

Design and Access Statement

Proposed Stables and Hay Store

at

Plex Farm, Bishops Lane, Buxton

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the erection of two additional Stables and Hay Store at Plex Farm, Bishops Lane, Buxton.
- 1.2 The application has been submitted by David Sutherland Architects on behalf of Mrs. Claire Millican, the owner of Plex Farm.
- 1.3 The statement addresses the planning issues raised by these proposals. It concludes that approval of the application for the provision of the proposed additional stabling and hay store would be in accordance with High Peak Borough Council's Local Plan and the Department for Communities and Local Government's National Planning Policy Framework where relating to this scheme.

2 Application site and planning history

- 2.1 Plex Farm lies within the Countryside and Special Landscape Area zones as identified in the High Peak Adopted Local Plan, towards the western end of a single track road known as Bishops Lane. Access to the farm is via a private access road leading from Bishops Lane.
- 2.2 The site of the proposed additional stabling is to the west of an existing limestone barn, currently being converted to residential use by the applicant's daughters. A public footpath runs along the front (north-east) elevation of the converted barn and onto a track beyond. The land further to the west of the proposed stabling rises and the site is screened from the north, west and south by existing mature trees and existing drystone, limestone walling. The site of the stabling previously accommodated a silage pit which has been dug out to provide a level hardstanding.
- 2.3 Planning consent was granted (HPK/2013/0378) on 25th September 2013 for the conversion of the existing traditional barn on the farm to two family dwellings. Work is currently under way on site, and the dwellings will be occupied by the applicant's daughters and their families.

- 2.4 Planning consent was granted (HPK/2013/0379) on 16th September 2013 for the erection of a new timber clad stable block to the west of the converted barn, consisting of 3 separate stables in an 'L' shaped configuration.
- 2.5 The 'as submitted' 2013 application for the stabling was reduced during the application process from an initial four stables and feed room to three stables only, at the request of the planning officer.
- 2.6 Planning consent for the existing manege to the south-east of the stables, for exercising and training the horses, was granted planning consent in 1991 and has been in continual use since that time.

3 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The current application seeks to re-instate the two omitted bays from the original application for use as stables, with an additional, narrower projection of similar construction, for use as a hay store.
- 3.2 The building will be clad externally with timber to match the existing stabling. The roof will be clad with profiled steel sheeting, again to match the existing stabling.

4 The Need

- 4.1 Mrs. Claire Millican has lived on Plex Farm for 27 years where she has raised her family. Her two daughters, Nicola and Jenny have grown up with horses on and around the farm all their lives, and now as adults with their own families, they wish to continue with their interest and pass this on to their own children.
- 4.2 Over the years the family has kept up to five horses on the 37 acres of land which make up Plex Farm. The horses have been kept on the farm and were previously stabled in the barn – which is now in the process of being converted to residential use.

- 4.3 The horses are kept for a variety of purposes – they are ridden for pleasure and competitively. The foals are raised and trained on the farm. There is always at least one elderly horse which is kept in retirement and cannot be ridden, and there is another with a permanent health problem which prevents it too from being ridden. It is not a commercial operation – it is a hobby/interest suited to the farm and the available land.
- 4.4 A fundamental part of this proposal is the hay store. Plex Farm is located some distance outside Buxton's built up area boundaries, along a narrow lane with high shrub boundaries. During winter months Bishops Lane and the access road to Plex Farm are frequently restricted and occasionally completely blocked. It is therefore essential that a good supply of hay for the horses is kept on the farm. Hay cannot be stored satisfactorily externally – hence the inclusion of a specific hay store in the proposal. Horses have been kept on Plex Farm for many years and hay storage on site has often proved to be essential in the past. Hay was previously stored in the barn now undergoing conversion, which is no longer available.

5 Planning Policies

- 5.1 As stated above, Plex Farm lies in the Countryside and Special Landscape Area as identified in the High Peak Local Plan Saved Policies.
- 5.2 The planning approval notice for the previous stable building states that the following policies from the Local Plan are relevant. I consider that as the proposed building is closely related to the existing stable building, the same policy considerations will apply:-
- BC1 – External materials
 - H14 – Domestic extensions and ancillary buildings
 - LT5 – Horse riding facilities, stables and riding schools
 - OC1 – Countryside development
 - OC3 – Special landscape area development
 - OC4 – Landscape character and design
 - TR5 – Access, parking and design

- 5.3 The approval notice also indicates that the following NPPF paragraphs are relevant:-
17, 28, 56-58 & 109.

6 Comment on Planning Policies

Local Plan Policies

BC1 – External materials

- 6.1 Policy BC1 requires that the external materials will be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the immediate surroundings and wider area of the proposal. It is proposed that the walls and roofs of the proposed stabling is the same timber cladding and sheet metal roofing as the existing stable building. As such, I believe that the requirements of this policy are complied with

H14 – Domestic extensions and ancillary buildings

- 6.2 Policy H14 states that developments must respect the character of the original building; it must ensure adequate privacy and amenity; it must provide adequate car parking; and it is for a domestic purpose.
- 6.3 Discussion could be had as to the relevance of this policy in relation to this application as stabling, albeit for recreational use, does not fall within the normal residential use grouping. In any event, the proposal is dug into a previously banked, unused area of land and has no impact on the amenity of the nearby (currently being) converted dwellings. Access to the converted barns and parking, are on the opposite side of the barn from the stables.

LT5 – Horse riding facilities, stables and riding schools

- 6.4 Policy LT5 primarily addresses commercially focussed riding schools, equestrian centres and associated facilities rather than small scale, 'personal' proposals. The pre-amble (para 8.14) however, does consider proposals related to personal use and considers the issue of the impact of such buildings on the character of the countryside. In this instance the proposed additional stabling/

hay storage is entirely concealed by existing buildings and the existing landscape. Nor does it involve the laying of new tracks, or accesses, or a manege. All those already exist. This proposal has no impact on the landscape.

OC1 – Countryside development

- 6.5 Policy OC1 is a general policy which considers all development in the open countryside outside the built up area boundaries. It requires that the development will not detract from an area where the character of the countryside may be vulnerable because of its prominence, or the existence of a narrow gap between settlements; the development will not generate significant numbers of people or traffic, and; the development will not detract from the character and distinctiveness of the countryside.
- 6.6 In this instance, as mentioned above, the proposal is extremely well concealed from all directions and therefore has no impact beyond the site boundaries. There are no nearby settlements or narrow gap to be filled. With regard to traffic generation, this proposal would help reduce traffic and people movements to and from site which would inevitably result if the horses had to be stabled elsewhere.

OC3 – Special landscape area development

- 6.7 Policy OC3 relates specifically to developments within the Special Landscape Area. It requires that proposals do not detract from the special qualities and character of the SLA and that special regard must be given to siting, design and landscaping of the proposal.
- 6.8 As stated above, the proposed additional stabling/storage is almost entirely concealed entirely by the existing landscape and buildings. It may be possible to catch a glimpse of the hay store from a short section of this footpath, beyond the existing stabling, but generally the proposed building will be well screened from all directions.
- 6.9 The design of the building itself is a continuation of the design previously approved by HPBC utilising natural wood cladding with a natural finish.

OC4 – Landscape character and design

- 6.10 Policy OC4 relates to landscape character and design and the specific issues addressed by this policy have been covered in earlier comment.

TR5 – Access, parking and design

- 6.11 Policy TR5 addresses vehicle and pedestrian access, parking spaces and vehicle manoeuvring spaces. None of those issues are particularly relevant to this application as it will generate no traffic. Conversely, therefore, this proposal will help reduce traffic generation by keeping the stabling/fodder/bedding provision on site.
- 6.12 Though not referred to in the previous approval notice for the stabling, perhaps policy TR1 is more relevant – which seeks to promote developments which reduce the need to travel and integrate land use with transport requirements.

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 17

- 6.13 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF is broad ranging in its scope, addressing 12 fundamental principles behind planning control. Relevant extracts from these principles are that developments should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings; ways should be found to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives; the intrinsic character of the countryside should be protected; rural communities should be supported. This proposal meets those requirements.

Paragraph 28

- 6.14 Paragraph 28 of the NPPF addresses the prosperity of rural economies. This is not a commercial proposal and its connection with rural economy is therefore perhaps tenuous. The paragraph does address leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside and as such this proposal is in accord with the objectives set out.

Paragraph 56-58

- 6.15 Paragraphs 56-58 of the NPPF address the quality of design of a development. This consideration has been dealt with above.

Paragraph 109

- 6.16 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ensuring a number of specific requirements are met. Relevant aspects have also been addressed in the above.

7 Energy Conservation

- 7.1 These buildings will not be heated and as such, beyond construction, have no carbon footprint

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 I believe that this proposal meets all relevant policy requirements.
- 8.2 There is an essential need to keep a ready supply of hay for bedding and fodder, particularly during the winter months. This cannot be stored externally.
- 8.3 Four to five horses have been kept on Flex Farm for the last 20 or so years. To continue doing so would cause no additional impact to the landscape or the access road.
- 8.4 Conversely, if this application were to be refused, this would give rise to increased traffic movements along Bishops Lane and the access road to the farm.
- 8.5 For the above reasons I believe this application should be granted planning consent.

David Sutherland

David Sutherland Architects - July 2014