

Supporting Green Belt Planning Statement

Laying of gravel on the stable yard with drainage channel added

Castle Edge Stables, Castle Edge Road, New Mills, SK22 4QF



PLAN:8 TOWN PLANNING LTD

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- 1 The subject property located on Castle Edge Road comprises stables designed and built to house horses. As well as stables there is an established vehicular access onto the site. In addition to established areas of land for the exercising of horses and for parking and storage ancillary to the main function of the property as stabling and the keeping of horses for exercising.
- 2 The applicant, Mr Simon Caine, has engaged fully with Officers of High Peak Borough Council Planning. This planning application is for full planning permission to retain the laying of gravel on land at the stables.
- 3 The purpose of the stables is for the exercising of the applicant's own horses. The riding and keeping of horses is widely recognised as a positive sporting activity that is suitable in Green Belt locations. To undertake this activity safely for the keeping of horses' certain forms of development are required that fall within the scope of planning; hence this planning application.
- 4 In this case the applicant has owned the stables for 18 months and found last winter that the area in front of the stables (between the stables and Castle Edge Road) and access to the exercise field were waterlogged. This caused great concern for the welfare of the horses and the people, mainly the applicant's close family, who look after the horses. We understand from the applicant that horses' hooves contract and expand especially in winter and especially when exposed to too much water. In order to protect the horses' hooves from the persistent wet conditions underfoot the applicant has installed some simple drainage channels at the property and has laid gravel over the original hardstanding and grassed area at the property; the works undertaken are shown on the enclosed plans prepared by Architectural Solutions. As Mr Caine has already installed the gravel and drainage he seeks planning permission retrospectively.

Planning History

- 5 Planning permission was granted in 1985 under reference HPK/0002/3832 for the erection of stables.
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- 6 Planning permission was subsequently granted, and we understand implemented, for new hay barn/implement store in 1995 under reference HPK/0003/4710.
- 7 Earlier in 2023 Mr Caine was granted a cultivation licence under the Highways Act, 1980 licence to plant in the highway. Mr Caine sought to undertake this as he had experienced that the verge outside of the property, between the drystone wall and highway, had been eroded back to the base soil by people parking motor vehicles over time creating an unauthorised lay by. Mr Caine has explained to planning and highways Officers at HPBC and Derbyshire Council (DCC) that this caused a number of issues namely:
- *“The collapse of dry-stone walls to the front of the property*
 - *“No natural soak away so the entrance to the stables was especially in winter is constantly flooded, given there are no grids or drainage on Castle edge road*
 - *“Use of the unauthorised layby for anti-social behaviour*
 - *“DCC had no budget to facilitate the re-instatement of the verges, however I agreed with Highways that if I was given a cultivation licence I would personally fund the work required.”*

As Mr Caine received a cultivation license he undertook the required works to accord with the license and reinstated the verge earlier this year.

Proposed Development

- 8 Planning permission is sought for the retention of drainage to the front of the stables and for the laying of gravel which is around 20mm to maximum 100mm in depth. The ground must be level and be well drained for the best interests of the horses.

Site Location

- 9 Castle Edge Stables are located on the west side of Castle Edge Road to the north of New Mills. The site is within the allocated Green Belt. Nearby uses
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include occasional scattered houses and across Castle Edge Road some stables and menage approved planning permission by HPBC under reference HPK/2019/0026.

- 10 The application site is not within a conservation area or other special area of control. The site itself is fairly flat, but is within the Pennine foothills so land is open to views but despite this the nature of development is well screened to the east and south by mature and semi-mature trees and bushes as well as dry stone walls and the existing stables. The photographs in the enclosures show the site including the subject area being underwater prior to drainage and gravel being laid.

Need for the Development

- 11 There is an obvious need for health, welfare and security of the horses to be able to exercise on draining and flat ground especially during the winter.
- 12 The applicant has explained the need for the development, both the stables and menage, from the family's viewpoint. We have interpreted this in the following paragraphs.
- 13 The British Horse Society (BHS) provides guidance for the keeping of horses and the size of stables and land for horses to graze. BHS guidelines suggest a ratio of one horse per 1 to 1.5 acres. The guidance itself states:

"However this recommendation is only a guide as there are many factors affecting this, such as:

Size and type of horse

Fat score/weight of horse

Length of time stabled or off the pasture

Time of year

Quality of the pasture and type of soil

Number of animals on the pasture

How well the pasture is managed and cared for"

- 14 The applicant's horses are stabled and not out on the grass all the time. They are on hay and feed and so don't need large amounts of grass. The applicant

advises that too much grass is detrimental to the health of a horse/pony. Too much pasture can lead to Laminitis, a painful hoof condition. Laminitis is inflammation of the hoof's laminae, which can result in temporary or permanent lameness.

- 15 In addition the applicant advises that weight gain from pasture is detrimental to a horse's health. As joints and soft tissues of the leg are stressed, the horse/pony becomes more likely to overheat, and metabolic disorders are directly related to overweight horses. Insulin Resistance and Cushing's Disease are two of the most metabolic problems in horses that increase their risk of laminitis.
 - 16 Eating too much spring grass can bring on serious abdominal pain in a horse/pony known as colic. Moderation in terms of grazing is the key to prevent grass colic. Controlling horse's exposure to new spring grass can eliminate much of the health concern associated with eating too much grass. Colic is a medical emergency and requires the urgent attention of a vet. The above-mentioned points are some of the issues flowing from horses/ponies eating too much grass.
 - 17 There is also a problem in winter if horses are out too much in muddy fields or other wet areas. Muddy fields are a hazard for horses. The water and mud can cause infections and skin irritations on legs and hooves. Horses/ponies need to stand out of the mud and damp. The large amounts of moisture, along with harmful bacteria colonies present in mud can be the root of infection. Moisture makes structures softer and therefore bacteria can easily infiltrate areas such as the skin and hooves. This can cause hoof ailments such as thrush and abscesses, and skin problems such as mud fever. Periods of stabling allow the horses hooves and legs to dry, reducing the chance of possible infection.
 - 18 In order to avoid the above-mentioned health issues having well drained land for the exercise of horses, especially in winter, is essential for the well-being of the horses/ponies. The grazing of the horses/ponies has to carefully controlled.
 - 19 The applicant needs the land in question to be well drained, keeping the horses off the mud and waterlogged ground in winter is essential to welfare. In addition to the exercising and ease of moving the horses around the yard the storage of hay is made easier by the laying of gravel. The submitted plan
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demonstrated the depth of the gravel and that the proposal is not readily visible from outside the site.

Green Belt and Other Planning Policy

- 20 Policies of the High Peak Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework are applicable to development with the Green Belt. The Green Belt policies within the local plan are consistent with the more recent policies within the NPPF. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. We are advised that: *“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.”* (Paragraph 143, NPPF).
- 21 The NPPF provides exception to specify the types of development that are acceptable within the Green Belt. Exceptions are given as:
- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
 - b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
 - c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
 - d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
 - e) limited infilling in villages;
 - f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
 - g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

Paragraph 145 of NPPF

- 22 The NPPF confirms that development that does not harm openness of the Green belt that is for outdoor sport or recreation, such as drainage and gravel laid on an existing forecourt of stables is an appropriate use as defined under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The proposed retention of the gravel and drainage, which do not harm openness of the green belt complies with Green Belt policy.
- 23 Aside from Green Belt policies the main policies that are applicable here would be design based policies of the High Peak Local Plan and the more recent the Design sections from Government policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). These policies relate to design of the proposal and the character of the area.
- 24 The Council have positive policies to encourage and permit new, replacement, improved or extended provision for outdoor sport and recreation subject to matters including design and appearance. The application site can only really be viewed from immediately in front of the site and has a backdrop of trees and hedgerow. The surrounding topography and surrounding dry stone walls and the stables themselves mean the ground level layer of gravel of the site is only open to very short views from within the site. Mr Caine has used local Derbyshire stone gravel which is suitable at this location. The site is only viewed in extremely limited glimpses. When considering the proposed development in context it is important to note the site is not within a Conservation Area or other special policy area. The proposal is suitable in context.

Conclusion

- 25 The proposed retention of gravel does not conflict with the five reasons for designating green belts. In addition, the proposal is clearly required for the horse's welfare and is essential for sport and recreation. The proposal does not harm or reduce openness of the green belt. We consider the proposal complies with the thrust and aims of Green Belt policy; we respectfully request that planning permission is granted.
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Enclosures – site photographs on the following pages



Following photographs show the site post laying of drainage and gravel











