

**AGENDA ITEM NO: 8/3(f)**

<b>Parish:</b>	<b>Hockwold cum Wilton</b>	
<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Retention of use of stables for addition of single w.c., shower and handbasin, in stable no.7, with waste discharging into septic tank. Use of Stable 6 as a reception area. Use of hay store as a staff / seated 'rest' area and food preparation area</b>	
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Soay Farm Cowles Drove Hockwold cum Wilton Norfolk</b>	
<b>Applicant:</b>	<b>Soay Farm Stables</b>	
<b>Case No:</b>	<b>17/00853/F (Full Application)</b>	
<b>Case Officer:</b>	<b>Mrs C Dorgan</b>	<b>Date for Determination: 27 June 2017 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 6 October 2017</b>

**Reason for Referral to Planning Committee** – The views of Hockwold Parish Council are contrary to the Officer recommendation.

**Case Summary**

The site is located on Cowles Drove, a rural site to the west of the village of Hockwold. The site comprises a series of paddocks with blocks of stables located to the south of the site with access and parking located adjacent to.

The application is for full planning permission for the retention of the use of stables as a wc, shower and hand basin in stable 7; the use of stable 6 as a reception area; and the use of the hay store as a staff/ seated rest area and food preparation area. The stables were granted planning consent in July 2016 under reference 16/00442/CU.

**Key Issues**

Principle of development  
Form and character  
Economic case  
Other material considerations

**Recommendation****APPROVE****THE APPLICATION**

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the hay store as a staff/ seated rest area and food preparation area. The stables were granted planning consent in July 2016 under reference 16/00442/CU.

The applicant makes the case that given the nature of the stables/ livery business, the owner, employees and visitors would be required to spend a large amount of time on site and therefore these facilities are necessary to run the business.

## **SUPPORTING CASE**

The applicant (who is also the owner and chief operator for the business) has many years' experience in the livery and boarding of horses and simply wishes to make a modest living within her area of passion and expertise. The applicant bought Soay Farm with an existing planning approval for the stables and equine care. Since then she has invested both her time and money heavily in the appearance and service of the site and stables. This, together with the information given on the Statement of Intent / Business Plan, show how serious the applicant is about the business.

The application is for the 'cold food prep. area', 'day room' and 'shower & toilet facility'. The applicant, due to the nature of the business, spends many hours at a time on site (up to 12no. hours on any given day). Also, the job is very often a dirty one. Therefore, the applicant wishes to have a food preparation area so that she can prepare a decent level of meal for both lunch and dinner, a washing and toiletry room for both herself and visitors (of which there is / will be many) to use and a 'day room' (or which constitutes a seating area and television) to sit comfortably for her meal breaks and breaks generally.

To conclude. Surely it is not unreasonable to expect the applicant to wish to provide amenity for a comfortable working environment. The applicant does not live, or spend any overnight time at the location and the above rooms proposed does not constitute evidence of such. We live in a world now where health and safety and working conditions are required to be of a high standard, and quite rightly so. These standards apply, or should be allowed to, to Soay Farm also. Would the committee members seriously expect anyone to work such long hours in an environment that didn't have the proposed?

Finally. The Parish Council have objected due to the "appearance" of the stables business. Stable businesses exist to the entrance of Cowles Drove and just beyond (to the opposite side of the main road). Other animals are catered for along Cowles Drove (dogs and fishery). I am sure that anyone who has viewed Soay Farm would agree with me that is extremely well kept and tastefully decorated. There is a new 1.83m timber fence surrounding a paddock area to the direct East of Soay Farm but this is under separate ownership and certainly nothing to do with Soay Farm. The stables on Soay Farm have been approved. Therefore, I am confused, to say the least, by the Parish comments.

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

16/01852/F: Application Refused: 04/05/17 - Retention of fully equipped staff room, office/ reception, family bathroom and storage room in existing stable - Soay Farm, Cowles Drove

16/00442/CU: Application Permitted: 15/07/16 - Retention of existing stabling and paddocks, and business use for accommodation and livery of horses. - Soay Farm, Cowles Drove

09/00864/F: Application Refused: 25/08/09 - Erection of agricultural building to house sheep and temporary residential dwelling in connection with early fat lamb enterprise - Soay Farm

## RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

**Parish Council:** The Parish Council voted to **OBJECT** to the plan. The plan is out of character to the area. The Parish Council are concerned about the above mentioned plan at Soay Farms. We are under the impression that it is currently being used as a residence for more than one individual. Can you tell the Parish Council if it is currently being investigated, and if anything is being done to rectify it?

**Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION.** Cowles Drove is largely un-adopted as public road and therefore I have no objection to the principle of development.

**Public Rights of Way (NCC): NO OBJECTION.** We do not have any objections to the application in respect to the development of the site itself. However it should be noted that the access to the site is via Cowle's Drove, a PROW (Hockwold Cum Wilton BOAT 8) which runs adjacent to the development site and provides access. Access to the route must remain available at all times during construction and subsequent occupation. Any damage to the surface of the route by the exercise of private rights remains the responsibility of the applicant to repair and maintain.

**Internal Drainage Board: NO OBJECTION.**

**CSNN: NO OBJECTION.** I take it from the second bullet point response that the foul water actually drains to a cess pit, rather than a septic tank, if it is a contained unit with no discharge facility? The applicant will need to be sure that a reliable system is in place to ensure the tank never reaches capacity and is routinely pumped/sucked out, to avoid any discharge of waste onto or into surrounding land, as this will cause contamination.

I note the horse manure and bedding is not stored on site for longer than 72 hours. The EPA informative will address any issues, should anything change in this regard in the future.

**REPRESENTATIONS** None received.

## NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework – sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

National Planning Practice Guidance - Provides National Planning Practice Guidance, in support of and in addition to the NPPF

## LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

**CS06** - Development in Rural Areas

**CS10** - The Economy

## SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016

**DM15** – Environment, Design and Amenity

**DM2** – Development Boundaries

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- Principle of Development
- Form and Character
- Economic Case
- Other Material Considerations

### **Principle of Development**

The stables and paddocks have already been granted planning consent in 2016 (under reference 16/00442/CU) for business use for accommodation and livery of horses. The applicant changed the use of some of these stables from stables/ hay stores to a reception, bathroom, and staff room and this application seeks to retain these for the purposes of the business.

An application was refused in May 2017 for the retention of these same facilities, and the reason given was that the nature of the 'rooms' and the personal effects within them indicated a level of domestication of the stables which does not accord with the permitted use of the site as a business. The applicant had not, as part of this previous application, provided any information to demonstrate why this scale of development was required.

In contrast as part of this application the applicant has provided a business case and this sets out the current and projected income, outgoing and projected profit. It is accepted that as a business use some facilities would be required for employees on site. The applicant has removed some of the personal effects from the stables and has assured us those remaining will all be removed shortly.

The site is located within the countryside, and in line with policies CS06 and CS10, employment uses are supported in the countryside. However the Parish Council have raised concerns that there are people living at the site, rather than just working there. The enforcement team have visited the site and there is no evidence that the stables are being used as a residence. An application for residential development in this location would not be successful and is contrary to policies CS06 of the Core Strategy and DM2 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan. If this application were approved it is recommended that conditions are attached to the consent to control the uses which are the subject of this application.

### **Form and character**

Few external changes have been made to the stables, aside from a glazed patio door to the staff room, and a domestic style door to the reception area, neither of which are visible from the highway. Also, the septic tank and plumbing/drainage is also largely screened from the highway. A further reception window and sign is proposed for the reception/ office which would be more visible but still in keeping with the existing use. Therefore in terms of form and character, this application has little impact on the rural form and character in this locality.

### **Economic case**

The applicant has submitted a Business Plan to justify the need for the facilities provided. To date there are no horses in the stables, although are some in the paddocks. The applicant has stated the stables need improvement works before the business can operate fully, and these repairs will follow this consent. It is accepted that a wc, hand basin and some rest facilities and a food preparation area may be necessary. It does appear that the applicant has provided more than required, however providing these are only used in connection with the business it is recommended that this should not be considered a reason for refusal.

## Other material considerations

There are no highway concerns to the proposed scheme, and aside from the Parish Council there have been no objections raised from the statutory consultees.

## CONCLUSION

The principle of a stables / livery business on this site has already been accepted, and the consent has already been granted. This application is to regularise the changes of use of some of the stables to a wc, wash basin and shower, a reception area, and a staff room to provide facilities for employees working on the site. The applicant makes the case that given the nature of the business, and the location of the site these facilities are necessary and commensurate.

In principle the need for facilities to support an existing rural business is in line with Local Plan policy. However the Parish Council has raised concerns that the stables are being used as a residence and the Enforcement Team have investigated this. To date there has been insufficient evidence to prove this is the case. However if the application were to be approved it is recommended conditions are attached accordingly to control the use of the stables.

## RECOMMENDATION:

**APPROVE** subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

- 1 Condition The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans (Drawing Nos 033 0301, 02, 03 and 04).
- 1 Reason For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 2 Condition The development hereby approved shall be limited to the retention of use Stable 7 as a wc and shower room/store, the use of the Hay Store as a Staff/Seated "rest" area and food preparation area with associated foul drainage and the use of Stable 6 as an Office/Reception and associated stables as defined on Dwg 033/3/03/B (Proposed stables floor plan).
- 2 Reason To define the terms of the consent and for the avoidance of doubt.