

Application No: W 12 / 0448

Town/Parish Council: Rowington

Case Officer: Liam D'Onofrio

01926 456527 planning_west@warwickdc.gov.uk

Registration Date: 24/04/12

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Sandall House Farm, Narrow Lane, Lowsonford, Solihull, B95 5HN

Construction of new drives (retrospective) FOR Mrs D Saber

This application is being presented to Committee due to an objection from the Parish Council having been received.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Rowington Parish Council: Objection on the following grounds:

Both drives were created well before 2012. The drive linking the bridge to the stabling complex refers to a non existent jumping paddock. No problems were encountered with water logged or muddy access from the buildings by the previous owner Raymond Tooth Racing from 1998 until 2007.

In reference to the supporting statement "The exercise track is surfaced with wood fibre and is too soft and valuable to be suitable for the regular passage of horses, equestrian and farm vehicles associated with Sandall House Farm" the Parish Council consider this makes no sense. The track was constructed by specialist contractors for the use of horses on a regular basis. There is no "significant amount of traffic" using this area other than a lightweight Polaris vehicle on occasions (never using the new drive) and a tractor perhaps once a month.

The scheme provides more hardstanding in a flood risk zone where any hardstanding will restrict the ability of the ground to absorb flood water from the brook. This will inevitably impact upon neighbouring properties when the brook "flash floods".

Parish Councillors view this retrospective application as yet another example of the constant incremental development taking place at the site, and consider this method of gaining planning permission as a growing abuse of the planning system.

The proposed flag pole was considered by the Parish Council to be totally out of keeping with the Green Belt and Arden Special Landscape Area. This element has been deleted from the scheme.

Environment Agency: Comments awaited at time of writing report.

Ramblers Association: No objection.

RELEVANT POLICIES

- DP11 - Drainage (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- RAP13 - Directing New Outdoor Leisure and Recreation Development (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- National Planning Policy Framework
- DP1 - Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP2 - Amenity (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)

PLANNING HISTORY

Sandall House Farm has historically been agricultural however planning history indicates that the site became a mixed agricultural/equestrian use in the mid 1980's.

Between 1985 to 2007 the land and buildings were used as a show jumping training facility along with the training of race horses, and the keeping of livestock. Several applications were submitted during this time to improve the equestrian facilities on site. It is understood that the land stabled around 34 horses; however by virtue of planning permission for an additional stable block in 2005, the capacity of the yard for stabling of horses grew to 48. In 2007 the land was sold to the applicant who runs the site for the schooling, training and starting yard for sport horses.

Supporting information indicates that there are currently 27 horses stabled at the farm, with a lawful capacity to stable up to 44 horses, reduced from 48 following the planning permission in April 2009 under application W08/1679.

The most recent/relevant applications are identified below:

W/08/1679 - New stable block, new access, farm drive and bridge (retrospective), construction of external staircase to grooms accommodation and enlargement of domestic curtilage. This permission allowed for the reduction of the lawful capacity of horses stabled at the farm to 44: Granted 2nd April 2009

W/10/0034 - Construction of horse exercise pen: Granted 21st March 2012.

KEY ISSUES

The Site and its Location

The application site is located on the northern side of Narrow Lane, between Santan Farm and Sanbrook Farm, within the Green Belt and Arden Ancient Landscape Area. It is a substantial equestrian establishment with a range of buildings of various ages and designs.

Details of the Development

Planning permission (retrospective) is sought for two hardcore drives within the site. A 50 metre length drive orientated southeast to northwest will link the bridge to the stabling complex running past the horse exercise pen. A 150 metre length drive orientated southwest to northeast will run parallel to the looped section of the horse exercise track, which the applicant states is located centrally within the site and experiences a significant amount of traffic.

The applicant states that without this hardstanding the routes were prone to water logging and heavy mud during wet periods.

The scheme originally included a 6 metre high flag pole at the entrance to the site to fly a national flag, however this has been deleted from the scheme due to concerns that it would not be appropriate development within the Green Belt.

Assessment

The main factors relevant to the consideration of the application are: the principle for development within the Green Belt; the siting of the drives and any other matters.

Principle

The National Policy Planning Framework April 2012 advises in Section 9. Protecting Green Belt land (paragraph 89) that provision of facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation can be considered as appropriate development within the Green Belt, as long as schemes preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

In this case the application site relates to an existing and established equestrian site used for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation. While hardstanding can have an urbanising impact upon the openness of the Green Belt this development relates directly to the movement of horses across key routes within the site, which are prone to becoming waterlogged and muddy. The proposed scheme is therefore considered to represent appropriate development within the Green Belt and is acceptable accordingly.

Siting/impact upon visual amenity

The scheme does not involve built form and the development has not raised ground levels. Although a public footpath runs through the main site the hardcore drives do not appear conspicuous from public vantage points and the 150 metre drive sits adjacent to a hedgerow that provides screening from lower land levels on Narrow Lane. The Ramblers Association have raised no objection to the scheme.

Other matters

The 50m drive and part of the 150m drive is located within Flood Zone 3. The applicant states that the drives have been constructed with a porous surface, namely a loose rubble base and hardcore surface. The NPPF Technical Guidance identifies outdoor sports and recreation and essential facilities such as changing rooms as water compatible development.

No further conditions are suggested for this retrospective application, however the Environment Agency have been consulted given the site's flood zone 3 location and conditions may be suggested within late representations if requested by the Environment Agency.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY OF DECISION

In the opinion of the District Planning Authority, the development does not prejudice the openness and rural character of this green belt area and is considered to comply with the policies listed.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT.
