

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/23/95495

Site Address: The Stables, Grange Road, Southampton, Eastleigh, SO31 8GB

Case Officer: Summer Sharpe

Description: Retention of replacement roof to the stable building and provision of a reduced rear (northwest) dormer (Alternative to application F/20/88060).

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
• Countryside • Settlement Gap (Area A Bursledon, Southampton, Netley, Hamble (A10)) • Minerals Safeguarding • Solent Mitigation & Disturbance Zone • Surface Water Flooding (Grange Road)		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
F/05/54050	Erection of single storey stable block and tack room	Refused (August 2005)
F/06/56013	Construction of single storey stable block and tack room	Permitted (April 2006)
F/09/66174	Construction of hay store	Refused (December 2009)
F/10/66765	Construction of hay store	Refused (April 2010)
F/10/67814	Construction of hay store	Permitted (November 2010)
F/20/88060	Raising of stable roof to provide loft storage space (part retrospective)	Refused (September 2020)
F/23/95491	Retention of the replacement entrance gates, fence and hardstanding area.	Under Consideration

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	None received.		
Parish Council:	Object on over development BE59, and have expressed concern that the building is being used as a residential building.		
EBC Ecologist:	Ecology does not appear to have been consulted on the original application F/20/88060. Since this is a retrospective application and the roof has already been replaced, if bats or nesting birds had been present, they would have been affected by the works to the roof and dormer. The elevation drawings show that this building would be appropriate for both bat roost boxes (side elevation facing south) and bird nest boxes (swift boxes on side elevation facing east) as biodiversity enhancements. No external lighting must be shining on these elevations to avoid disturbance to these species.		
HCC Highways:	It is noted that the updates proposed by this application when compared to the permitted application (which HCC Highways were not consulted on) have no additional impact upon the local highway network. As such, there is no objection to the proposals from a highway perspective.		

Policy:
National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Development Plan:

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036

Policies: S1 (Delivering sustainable development), S5 (Development within the countryside), S6 (Protection of settlement gaps), DM1 (General development), DM11 (Nature Conservation), DM13 (Transport), DM14 (Parking) and DM34 (New and Enhanced Recreation and Open Space Facilities).

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Quality Places; Biodiversity; and Trees and Development.

Site Visit

Yes ☒

No ☐

27 September 2023.

Assessment:

Site & Surroundings

The application site comprises a piece of land and stable block which is located to the north of Grange Road, opposite 'Ainsworth Insulations', an industrial/ commercial unit. This unit is located to the south of Grange Road and is set back from the road by an area of hard standing and also benefits from entrance gates. The application site is the first plot to the north of Grange Road when entering from Portsmouth Road (A3025). This is predominantly bound by barbed wire fencing (enclosing animals). From the site visit there also appeared to be some young vegetation in-front of the fencing, adjacent to Grange Road, with the main entrance gate which is set back from the road.

There was also an existing building, the subject of this application, situated to the west of Grange Road. The building is finished in wood and is set in from the boundary, screened by dense mature vegetation. The building is accessed via the gates and existing hardstanding. There is also another building on site situated further north, accessed via the same point.

Proposal & Background

This application seeks the retention of replacement roof to the stable building and provision of a reduced rear (northwest) dormer. Which is an alternative scheme to previous application F/20/88060.

Planning application F/06/56013 permitted the original hay store in 2006. The approved stable block had a footprint of approx. 74m² (14.7m by approx. 5m). This had a hipped roof with a maximum height of 5m and eaves which measured approx. 2.6m. There was a small dormer (on the western elevation) which projected 1.8m from the roof slope, 1.2m in width and approx. 2m in height. The building was finished in timber. Internally this provided 3 stables, 1 loose box and a tack and feed area.

Planning application F/10/67814 also permitted a hay store in November 2010. This was a reduced scheme, compared to the 2006 application. From a site visit, it was noted that this scheme had not been implemented.

Planning application F/20/88060 sought to regularise roof alterations to the previously approved hay store. This involved the increase in overall height to 6.4m with a large dormer on the western roof slope which projects approx. 1.8m from the roof slope, and measures 12.4m in length and 2.2m in height. From a site visit, it was noted that this scheme had been implemented. This was refused, and as a result this application has been submitted.

This current application proposes to alter the current unlawful roof form. The footprint would remain as previously approved, the overall height measures approx. 6.4m, and would include a large dormer (on the western roof slope), which would project approx. 2.7m from the roof, measure 3.8m in width and 3.7m in height. This would be predominantly glazed with 2no. rooflights either side of the dormer.

Principle

The application site falls within designated countryside protected by Policy S5. This Policy sets out that new development in the countryside is generally restricted and notes (1) compatible usages for which new development in the countryside is appropriate. 1(a) and (b) of this Policy sets out that existing buildings in the countryside can be altered subject to stipulation of relevant Policies. Policy DM18 sets out that the extension or replacement of non-residential buildings in the countryside should *not have an urbanising effect on the countryside in terms of its density, scale, massing, layout and height*, amongst other matters. Policy S5 also goes on to stipulate (2) that new development in the countryside will seek to avoid adverse impacts upon the intrinsic character of the landscape.

The application site also falls within a settlement gap, protected by Policy S6, which ultimately seeks to ensure that development would not undermine the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements, nor have an urbanising effect detrimental to the character of the countryside or the separate identity of adjoining settlements. This Policy is supported by the 'Settlement Gap Study'. Within this, the site, Area A10, is described as follows:

Triangular piece of land framed by mature field boundary vegetation associated with Grange Road, Shop Lane and Portsmouth Road. With the exception of a cluster of agricultural business units, and the manicured garden to the single dwelling along Grange Road, the sub area is well enclosed.

Policy DM34 relates to new and enhanced recreation and open space facilities, including private recreation. Section 1(b) of this Policy sets out that if this is in the countryside then development should not cause urbanisation or detract from rural character.

This application seeks to regularise the increased roof height of the previously approved hay store, and proposes an alternative design when compared to the previously refused application F/20/88060. The abovementioned Policies all seek to ensure that development, if accepted, within the countryside does not have a detrimental or urbanising impact upon the landscape nor character of the countryside, and in this case also the impact upon the settlement gap.

In this instance, Policy DM18 specifically states that development should not have an urbanising effect on the countryside, including scale, massing, and height. As will be set out further within the design section, the proposals have increased the previously approved height and are proposing to introduce a dormer which would urbanise the building and create additional roof massing which is considered to be harmful. The proposals are therefore not considered to be acceptable in principle.

Design

Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) stipulates that all new development should respect the character and appearance of urban areas, take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character, appearance and land uses of the locality or neighbouring, and be compatible in terms of mass, scale, layout density, design and siting.

As a starting point, it should be noted that the original barn was permitted in 2006, with the dimensions set out within the proposal section. This was a reduced scheme when compared to the originally refused scheme F/05/54050. The approved barn was

considered appropriate as a result of its dimensions and its proposed use (stables) was compatible with the countryside location.

Previous application F/20/88060 sought to regularise the increase in roof height and addition of large western dormer which faces the open countryside. Within the Officers report it was noted that the F/05/54050 application was similar to that of the 2020 proposals. The 2005 application was refused as a result of the siting, massing design and layout which was considered to result in a detrimental impact upon the character of the countryside and settlement gap.

Within the previous application F/20/88060 the Officers report noted that the *additional ridge height, roof mass and box dormer makes the stable block structure more prominent within the strategic gap and therefore alterations and additions would be detrimental to the quality and openness of the strategic gap*. It was also noted that the site and stables are situated within a paddock area which due to its open nature and established vegetation lined perimeter (to the east) is considered to make a positive contribution to this part of the countryside and despite being situated adjacent to a light industrial employment area contributes to the semi-rural characteristics of the area. Furthermore, *the development would have an irreversible and unacceptably urbanising impact upon the character of the site and strategic gap as well as upon its immediate surroundings through the introduction of increased built form... The proposals would also serve to erode in part the undeveloped open land that has been maintained between settlements and the countryside beyond... These factors would further undermine the semi-rural character of this section of the area and the sites surroundings... The development has an urbanising effect and consequent change in the appreciation of the immediate landscape and closure of the gap as noted above this would harm to the existing landscape character*.

Ultimately, it was concluded that *this part of the gap is generally lacking in development. Buildings are generally small low rise. The site and its immediate surroundings are very flat and open meaning that development of even a modest scale would be clearly visible and likely to result in an adverse impact to the visual amenity and character of this important part of the local gap*.

The application was taken to appeal which was consequently dismissed. The main issue considered at appeal was the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

In paragraph 7 of the appeal decision the Inspector set the scene of the appeal site: *The appeal site is surrounded by open countryside fields to the rear and side and much of the boundary is defined by mature hedging. Notwithstanding some sporadic employment and residential built development on the opposite side of Grange Road, the immediate locality is predominantly rural in character and appearance*.

Regard was also given to the 2006 scheme, the Inspector noted that this was a *single storey structure...and had a simple functional appearance, comprising timber boarding walls under a low, tiled hipped roof*. This was considered to have rural appearance, and the design and size would have been entirely in keeping with the equestrian use of the site, and countryside character of the surrounding area. *It would not have appeared incongruous or over-dominant within this countryside setting, notwithstanding its prominent position close to the road frontage, and it would have sat comfortably in relation to the hay barn which was subsequently built beside it*.

The Inspector then went on to note that the *appeal scheme, whilst retaining the approved building footprint has provided an additional level of floor space within the roof, to accommodate a hay loft. It has significantly altered the appearance of the building and resulted in a notable increase in its height and massing. The approved shallow, fully hipped roof has been replaced by a much deeper and bulkier half hipped structure with a higher ridge height. The increased roof size is magnified by the incorporation of a long box*

dormer which extends along the majority of the length of the west-facing roof slope, occupying a considerable amount of the roof slope.

Comment was also made with regard to fenestration, being *considerably larger than those approved at ground floor level below them, in association with the stables, and this contributes to the top-heavy appearance of the enlarged roof form.*

The Inspector concluded that the cumulative alterations resulted in *the building having acquired a more residential appearance. The box dormer and first floor windows are distinctly domestic in character, having regard to their size, proportions and positioning, and are not typical of the style of fenestration usually associated with stables and hay stores.*

The proposals within this application seek to retain the ridge height of 6.4m but would reduce the length of the existing dormer. The previous refused and dismissed scheme concluded that the increased height was not acceptable. Further the introduction of an excessively large dormer was not acceptable. Whilst the proposals would reduce the size of the dormer, the dormer itself would still appear as a domestic feature, further worsened by the excessive amount of glazing, completely uncharacteristic of the surroundings.

Within the 'Planning, Landscape, Design & Access Statement' it sets out that *the locality is characterised by agricultural buildings and holdings, detached family dwellings and substantial commercial premises... and notably includes a substantial building with a barn-hipped roof 'Corringham House' (that stands 65m to the east of the application).* The statement then goes on to note that *the application site is a large agricultural/ equestrian holding... a sizable building finish in brown timber cladding with a barn-hipped roof of plain brown tiles'.*

The barn, subject to this application, is a stable building not a dwelling. Therefore the comparison to Corringham House, albeit noting the roof form is not direct nor appropriate. Generally agricultural buildings of this nature are low and simple in their form, required predominantly for functional purposes. The proposed dormer would domesticate the simple barn urbanising it to a harmful extent. The excessive glazing of the dormer and introduction of rooflights also worsens the overall design, further domesticating its appearance.

To conclude, it is not considered that the current proposals satisfactorily address the previous concerns set out within the previous refusal and dismissed appeal. The overall ridge height and roof form remains the same as refused. The main difference relates to the proposed dormer. Whilst it is acknowledged that this would be smaller in length, it is considered more urbanising given the extent of glazing and introduction of roof lights. As such, the proposals are considered to be contrary to the relevant Local Plan Policies and would therefore warrant refusal.

Impact upon Neighbouring Amenities

Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) amongst other matters, stipulates that all new development should not have an unacceptable impact upon residential amenities of both new and existing residents.

Owed to the location, siting and type of development, the proposals are not considered to have an adverse impact upon the amenities of the neighbouring properties.

Highway Safety & Parking

Policy DM13 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) requires that development is or could be well served by public transport, cycling and walking and it includes measures which minimise its impact on the existing highway network. Policy DM14 of the

Plan requires that an appropriate level of car parking be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted standards. The policy provisions are consistent with the requirements of the NPPF and in particular those of paragraphs 107 and 108.

Due to the nature of the development, the Local Highways Authority (LHA) were consulted. They noted that they were not consulted upon as part of the original application for the barn, however they would have no objection to the proposals from a highways perspective.

Ecology & Trees

Policy DM11 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) stipulates that the Borough Council will work with statutory and voluntary agencies and developers to; protect, conserve and enhance areas subject to international, national and local nature conservation designations, and promote the net gain of biodiversity on all sites through the protection, enhancement and connection of existing provisions and new habitats and features compatible with the native biodiversity characteristics of the Borough.

The Council's Ecologist noted that the proposals were retrospective, therefore biodiversity enhancements were requested. It was suggested that this could include *bat and bird boxes mounted on the side elevations of the existing building*.

Equalities Act:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2021 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020-2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF and development plan do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and Local Plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Local Plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

The NPPF aims for the need for housing to be met, and Policy S2 of the Local Plan sets a target for 14,580 dwellings to be provided by 2036. The NPPF and Policies, S1, DM2, and DM3 of the Local Plan and energy and water elements of the adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. When considering the impact of climate change, the proposed development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and is expected to limit impacts on climate emissions as a result of the development or its use.

Conclusion:

Reasons for Refusal:

- 1) The proposed development, by virtue of its height, massing and domesticated design, would result in an unacceptable urbanising impact which would be detrimentally harmful to the countryside and settlement gap, thus the proposals would be contrary to Policies S5, S6, DM1, and DM18 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☐

REFUSE ☒