

Application No: 14/3538C

Location: SOMERFORD PARK FARM, HOLMES CHAPEL ROAD, SOMERFORD, CW12 4SW

Proposal: Outline Application for a replacement covered riding arena

Applicant: Mr & Mrs King

Expiry Date: 22-Oct-2014

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES:

- Principle of the development
- Character & Appearance
- Landscaping
- Amenity
- Highways & Parking
- Ecology

REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is a small-scale major development.

DESCRIPTION AND SITE CONTEXT

The application relates to Somerford Park Farm, a large equestrian facility situated on the north eastern side of Holmes Chapel Road, Somerford. The land is designated in the adopted Congleton Borough Local Plan as being within the Open Countryside. There are residential properties to the west and open countryside to all other directions.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of a covered riding arena to replace the existing open arena at Somerford Park Farm. Details of landscaping have been

submitted for consideration as part of this application, with all other matters reserved for approval at a later stage.

RELEVANT HISTORY

Somerford Park Farm has an extensive planning history relating to the use of the site as an equestrian centre. The most recent and relevant planning applications are:

14/1118C - Erection of a stable block comprising 20 no. stables with tack / feed / wash / store areas; bulk straw and chipping storage and a muck room – Approved 23-Apr-2014

12/2794C - Erection of Veterinary Building – Approved 12-Oct-2012

11/0561C - Erection of a Satellite Stable Block Comprising 20no. Stables with Tack / Feed – Approved 28-Jul-2011

POLICIES

Local Plan Policy:

Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review 2005:

PS8 – Open Countryside

GR1 – New Development

GR2 – Design

GR6 – Amenity and Health

GR9 – Parking and Access

RC5 – Equestrian Facilities

NR1 - Trees

E5 – Employment Development in the Open Countryside

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Version:

PG5 – Open Countryside

SD1 – Sustainable Development

SE1 – Design

EG2 – Rural Economy

Other Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)

Environmental Protection:

No objections subject to an informative regarding contaminated land.

Natural England:

Do not consider that the proposal would have an adverse impact.

VIEWS OF SOMERFORD PARISH COUNCIL

No objection

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

None received

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The site is designated as being within the Open Countryside, where Local Plan Policy PS8 states that development involving facilities for outdoor sport, recreation are acceptable in principle provided that they preserve the openness of the countryside.

Local Plan Policy RC5 deals specifically with proposals for equestrian facilities and states that proposals will be acceptable where they do not adversely affect; ecology; landscape; agricultural land; amenity and provide adequate parking provision and is linked to the bridleway network.

Local Policy E5 allows for the expansion or redevelopment of an existing business, appropriate to a rural area or essential for the continuation of operations which are already on site where there are no suitable existing buildings which could be re-used.

The existing operation is a commercial operation and employs over 35 full time equivalent staff. The proposed use has already been accepted as being appropriate in this rural area and there are no existing buildings or structures which could be reasonably utilised to accommodate the proposals. As such, subject to compliance with other material considerations (these being character and appearance, landscaping, residential amenity, highways and ecology), the principle of the development is supported by local policy and by national policy (NPPF para 28) which gives support to sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses.

Character and Appearance

Whilst the application has been submitted in outline form, the application is supported by detailed plans. The plans show a large apex agricultural style portal framed building situated towards the rear of the site towards the far perimeter. The building would reflect the style and appearance of the other equestrian buildings in terms of design and materials and would be well grouped with the existing development at the site. Owing to its location towards the rear of the site, the scale of the building would not be overly prominent from main vantage points and as such, it is considered that a building of the size proposed and in the position indicated on the layout plan is acceptable in terms of its impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Landscaping

The application is supported by a landscape report. The report does not identify any significant visual impacts outside of the immediate areas of the site and the landscape impact is reported as being low/negligible.

The proposed building would be visible from outside of the site (from Holmes Chapel Road to the north-west), the development would be viewed in the context of the existing facilities. The

existing vegetation together with proposed landscaping to the north of the site would help to mitigate impacts. The Senior Landscape Officer has recommended that some further landscaping may be required but has recommended that this can be secured by a condition requiring submission of a revised landscaping scheme. Subject to this, the scheme would be acceptable in terms of its landscape impact.

Amenity

Policy GR6 requires that new development should not have an unduly detrimental effect on the amenities of nearby residential properties from loss of privacy, loss of sunlight or daylight, visual intrusion, environmental disturbance or pollution and traffic generation access and parking.

The proposed riding arena would be in excess of 280 metres distance away from the nearest residential property. Further, the enclosure of the riding arena would provide an envelope for the proposed riding activities and would minimise the noise that an open riding arena would provide. The Council's Environmental Protection department has assessed the application and has offered no objection to the proposal. As such, it is not considered that there would be any adverse impacts on residential amenity.

Highways & Parking

Policy GR9 states that proposals for development requiring access, servicing or parking facilities will only be permitted where a number of criteria are satisfied. These include adequate and safe provision for suitable access and egress by vehicles, pedestrians and other road users to a public highway.

The proposal would not lead to any loss of parking spaces and there would be no alteration to the existing access. There would be an adequate level of parking provision within the site and the wider equestrian complex. In terms of traffic generation, the submitted Transport Statement considers that the traffic generation from the arena will be insignificant. It states that the development proposals could generate a small increase in the number of trips on the Saturday and Sunday peak periods but this could not be considered severe in the context of the NPPF. The proposal is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policy GR9 of the adopted local plan.

Ecology

The application site is located just to the south of the 'Pool Wood Local Wildlife Site'. The submitted plans appear to show the building about 5m from the boundary of the LWSW which may potentially put the building either under or very close to the canopy of the woodland trees. However, the agent has confirmed that the proposed building shown in the indicative position will not affect the canopy or health of the existing trees and given that there is scope to ensure decent separation, it is considered that this can be secured at the reserved matters stage.

Evidence of badger activity was recorded during a submitted survey but no setts were identified. It has been confirmed that the survey extended to adjacent 'Pool Wood'. The Council's Nature Conservation Officer has confirmed that no protected species would be

unduly harmed by the proposal. He has however, recommended that any lighting should needs to be agreed to avoid any potential adverse impacts on the adjacent woodland and associated wildlife. This matter may be dealt with by means of a condition if outline consent is granted. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in ecological terms.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the principle of the proposed development will not have a harmful impact upon the character of the existing countryside and is acceptable in landscape terms and therefore complies with Local Plan Policies PS8, GR4, E5 and PG5 of the development plan. The proposed use of the site is likely to have a minimal impact upon matters relating to highway safety, residential amenity or ecology and therefore the scheme is acceptable and in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy. Accordingly, a recommendation for approval is made subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Standard outline – development to commence within 3 years or within 2 years of approval of reserved matters**
- 2. Application for approval of reserved matters to be made within 3 years**
- 3. Submission of reserved matters**
- 4. Development to be carried out in accordance with approved plans**
- 5. Reserved matters to comply with scale parameters**
- 6. Materials to be submitted to and approved**
- 7. Landscaping Scheme including details of boundary treatments to be submitted**
- 8. Landscaping implementation**
- 9. Submission of Tree Survey / Arboricultural Method Statement**
- 10. Accordance with Ecological Survey**
- 11. Details of external lighting to be submitted**

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