

NORTHERN PLANNING COMMITTEE - 17 April 2013

UPDATE REPORT

Application No. 12/4814M

Location: FLORENCE STABLES, WOODFORD LANE, NEWTON,
MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE, SK10 4LH

Proposal: REGULARISATION OF STABLES AND YARD

Prepared: 15 APRIL 2013

Additional Neighbour Comments

Comments have been received in relation to:

- 1- the availability of grazing/turn out land
- 2- highway safety concerns

Availability of grazing land:

Concerns have been raised following publication of the Committee Report that that Florence Farm is not British Horse Society (BHS) approved. Following correspondence with the BHS, they have confirmed that Florence Farm Stables is not BHS Approved but Lumb Brook Livery is BHS Approved.

BHS currently has 20 Approved Centres in the county of Cheshire. Some are riding schools, some training centres and some are livery yards. The common denominator is the aim of the scheme to give those who ride, or who are looking to learn, the confidence that they will be choosing a centre that maintains high standards of customer and horse care.

The North West Development Officer has responded to say: the two BHS approved centres which were referred to in the original letter are those considered within easy travelling distance of Mottram St Andrew, Lumb Brook and Dean Valley in Woodford, as both centres offer services and facilities that are convenient for the horse owners in the immediate area as well as for the wider equestrian community.

The neighbours concerns regarding insufficient land at Florence Stables have been discussed with the BHS. The LPA were informed that competition horses are generally exercised in controlled circumstances so that the risk of injury is minimised. Whilst horses should have freedom to roam it would not be unusual for competition horses to have exercise limited to around 1 or 2 hours a day. The amount of land would be an issue for the BHS if all 18 horses were living in the fields permanently 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The response from the BHS included a link to the Guidelines for the Keeping of Horses, Stables Sizes, Pasture Acreages and Fencing document, which is the guidance issued by the BHS Welfare Department.

This document details:

Average pasture will maintain approximately two horses per hectare as permanent grazing (1-1.5 acres per individual), provided that good pasture management is employed:

This is generally considered a minimum acreage requirement for the average horse, but there are numerous variables that must also be taken into consideration. The acreage required per horse or pony will depend, to a large extent, on the type of and general management of the animal and also on the grazing quality and pasture management capabilities of the keeper. Possible stock densities may increase with a larger acreage: for example, ten acres could support more than ten horses (provided the acreage is sub-divided and effective management and husbandry is employed).

There is a distinct difference between acreage requirements for horses where the grassland is to provide total grazing keep for the animal and where it is only to provide supplementary grazing or turnout exercise. In the combined system of management, where the horses is stabled for part of the time, 1 acre per horse may be more than adequate. Even where adequate pasture is available, stabling the horse helps reduce the effects of long term grazing, giving the grass and ground a chance to recover.

To summarise, the BHS have confirmed that whilst Florence Farm is not formally BHS approved, they still support the application at Florence Farm. This is due to the flexible welfare management of the horses, the way in which the centre is run (under the same ownership) and same personnel as Lumb Brook.

The BHS have advised that this situation (more horses than land) is not an unusual scenario and that subject to good animal husbandry and a site management scheme; this scenario can operate successfully without raising any welfare concerns. There were no animal welfare concerns at the time of the BHS officers' visit.

Accordingly, members may feel it appropriate to consider a personal consent to the applicants, as the way the applicants manage the number of horses on the existing land is supported by the BHS.

Highways Matters:

Comments have been received that a Highways report that covers the two Livery yards together should be undertaken as the response from the Strategic Highways Manager in relation to the 2010 scheme at Lumb Brook Farm noted: 'Lumbrook is accessed from a rural road that is not designed to accommodate high numbers of vehicle movements and applications that materially increase traffic should be resisted.' Whilst the request is noted, a

representative for the Strategic Highways Manager will be in attendance at the Meeting to address any outstanding Highways matters. Furthermore the Officers delegated report for 10/1887M (Lumb Brook Livery) noted that: *'as the changes proposed on the site are minor there are no highway objections to this application. No highway safety issues are therefore raised'*.

To reiterate the Highway response in relation to this application noted that traffic flows are very low and whilst the lane is narrow for much of its length there is no material evidence that vehicular conflict is a difficulty. The junction with Wilmslow Road is of a good standard.

Members could consider a condition which prevents the use of any DIY stabling, to minimise the number of vehicular movements to and from the site. However, as previously outlined the Strategic Highways Manager raises no objection to the application and the application is considered to accord with Policy DC6.

Other comments raised reiterate points/provide further examples of concerns over speeding traffic and the potential harm to other road/footpath users, previously summarised in the main Committee Report.

Other Matters

Members raised the following points at the Committee site visit:

1. The location plan as submitted doesn't include Lumb Brook Farm in the land edged blue.
2. Internal size of the stables situated in the former agricultural building.
3. Requirement for a house
4. How long have the stables been there.

In relation to point 1. clarity is being sought with the applicants agent and Members will be updated verbally at the Meeting.

2. The approximate internal size of the stables are 3.6m by 2.9m.

3. In terms of the submission of an application for a house at Florence Farm, such an application would be treated on its own merits, as with any application. This cannot be given any weight in determining this proposal.

4. The Applicants Design & Access Statement summaries that: stables/livery have been on site for more than 20 years and accommodation for 18 horses has been available since 2004. However, this has not been tested through a certificate of lawfulness and should have no bearing on this proposal; the application must be determined on its merits against local and national planning policy and other material considerations.

CONCLUSION

The additional neighbour comments are noted, however, the application remains recommended for approval subject to conditions, with the additional condition for a personal permission.

Additional condition:

3. Personal permission