

**HAT/20322 – Grey Fox Racing
Erection of office, tack room, store, storage barn and temporary dwelling
(retrospective) and change of use of land to equestrian
Grey Fox Stables, Hatford, Faringdon**

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 The application is for an office, tack room, store, storage barn, and temporary dwelling. It should be noted that the temporary dwelling is already on the site, albeit in a slightly different position than that now proposed.
- 1.2 Extracts from the application plans are at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 The application comes to Committee as the Parish Meeting objects to the application.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 HAT/15051/13 - Change of use of existing building to equestrian. Erection of store building. Permitted in January 2006.

3.0 Planning Policies

- 3.1 Policy DC1 of the adopted Local Plan requires new development to be of a high design quality in terms of layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials to be used, and its relationship with adjoining buildings, and to take into account local distinctiveness.
- 3.2 Policy DC5 of the adopted Local Plan requires safe and convenient access and parking.
- 3.3 Policy DC9 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to ensure development will not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties and the wider environment.
- 3.4 Policy H13 of the adopted Local Plan states that new dwellings outside the built up area will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated to be essential to meet the needs of an agricultural, equestrian or other rural enterprise genuinely requiring a countryside location.
- 3.5 Policy E20 of the adopted Local Plan enables proposals for the keeping, rearing, training and livery of horses on a commercial basis providing it would have safe access, would not result in the erosion of soil or vegetation, and would not harm the physical characteristics of the site or its landscape setting.
- 3.6 Policy GS2 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to resist development within the open countryside
- 3.7 Policy NE9 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to resist development that would have an adverse impact on the countryside within the Lowland Vale
- 3.8 Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

4.0 Consultations

190/07

- 4.1 Hatford Parish Meeting objects to the proposal. Their comments are at **Appendix 2**.
- 4.2 Stanford in the Vale Parish Council (the neighbouring parish) does not object but requests the following issue be given consideration: the entrance to the property is on a tight bend; this was the scene of a recent fatality.
- 4.4 County Engineer – “The proposals at New Barn Farm for the access, and the improvements for this as shown on the additional plans, including vision splays, and the passing bay details, are considered to be acceptable.”
- 4.3 Principal Drainage Engineer – “A foul drainage assessment has not been submitted. Planning consent should be made conditional on the submission and approval of drainage details.”
- 4.4 An Equestrian Consultant has been commissioned to advise the Council on the merits of the proposal. Their comments can be seen at **Appendix 3**.
- 4.5 1 letter of objection has been received from a neighbouring resident whose comments can be summarised as follows:
- The application site was sold off separately from New Barn
 - Concerns raised with regard to the proliferation of buildings within the open countryside
 - Concerns raised with regard to the environmental and visual impacts of the proposal on the countryside, and neighbouring properties
 - Concerns raised with regard to highway safety i.e. from the access, and traffic generation

5.0 **Officer Comments**

- 5.1 The application site was the subject of a planning permission to convert the existing barn into stables in 2006. The existing barn, therefore, already has permission for its use as commercial stabling. Permission was also granted for a store building to the south of the site, not dissimilar to the size and scale of the building to the south now proposed. The current application proposes an additional building for storage, an office and staff room, and a temporary mobile home, together with associated hardstanding.
- 5.2 A proportion of the site has already been hardsurfaced, and whilst it this is a relatively large area, it is considered that a degree of hardsurfacing as a yard area is necessary for the operation of a commercial stable business. The additional building now proposed is adjacent to the yard area and would face the existing stable building. The applicants have expressed a need for this building in association with the existing business. Given the existing use of the site, and the fact that the additional building would be located adjacent to the yard area, Officers do not consider that it would have a harmful impact on the open countryside.
- 5.3 A temporary mobile home is also proposed, which it is noted is currently on the

site, albeit in a slightly different location. The applicant has stated that there is a need for a full time member of staff on the site at all times to care for the horses. In this regard the Supporting Statement states that racehorses are highly strung and volatile animals, and require constant supervision. The applicant does not consider that this need could be met by providing accommodation in the neighbouring village, as this is approximately 2.5km away. Local Plan Policy H13 states that a new dwelling would only be permitted if it is essential to meet the needs of an equestrian enterprise. PPS7 requires such proposals to fulfil a functional test to establish whether a worker is required to be available in site at all times, and a financial test to establish whether the business is viable, in this regard the Council has consulted an external equestrian consultant to assess the proposal. The consultant's full comments can be seen at Appendix 3. In the conclusion he states "against the key tests for a mobile home we conclude i) there is evidence of intention and ability; ii) there is and will be a need for a resident worker; iii) there is clear evidence of sound financial planning; iv) no other dwelling could meet the need; and v) siting is acceptable from a managerial point of view." In light of these comments Officers consider that there is clear evidence that this proposal does meet the functional and financial tests as set out within PPS7. Notwithstanding this, concerns were raised with regard to the original siting of the mobile home, which appeared visually separated from the existing enterprise, and consequently was considered to be harmful to the open countryside. An amended plan has been received which locates the mobile home within the existing and proposed cluster of buildings. No objections are therefore raised to the revised siting. It is considered that a temporary period of three years is appropriate, or when the business ceases to be in operation, if sooner.

- 5.4 The applicants have provided additional information and plans relating to alterations to the existing access and driveway, which include improvements to the vision splays, and the provision of passing bays. The County Engineer considers the proposal to be acceptable if these alterations are completed. Whilst the proposal would likely result in an increase in traffic flows, it should be noted that permission has already been granted for the conversion of the existing barn to stables. The County Engineer considers that the improvements to the access and driveway would improve the existing situation. It is considered that there is sufficient parking, turning and manoeuvring within the site.

6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 *It is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the following conditions.*

1. *TL1 Time limit*
2. *MC1 Submission of materials*
3. *RE7 Submission of Boundary Details*
4. *The temporary dwelling hereby permitted shall only be occupied by a person employed full-time in the equestrian business within the application site*

5. *The temporary dwelling shall be removed from the site on or before the 30th April 2011, or at such time as the equestrian business within the application site, ceases, if this is before the specified period. At such time the land shall be reinstated to its original condition.*
6. *The improvements to the access and driveway as shown on the submitted plans No.GFR/08/01 and GFR/08/02 shall be completed within 6 months of the date of this permission.*
7. *MC20 This permission is granted in accordance with the amended/additional plans
(relating to revised siting, and access/driveway improvements).*