

PLANNING STATEMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Revision A)

Planning Application Reference: P/2021/0862

The Planning Officer has asked the following question:

‘Why is a tack / store room required? Could this be accommodated within the existing stable block? Why are w/c / wash room facilities proposed?’

1. Tack and Store Room –

Horse tack and equipment together with such items as feed supplements, minerals and vitamins, medication and sundry items would be stored in this building. The suggestion that the stables could be used for storage is not an option as we currently have three horse and by next spring we should have four as my broodmare is in foal. The maximum number of horses is expected to be four at any one time but could increase if purchases are made over and above sales of stock.

2. W/C and Washroom Facilities –

Regarding the requirement of toilet and washroom facilities and also for a small basic kitchen, both are self-explanatory and as briefly outlined in the Planning Statement as follows:

‘The proposed store and welfare building is required to provide facilities for the owners of the stables, staff and any visitors, for example, vets and farriers. The proposed facilities are a minimum requirement to fulfil the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive, the recommendations of the British Horseracing Authority under which we operate and the Thoroughbred Breeders Association.’

3. The remaining proposed facilities are:

- Cloak Room.
- Basic Kitchen and Rest Room.

Both areas are essential for the efficient running of the enterprise.

- Porch

Whilst not an essential element of the building but more a design feature, it is a place to leave boots / wellington boots under cover before entering the building.

Business Activity and Status:

1. The yard and land (acreage 8.2 acres) are, and always have been commercial premises and were purchased in October 2020 solely for the purpose of providing a facility for the breeding and raising of thoroughbred racehorses. The horses are currently stabled at two different stud farms and the intention is to move them to Barngate Stables where they can be cared for by us personally, so reducing costs with resulting increased profitability. The horses will be moved here in the Spring of next year. The property has been allocated an Equine Premises Number by Weatherbys, a requirement under law, to ensure traceability of equines –
Equine Premises Number W1177

2. In addition to the above, the holding is registered with Rural Payments Wales as a Permanent Agricultural Holding – County Parish Holding Number 56/243/0025. This allows the keeping of other livestock and will be a further activity carried out on the holding as 8 acres is in excess of the requirements of 4 horses.
3. The enterprise is a commercial business for gain which began in February 2019. The business is a registered business with HMRC and is also VAT registered for the Raising of Horses and other Equines. This fact cannot be disputed, therefore the business can be nothing else but a commercial enterprise for the purpose of breeding and rearing of horses together with other livestock rearing.

Technical Advice Note 6 - Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities states the following:

6.11 Development involving horses –

6.11.1 The definition of agriculture includes “the breeding and keeping of livestock” and “the use of land as grazing land”. “Livestock” has been held to relate only to livestock bred or kept for agricultural purposes³⁸. Land can be said to be used for “grazing” if horses are turned on to it with a view to feeding them from it, but not if they are kept on it for some other purpose (such as exercise or recreation), when grazing is seen as completely incidental and inevitable. A planning application is normally required for the use of land for keeping horses and for equestrian activities, unless they are kept as “livestock” or the land is used for “grazing”.

The horses fall under the definition “the breeding and keeping of livestock”, they are kept as livestock and the land, so far as they are concerned, is used only for grazing. There will be no other activities such as riding or exercising.

The Rural Economy

Small businesses are an important part of the Welsh rural economy and should be supported and encouraged. This business at this early stage has already contributed in making numerous purchases from local builders merchants and shops in Overton and will continue to do so.

Our business activities will involve purchases of feed stuffs and bedding, and the professional services of veterinary, farrier and horse transport.

Far better that the local economy should benefit from our presence here than the suppliers in North Devon and Cheshire that are currently supplying this business, amounting to £1,200 to £1,500 per month.

It is hoped that Wrexham CBC will be following the lead of the Welsh Government and support small business in the rural community rather than placing obstacles and generally discouraging such enterprises.

Legal Responsibilities

The Animal Welfare Act (2006) –

If you own or are responsible for an animal you have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to ensure its welfare needs are met.

The Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses (Wales) –

Section 1: Environment

Supervision

1.29 *Horses at grass should, as a minimum, be inspected at least once a day, preferably more often. Stabled or group-housed horses should, as a minimum, be inspected at least twice a day, again preferably more often. Particular attention should be paid to their gait, demeanour, feet, body condition and appetite so that early signs of disease, injury, illness or parasites can be noticed and appropriate treatment promptly provided. Close examinations should also be conducted at regular intervals in order to identify any problems (e.g. skin conditions) that may not be apparent from a distance. Tethered horses may need to be checked more frequently.*

1.30 *Hooves of horses should be picked out daily. As lameness could be caused by a variety of factors, legs and hooves should be regularly examined for wounds, injuries, loose shoes, impacted foreign material or anything else unusual.*

1.31 *Apart from those on turnout and only undertaking very light work, horses should be groomed regularly, but not excessively (which could remove the protective grease from the coat), to ensure that the coat is clean, free from wounds or parasites and to detect rug, tack or harness rubbing.*

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

The Health and Safety Executive in the section ‘the basics for your business’ states that welfare facilities, including toilets and washbasins, drinking water and having somewhere to rest and eat meals, should be provided.

It is envisaged that part time staff and self-employed persons will be required from time to time and will need to access the welfare facilities proposed, as well as the proprietors, these facilities therefore are essential.

Clearly, in order to carry out our duty of care requirements under the Animal Welfare Act (2006), the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the responsibilities as set out in the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses (Wales), it is necessary to be in attendance for long periods of time, added to this pasture and premises maintenance, we will be at our holding for much of the day and as this is our only business this is our intention.

The proposed store and welfare building will provide us with the basic facilities, including, importantly a hot water supply for our use and required for the care of the horses. The building is therefore essential, enabling us to attend for long periods of time and is required in order for us to fulfil our duties and responsibilities as required by law.

Design, Appearance and Siting

TAN 6 advises that new buildings should normally form part of a group rather than stand in isolation, and relate to existing buildings in size and colour.

The proposed Storage and Welfare Facilities acknowledges this advice, the siting is adjacent to the stable block and will be constructed of the same materials, including the roof. The width of the building will be approximately the same as the stable block albeit the overall area will be much smaller.

Both buildings will complement each other in both design and appearance and will cover the minimum area of land necessary to accommodate them.

The specification of the proposed building will include insulation to a standard appropriate for this type of building.

The building will be minimally heated and supplied with hot water with a system using electricity and an appropriately sized heat pump.

Minimising Travel by Car

In order to carry on our business breeding and rearing horses and other livestock on our holding, to adhere to our legal obligations and to follow the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses (Wales), it is our intention to remain at our premises for much of the day. We do not live at the property, it is our workplace and the business is a commercial enterprise.

It is our intention to come to our holding and remain for the majority of the day and not to travel unnecessarily back and forth from home to the farm. This effectively will reduce considerably journeys by car which otherwise would have to be undertaken, with a corresponding reduction in carbon emissions.

We intend to operate in a responsible manner by keeping journeys by car to a minimum and in a small way we will be helping combat climate change, something which affects us all and to which we should all play our part.

Final Comments

This business will bring added benefits to the local rural economy, providing, as is already the case, business with local suppliers and the shops in Overton.

The business is a commercial enterprise and will not be able to function without the proposed building and proposed facilities, they are essential for the business to continue and operate efficiently on a daily basis and provide the needs of the owners, staff and visiting professionals such as for example vets and farriers.

A lean-to or extension to the stable block (planning permission granted 5th March 2021) has been considered but neither would be suitable or appropriate for the facilities required. The proposed building has now been reduced in size by approximately 20% and as a consequence of this the position of the building on the site has also been amended.

The facilities proposed are essential for our business and required for the reasons given above.