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Herts Local Plan.
- 8.4 Finally, having regard to neighbour amenity and highways considerations, a condition can be provided to ensure that the site is used for private leisure purposes only and not for any commercial activity, thus addressing the concerns of the Highways Authority, Great Amwell Parish Council and the neighbouring resident.
- 8.5 On this basis I have recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions provided at the head of this report.