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Planning Department
Horsham District Council
Parkside, Chart Way
Horsham
West Sussex RH12 1RL

Dear Sir/Madam

DC/20/1205: Construction of stables and sand school: Pemberley, Copsale Road, Maplehurst
(amended plans dated 26 October 2020 and further amended plan dated 17 November 2020)

Background

The applicant recently applied to convert a barn/stable to a dwelling house (DC/19/2117). This was refused planning permission by HDC because:

"The proposal would create a dwellinghouse, outside the limits of any town or village, and represents an undesirable form of sporadic residential development which is not essential to its countryside location, and would not meet the requirements for an essential need of a rural worker. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies 1, 2, 3, 20 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), and would conflict with the aims of the NPPF, in particular Paragraph 79."

The Planning Inspectorate dismissed the applicant's appeal on similar grounds.

The original application

The original application proposed the construction of a large stable block with three stables, four foaling stables, feed store, hay store, tack room, refreshment room and toilet and a large 60m by 30m sand school. This is in addition to the existing barn/stable block and a mobile field shelter/stable.

The amended application

The applicant submitted the following amended plans on 26 October 2020: location and block plans, proposed sand school and proposed stable elevations and on 17 November 2020 a further amended location and block plan. The Parish Council notes that the amendments to the plans could only be discovered by comparing the amended plans with the original plans because the applicant provided no explanation of the amendments. This is not satisfactory. When amended plans are submitted applicants should be required to describe the amendments and state why they have been made.

The Parish Council notes that the main amendments appear to be, presumably in an attempt to mitigate the effect on the Grade II listed Sheepwash Farm:

- Proposals to plant hedging/trees to the south west and south east sides of the proposed stable block and sand school and along the edge of the entrance track;
- To partially recess the stable block into the ground; and
- To change the appearance of the stable block with “openings” shown as brown instead of white.

The Parish Council also notes that it is now clear that the applicant intends to operate a commercial business from this site.

The Parish Council remains extremely concerned about this proposal because:

- 1) The applicant’s intention is to change the use of the site from one of personal use to a commercial business.** The applicant should have applied for permission for a change of use to a commercial equestrian business, including a stud farm and horse training facilities.
- 2) This is not a sustainable site for a commercial business.** It would lead to more traffic movements from farriers, vets, horse physiotherapists, behavioural specialists, feed delivery lorries and prospective customers of trained horses. This is a countryside location with narrow lanes and would increase the traffic hazards for existing local residents and the many cyclists who use the lanes in Maplehurst.
- 3) Vehicular access and parking.** The application has made no provision for vehicular access to the stable block and no provision for vehicle parking.
- 4) Noise and odour pollution.** The amount of activity associated with this proposed commercial business will generate excessive noise and smell.
- 5) There has been no attempt to re-configure/extend the existing barn/stable block (which has 7 stables) to make it appropriate for the applicant’s horses including the bigger horse (17hh) the applicant has chosen to buy.** This should have been a next step by the applicant.
- 6) This site would contain three stable blocks which constitutes sporadic development in the countryside.** (The existing stable block, the mobile field shelter and the proposed new stable block). This littering of the countryside with structures should be resisted and especially as the site is visible from Copsale Road and it adjoins Sheepwash Farm, a Grade II Listed Building.

7) The applicant has not stated what will happen to the existing barn/stable block. If this application is granted permission, then it is expected that the existing barn/stable block will be block declared redundant and there will be a renewed application for its change of use to a dwelling.

8) The proposed sand school at 60m by 30m (when the usual manège size is 40m by 20m and international manège size is 60m by 20m) **appears excessively large.**

9) The proposed recessing of the stable block and planting of hedging/trees will only provide marginal mitigation of the adverse effect on the Grade II listed Sheepwash Farm. There is virtually no gradient at the proposed location of the stable block, therefore recessing will be minimal. Sheepwash Farm is very much higher than the proposed sand school, therefore the structures will be still be visible from Sheepwash Farm and affect its setting.

Conclusion

The Parish Council strongly objects to this application on the following grounds:

1) The proposed stable block and the sand school, by nature of their form and position, represent sporadic development in the countryside and would cause material harm to the visual amenities and character of this rural area. Therefore the proposal contravenes policies 3 and 4 of HDC's Planning Framework which seek to protect the countryside from such developments.

2) The proposed new stable block is not "essential" as there is already a barn/stable block that could be extended/converted to provide for the applicant's needs. It will cause material harm to the character of the rural area. Therefore the proposal conflicts with policy 25 of HDC's Planning Framework because it does not protect, conserve or enhance the landscape and policy 26 of HDC's Planning Framework on "Countryside Protection".

3) The proposed development has an unacceptable adverse effect on the setting of "Sheepwash Farm", a Grade II Listed Building. It lies within the setting of this heritage asset and it will be very visible from the heritage asset. Therefore the proposal conflicts with policy 34 of HDC's Planning Framework which seeks to protect heritage assets.

The Parish Council also notes, and supports, the comprehensive objections to this application submitted by the owner of "Sheepwash Farm".

The Parish Council strongly urges HDC to refuse permission for this application on the above grounds.

Yours sincerely
Sarah Hall

Sarah Hall
Clerk to Nuthurst Parish Council