

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/24/96999

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

Case Officer: David Huckfield

Description: Retention of replacement roof to the stable building and removal of the rear (northwest) dormer (Resubmission of application F/23/95495).

Relevant Site Constraints	Yes ☒	No ☐
- Within Designated Countryside and Settlement Gap (Area A Bursledon, Southampton, Netley, Hamble (A10)) in adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 - EA Flood Map – Risk of Surface Water Flooding (Grange Road)		

Relevant Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Ref. No	Description	Decision
F/05/54050	Erection of single storey stable block and tack room	REFUSED (Aug 2005)
F/06/56013	Construction of single storey stable block and tack room	PERMIT (Apr 2006)
F/09/66174	Construction of hay store	REFUSED (Dec 2009)
F/10/66765	Construction of hay store	REFUSED (Apr 2010)
F/10/67814	Construction of hay barn	PERMIT (Nov 2010)
F/11/68710	Construction of hay barn (amended scheme)	PERMIT (Jul 2011)
F/11/69860	Construction of hay barn	PERMIT (Aug 2012)
F/20/88060	Raising of stable roof to provide loft storage space (part retrospective)	REFUSED (Sep 2020) & DISMISSED ON APPEAL (Feb 2021)
F/23/95495	Retention of replacement roof to the stable building and provision of a reduced rear (northwest) dormer (Alternative to application F/20/88060)	REFUSED (Nov 2023)
F/23/95491	Retention of the replacement entrance gates, fence and hardstanding area	REFUSED (Nov 2023)

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations	None received.		
Consultation Responses (Summarised)			
Hound Parish Council:	No objection subject to the building being used as storage only and remaining as an agricultural building.		
EBC Ecologist:	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 original works to the roof and dormer. Biodiversity enhancements will be required. If the dormer is to be removed or any work done to the roof, please could you add the following informative to the decision notice: In the unlikely event of any bats being found during demolition or construction, all work must stop immediately, and Natural England must be called. Additional information is available on the Bat Conservation Trust website. 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. The Bat Conservation Trust recommends installing a bat brick/box at least 4m above the ground, away from artificial light sources, sheltered from strong winds and exposed to the sun for part of the day, facing south, south-east or south-west. Swift nest boxes are best positioned under the eaves or on walls facing north, northeast or north-west out of direct sunlight, five metres above the ground, with clear adjacent airspace so swifts can access them in a high-speed direct flight.
HCC Highways:	No objection. It is understood that the windows do not face the highway and as such there are no highway impacts as a result of the development.

Policy:

Legislative Background:

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan:

The Development Plan comprises of the Policies of the adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 with the following policies being of relevance to the application: S1 (Delivering Sustainable Development), S5 (Development within the countryside), S6 (Protection of Settlement Gaps), DM1 (General criteria for new development), DM11 (Nature conservation), DM13 (General development criteria – transport), DM14 (Parking), DM34 (New and enhanced recreation and open space facilities).

National Planning Policy and Guidance:

The latest iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF or Framework) was published in December 2023 and, as set out within paragraph 224, the policies contained within it are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication. The Planning Practice Guidance provides additional guidance in support of the policies within the Framework and is also a material consideration in the determination of the application.

Site Visit	Yes ☒	No ☐
A site visit was undertaken by the Case Officer to review the proposals in context.		

Assessment:

Principle of development:

The site falls within an area designated as countryside and settlement gap within the Council's adopted Local Plan. Policy S5 seeks to prevent inappropriate development within the countryside in order to maintain its rural character and limit urbanisation, whilst facilitating and controlling development for which a countryside location is genuinely and justifiably required. This policy specifies that such development can, amongst other things, incorporate that which is related to outdoor recreation and open space uses (which can include horse-riding), subject to the criteria of the relevant development management policies within the plan being adhered to. Policy S6 seeks to prevent development which would undermine the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements or have an

urbanising effect on the countryside. These matters, along with the other material considerations relevant to the proposals are considered below.

Background and summary of planning history:

The application building, in its original form was approved in 2006 under planning application reference F/06/56013, with this consent being subsequently implemented. The building, which incorporated 5 stables, was a single storey structure of a simple, functional appearance, comprising timber boarded walls under a low, tiled hipped roof. It was considered appropriate in size, scale and visual appearance for both its intended equestrian purpose as well as for its countryside setting.

The building was, however, subsequently altered without the benefit of planning consent. These alterations incorporated an increase in roof size to allow for the provision of a first-floor area to be used as a hay loft, with this being served by windows in either end of the building as well as a sizeable box dormer positioned along the western roof slope. These works were subject to a retrospective application in 2020 (F/20/88060) which was refused by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). A subsequent appeal was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate with the appointed Inspector identifying harm to the character and appearance of the area and the site's countryside and gap setting, with this arising from the increase in building size and the more domestic appearance of the structure which resulted from the box dormer and the nature of the fenestration that it incorporated.

A further application, which had proposed to retain the roof alterations but with a reduced dormer of an alternative pitched roof design, was also refused by the LPA in November 2023 (see application F/23/95495), with the impacts upon the countryside and settlement gap not being considered to have been suitably overcome by the proposed revisions.

Assessment of proposals:

The current application proposes a further revised design which would see the enlarged roof being retained but with the west facing box-dormer removed in its entirety and replaced by three rooflights. The first-floor windows in the northern and southern ends of the building would also be removed, with the openings being proposed to be infilled and clad to match the remainder of these elevations.

Taking away these features would, in the case of the dormer, lessen the bulk and massing at roof level and, in both instances and significantly, would remove the features of the unauthorised development which are distinctly domestic in character. As noted by the Inspector in the appeal decision in relation to application F/20/88060, these elements of the scheme are not typical of the features usually associated with stables and hay stores and both give the building a more residential appearance and result in it having an unduly urbanising impact upon its surroundings.

It is acknowledged that the resulting building would still be larger and taller than that which was originally approved and invariably, therefore, it would have an increased level of visual and physical impact upon this area of countryside and gap, with it achieving a greater level of prominence both from Grange Road as well as from its immediate surroundings. The changes to the design which are referred to above, however, would serve to give it a notably more rural appearance with its form and external materials being more akin to a barn style structure which would not be atypical in the countryside, and which would, in design and visual terms, sit more comfortably within its setting.

Very much on balance therefore and whilst recognising the concerns raised in relation to previous schemes and that the development will still have an impact on its surroundings, it is not considered that this would be such as to be unacceptably harmful to either the character of the countryside or the function of the countryside gap to a degree that would justify the refusal of planning permission.

It is however considered necessary to restrict the building to be for private use only, in the interests of protecting the character of the countryside. In addition, and, as the current structure is unauthorised and the works proposed are required to make the building acceptable in planning terms, a timescale of 6 months by which they must be completed will also be imposed by condition. Given the modest extent of the alterations to be undertaken and that the specified timescale would incorporate the late spring, full summer and early autumn period where inclement weather should present less of an issue, it is considered that this is a reasonable timescale in this instance.

In terms of other relevant considerations, there are no highway related concerns associated with the proposals and no objection has been raised by Hampshire County Council in this regard.

In respect of biodiversity, the informative requested by the Council's Ecologist concerning the potential for bats to be discovered during construction works will be added to the decision notice accordingly. Amended plans have also been received to show bat and swift boxes to be installed on the building in response to the Ecologist's comments and the need for the development to achieve a biodiversity net gain in accordance with the requirements of Policy DM11 of the Local Plan. Their installation will be covered by planning condition.

Finally, as a result of the siting of the application building relative to the nearest residential properties, it is not considered that the proposals would unduly impact upon the amenity of their occupiers.

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. 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.

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☒

REFUSE ☐