

***Proposed Stable Block and Horse Box Shelter at
Hargate Hill Equestrian Centre Charlesworth Glossop***

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposal

The proposed development consists of a new stable block of ten loose boxes with central aisle; and a garage for a horse carrier for transporting horses and their riders to equestrian shows and competitions. The main stable block would be 24.4 metres in length by 12.4 metres in width, whilst the garage, at one end of the block, would project 6.1 metres with a width of 6.3 metres. Both parts of the building would be under a pitched roof of profiled metal cladding with the north elevation clad in multi-face Cheshire brick (used on other buildings at the centre), and a brick base course to the other less exposed elevations.

The building would take advantage of the change in levels across the site. The stable level would be at the higher level with access direct from the main drive serving the equestrian centre; and the garage would be at lower level with access also from the main drive, but leading around the back of the existing long stable block fronting it.

The proposed stable block is necessary to replace the outworn brick stables which stood as an E-shaped block to the north of Hargate Hill farm house. Planning permission was granted for new stables, similar in size and style to those now proposed, in 2005 as a replacement for the E block. It is not now proposed to build these. They could not, in the event, have been positioned where they were approved because of the proximity of the holiday cottages first approved in 2008. The siting of the cottages has had to be moved even closer to them because of the discovery of a sewer and surface water drain nearby. The new position of the cottages was approved in February 2011. It will also be necessary to create amenity space and parking in front of the cottages for the holiday occupants.

The stable block as now proposed is thus a replacement of old and approved new stable buildings. The site chosen between an existing old stable block still in use, and a new stable block, both fronting the driveway to the centre and shown on the site plan, uses a gap between existing buildings where it would be visually unobtrusive.

Here it would be separate from the residential environment of the farmhouse, holiday cottages, and staff accommodation in the converted barn; and closer to the other modern stables at the centre and the parking and turning space for the vehicles, horse boxes and trailers which use it. The garage element of the new building is important for the shelter and security of the mobile horse box with living accommodation for riders. This is a valuable vehicle and important to the centre for use in competitions around the country. The daughter of the applicant achieved second place in one of the exhibition events at the Horse of the Year Show 2010.

The Site and Surroundings

Hargate Hill Farm has developed into an important equestrian centre over the last thirty years. Prior to 1980, as a farm, it was very run down with buildings in poor condition and the topsoil stripped from most of the fields by the previous owner. The applicant has brought the fields back to life as productive meadows and gradually redeveloped the buildings to make it into an equestrian centre. It is an important recreational facility on the outskirts of Glossop and Tameside and relied upon both by the many local owners of horses who use it for private livery and more recently the local education authorities of Stockport and Derbyshire for courses in equestrianism, small animal management, and countryside management and conservation.

The Equestrian Centre lies at the end of a drive half a kilometre in length leading from Glossop Road Charlesworth. An open car park stands on the right of the drive just before the range of buildings. The main buildings consisting of stables around a courtyard, an indoor riding arena, an outdoor riding ménage, and ancillary storage rooms and classrooms, lie on the east side of the drive. The proposed new stable block is on the west.

To the north of the site of the proposed stable block is an existing stable block approved and built in 2005. To the west of that is the site of an approved competition size indoor riding arena approved in 1999, started and extant. To the south of the application site is an existing old stable block in brick. To the south of this is the site of the approved holiday cottages on a concrete yard, facing the site of the former E block of old stables, and the site of the modern stable block approved in 2005 but not now to be built.

Design

The new stable block would be a steel-framed building with its gable end (and therefore its smallest profile) facing the drive with a feature porch entrance like those on the existing surrounding modern stable blocks. The land rises as a stepped rock face immediately behind. This would require minor excavation to accommodate the flank elevation of the building. The garage would project from the north side of the stable with its floor level approximately 2.1 metres below that of the stable. In that way the height of the horse transporter (similar in size to a double-decker bus) could be accommodated without any increase in the overall ridge height. A roller shutter door 5.2 metres in height would give access to the garage from the main access drive to the rear of the long modern stable block. An internal slope between the stable and garage floor levels would permit the loading and unloading of horses under cover.

Externally the building would be clad mainly in profiled metal cladding using the same dark neutral colour as the existing modern stables nearby. Feature brickwork (Cheshire brick) would be used to the base and the north elevation. This was the material used in the old buildings at the farm and has been followed in the new ones.

There would be some limited scope for landscaping immediately around the building. The existing quarry face and the surrounding existing and proposed buildings would screen the building on three sides and above this, new trees could be introduced at the south end of the new building. Existing planting is already provided at the north end of the building where the access would join the car park, comprising a lawned bed with two young trees; and a similar grass and trees area lies alongside the eastern side of the long stable block.

Access

Access to the site by car, horse, or on foot is via the main access drive from Glossop Road. There is a network of bridleways and public footpaths across Hargate Hill farm which is used by riders and by members of the public from adjoining residential areas in Simmondley and Gamesley.

There would be two access points to the building. The first one leads directly to the drive on the east side of the building, where horses and riders would have immediate

access to the outdoor ménage and indoor riding school on the opposite side of the drive. The second would be used only for the horse transporter and would lead into the existing car park at the north end of the building.

National Planning Guidance

This Statement is prepared in accordance with Section 42 of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 and DCLG Circular 01/2006; and with the principles of sustainability in PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development. PPS1 encourages local planning authorities and developers to 'deliver homes, jobs, and better opportunities for all, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, and conserving the countryside and open spaces that are vital resources for everyone.'

Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 Green Belts contains a general presumption against inappropriate development in Green Belts. Such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances, and it is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. There are very special circumstances in this case as follows.

The purpose of proposed stable and garage which is the subject of the application, is to replace stable space which has been lost through demolition and to replace an earlier planning permission for new stables which cannot now be built in the position shown. The old brick built stables comprising the E block is shown on the site plan. Their area was approximately 391 square metres. The new stable block approved on 1st August 2005 under reference HPK/2005/0438 measured approximately 276 square metres. The stable block and garage now sought would be 449 square metres that is 57 square metres more than the original E block stables. In the context of the range of buildings now serving the equestrian centre this is a small increase. It is largely accounted for by the covered porch at the east entrance and the projection for the garage on the north elevation of the proposed building. The garage is necessary because the horse box with living accommodation is a very valuable piece of equipment and susceptible to theft if left in the open at the centre. There are no other buildings at the centre with the door height to admit it.

The proposed building is part of a gradual programme of the replacement of outworn stables and the rationalising of the range of buildings now required to serve the equestrian centre. Paragraph 3.4 of PPG2 excepts essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation from the term 'inappropriate development'; and the advice that only 'small stables' (paragraph 3.5) should be permitted should be seen in the context of size of the equestrian centre as a whole. It now covers 150 acres and has up to 140 horses under livery at any time. PPG2 recognises the needs of sport and recreation; and a facility such as Hargate Hill Equestrian Centre must be located close to centres of population to meet the evening and weekend demands for riding which now arise from the surrounding settlements. On the edge of the conurbation of Greater Manchester, a location in the Green Belt is unavoidable for an equestrian centre of any size. The range of buildings is essential to the financial structure which maintains the open use of land around them. The footpath and bridleway network at Hargate Hill reduces visitor pressure on the Peak District National Park which abuts its boundaries; and the centre now takes advantage of the Trans-Pennine Trail which passes close to its western boundary.

The proposed stable block would maintain the openness of the Green Belt by releasing land previously used and approved for the former and new stables; and by using an enclosed and unobtrusive site within the existing range of buildings. The site plan shows these. The main stable and ménage buildings now stand within mature landscaping carried out by the appellant as part of the general works of environmental improvement which he has carried out at the centre. There is already tree planting along the driveway in front of the long new stable block. This block, and the proposed indoor riding arena in the excavated stone bank behind, would enclose the proposed building from any significant views from outside the application site.

PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth says at Policy EC6 (g) that local planning authorities should 'where appropriate, support equine enterprises, providing for a range of suitably located recreational and leisure facilities and the needs of training and breeding businesses that maintain environmental quality and countryside character.'

The applicant has a record of thirty years of consistent environmental management and improvement. The land has been improved back to productive farmland,

extensive belts of trees planted, and watercourses managed. He has encouraged the public to use the footpaths and bridleways which cross his land. By doing so he has made a major contribution to environmental quality and countryside character.

Local Planning Guidance

The development plan for the area is the Local Plan for High Peak adopted March 2005 with certain policies saved until 2008.

Policy OC1 Countryside Development permits development which is an integral part of the rural economy and which can only be carried out in the countryside, provided that it would not affect a narrow gap between settlements or harm the character and distinctiveness of the countryside, or bring undue traffic or harm residential amenity. The proposed barn is proposed as a replacement to other buildings which have been lost. It would be built in an unobtrusive position and use materials sympathetic to those surrounding it. These are well established and have a consistent character and appearance. They are set in a context of mature tree planting.

Policy OC2 Green Belt Development repeats national planning policy in PPG2. The proposed development would meet the requirements of this local policy in the same way as that of national policy towards Green Belts described above.

Policy OC 4 Landscape Character and Design allows for development in the countryside provided its design is appropriate to the character of the countryside. That is, provided that it has regard to and conserves the landform and natural patterns of drainage; the pattern and composition of trees and woodland; the type and distribution of wildlife habitats; the pattern and composition of field boundaries; and the pattern and distribution of settlements and roads.

The site of the proposed barn and garage has been chosen carefully. It is an integrated design to minimise its height and impact and to take advantage of the existing levels at the site. It will be mainly concealed behind existing and proposed buildings. It would not disturb the existing extensive landscaping at the Equestrian Centre. It would partly occupy excavated land and would have no impact on fields in agricultural use or on field boundaries.

Conclusion

In terms of DCLG Circular 01/2006, the **amount** of the development consists of a single-storey steel-framed building of 449 square metres designed to accommodate ten horses and a horse carrier. In **layout** it would occupy an plot within the range of the buildings at the equestrian centre which is visually unobtrusive. In **scale** the proposed building would be on one storey, with a an under-storey at the garage end. Substantial **landscaping** already exists on the site as a whole but supplementary tree planting would take place where suitable.

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