

**UTT/14/3326/FUL (Little Canfield)**

(MAJOR APPLICATION)

**PROPOSAL:** Change of use of land, erection of stable building and construction of surfaced exercise area, all in connection with the keeping of and exercising of horses

**LOCATION:** Land east of Ladlers, Stortford Road, Little Canfield

**APPLICANT:** Mr and Mrs Rea

**AGENT:** Alun Design Consultancy

**EXPIRY DATE:** 26 February 2015

**CASE OFFICER:** Lee Smith-Evans

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**1. NOTATION**

1.1 Outside development limits, gas pipeline, within 6km of Stansted Airport. Development Affecting Listed Buildings.

**2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

- 2.1 The application relates to two fields of 12.34 hectares to the east of a group of buildings forming as a farmstead around Little Canfield Hall, a listed building. Between the Hall and the field is a mature row of trees with a loose hedge under layer. The fields are currently used for agriculture and have a small herd of cows grazing on one whilst the other is arable, producing fodder for the cattle.
- 2.2 The applicant resides in the closest building to the fields which is Ladlers, a barn that has been recently converted into a dwelling. The farm complex built around Little Canfield Hall sites behind the applicant's house, to the west of the site
- 2.3 The site is open to agricultural fields to the south, east and north with the A120 being a field away to the north, a distance of some 270 metres. Access to the field is from the long private drive leading to the Hall with a small track diverting from this road directly to the field and the modern, metal clad, barns from which the applicants run their farm business. To the south is Stortford Road from which the site and neighbouring uses are accessed via the long private drive.

**3. PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The proposal is to change the use of fields owned by the applicant for an equestrian use, providing a fully serviced livery for horses. In association with this use the proposals include an all-weather surface enclosed by post and rail fencing and a stable complex for 20 horses. It should be noted that the floodlights in the original description of the proposal have been omitted from the application. The site is located close to the applicants dwelling to provide security and observation of the livery.
- 3.2 The stable block is almost a square of 34 x32 metres facing onto an internal exercise area that has a circular horse walking apparatus in the centre. Storage rooms, tack rooms and changing facilities are located in the corners of the square. The external

sides of the square are low key, single storey with a slack pitched slate roof with minimal fenestration provided to the stable units as grilled windows with louver covers. The stable block has an entrance feature on the south side which is a tall central gable in the elevation with high gates. The northern end which provides direct access in the ménage for horses is open in the centre with smaller gates enclosing the central yard.

- 3.3 The Stable block is predominantly finished in black weather board above a red brick plinth. It will be roofed in natural slate with a tiled ridge.
- 3.4 There has been provision made for the parking cars for staff and horse owners which includes provision for the storage of client's horse boxes that may be left at the livery. This parking has been placed at the south of the site at the closest point to where clients will arrive. Some landscaping has been provided to screen the parking from Ladlers.
- 3.5 There are additional elements of landscaping provided across the wider site to provide some mitigation on the visual impact of cars and vehicles on the predominantly residential buildings in the farmstead and in particular the listed building Little Canfield Hall. The details of the additional landscape are poorly described in the drawings although the necessary provision of it is acknowledged in principle.

#### **4. APPLICANT'S CASE**

- 4.1 As part of the application submission the following supporting statements have been submitted;
  - Design and Access Statement;
  - Organic Livery description and justification by Sworders
  - Business Case
  - British Horse Society Guidance
- 4.2 The applicant proposes a full commercial livery which would use organic parameters as much as possible. This would be in line with the ethos of the farm from which has Soil Association certificated organic fields. The proposal would provide full livery services for up to 20 horses. Full livery provides for the feeding, exercising, cleaning and care of the horses by the employees of the livery which is unlike standard liveries where the horse owners rent a stable and care for their own animals themselves.
- 4.3 The business case submitted by the applicants establishes that the applicants have qualifications and experience suited to the business. The research indicates that full livery services do not exist in the locality and the applicants have letters of support that indicate demand and potential customers. The applicants propose that the organic philosophy of the farm and the Livery have greater benefits for the environment and wildlife than a non-organic similar facility.
- 4.4 The livery will employ up to 10 part time staff when the livery is full.

#### **5. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY**

- 5.1 The proposals were the subject of pre application advice in 2010. The advice indicated that the facility could be located within the complex of existing farm buildings, since this time many of the buildings within the complex have been converted to residential uses.

#### **6. POLICIES**

## 6.1 National Policies

- National Planning Policy Framework

## 6.2 Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005

- Policy S7 - The Countryside
- Policy GEN1 - Access
- Policy GEN2 – Design
- Policy GEN3 – Flood risk protection
- Policy GEN5 – Light Pollution
- Policy GEN8 - Vehicle Parking Standards
- Policy E4 - Farm Diversification: Alternative use of Farmland
- Policy ENV2 – Development affecting Listed Buildings
- Policy ENV4 – Sites of Archaeological importance
- Policy ENV5 – Protection of Agricultural Land

## 7. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

### Little Canfield Parish Council

- 7.1 The Parish Council has not responded.

## 8. CONSULTATIONS

### ECC Highways Authority

- 8.1 No Objection

### Natural England

- 8.2 No Objection

### National Grid – Gas

- 8.3 No Objection

### ECC Archaeology

- 8.4 The following recommendations are in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATION: A Programme of Trial Trenching followed by Open Area

## Excavation

1. No development or preliminary groundworks can commence until a programme of archaeological trial trenching has been secured and undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the planning authority.
2. A mitigation strategy detailing the excavation/preservation strategy shall be submitted to the local planning authority following the completion of this work.
3. No development or preliminary groundworks can commence on those areas containing archaeological deposits until the satisfactory completion of fieldwork, as detailed in the mitigation strategy, and which has been signed off by the local planning authority through its historic environment advisors.
4. The applicant will submit to the local planning authority a post-excavation assessment (to be submitted within six months of the completion of fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Planning Authority). This will result in the completion of post-excavation analysis, preparation of a full site archive and report ready for deposition at the local museum, and submission of a publication report.

## **National Grid –Electricity**

- 8.5 Standard Response – no objection

## **Essex Ecology Services**

- 8.6 Thank you for consulting us on the above application. I note the 'no' answers on the biodiversity questionnaire and having reviewed the aerial image I agree with this. The site appears to be an expanse of arable land with some boundary trees. Any boundary trees and hedgerows should be retained.  
I have no further comments or objections.

## **Health and Safety Executive**

- 8.7 No Objection

## **9. REPRESENTATIONS**

- 9.1 None received.

## **10. APPRAISAL**

- 10.1 The issues to consider in the determination of the application are:

- A Principle of development and impact on countryside (NPPF, ULP Policy S7 of ULP)
- B Compliance with Policy E4 Farm Diversification:
- C Protection of Agricultural Land (Policy ENV5 of ULP)
- D Whether access and parking arrangements would be satisfactory (Policy GEN2 of ULP)
- E Assimilation of the proposal into the countryside and landscaping (S7 of ULP)
- F Impact upon Listed Buildings (Policy ENV2 of ULP)
- G Impact on Archaeology (Policy ENV2 of ULP)

- A Principle of development and impact on countryside (NPPF, ULP Policy S7 of**

## **ULP)**

- 10.2 The proposals in the context of government guidance are considered acceptable as the NPPF (chapter 3) promotes the development and diversification of agricultural land and the growth of rural businesses in general. The site is within the countryside and must therefore be considered against the criteria of the ULP policy S7. In this regard the development is considered appropriate to a rural area in principle. A livery is, most often, a rural enterprise and the typology of buildings are intrinsically rural.
- 10.3 The design and layout of the proposal has been amended to relate more appropriately to its location. As such the proposal does impact on the countryside, in that the openness is changed through the addition of a building, but the use of the countryside for this purpose requires such an impact. It can be considered that the potential harm is relatively minimal as views to the location are predominantly only glimpses from public places and the single storey stable block would appear very low in what will be mostly long distance views, predominantly from the A120

## **B Compliance with Policy E4 of ULP, Farm Diversification:**

- 10.4 Policy E4 of the ULP requires that farm diversification includes proposals for landscape and nature conservation enhancement. The application in this regard proposes additional hedging and areas of planting which, whilst primarily intended as screening will provide some benefits to nature conservation as well. It should also be noted that the organic ethos of the proposals as defined in the business plan and Design and Access Statement have inherent positive effects for wildlife and nature conservation.
- 10.5 The other elements of Policy E4 require development to not cause harm to through noise or place unacceptable pressure on the road network. The proposals are not considered to represent harm in either of these aspects, the highway authority has not objected to the proposal. The final aspect of policy E4 states that the proposal must not harm the vitality of the existing agricultural holding. The applicants state that the livery will support the function of the farm with profits being returned to the farm business.

## **C Protection of Agricultural Land (Policy ENV5 of ULP**

- 10.6 The change of use is considered to not cause the loss of agricultural land which is protected under ULP Policy ENV5. This is because the land is currently used for the grazing of cattle and hay making. The basic use of the land is not changed by the proposals in that horses will graze as an alternative to cattle. Although the original pre application advice suggested that the livery may be better located within the existing group of buildings these have subsequently been converted to residential use. This would potentially make the livery a poor neighbour within the farm complex.

## **D Whether access and parking arrangements would be satisfactory (Policy GEN2 of ULP)**

- 10.7 The parking standards adopted by the council allow for uses such as the livery to be considered on a case by case basis. The scheme has been amended to allow for more parking than originally proposed and to also accommodate horse boxes that may be left on site by clients of the livery. The parking has been arranged to provide convenience for clients and has been kept away from the listed buildings to the northwest of the site. The parking has been screened from the applicant's house and is considered appropriately located within the site. As such the application complies with Policy GEN8 of the ULP 2005

## **E Assimilation of the proposal into the countryside and landscaping (S7 of ULP)**

- 10.8 The design of the proposals has been amended during the application at the case officer request. The amendments have involved the reorientation of the stable and ménage to provide greater separation of the new building from the listed Hall. The design of the stable block has also been simplified to better reflect the modest nature of the buildings in the immediate vicinity and appear more appropriate in the rural environment. As such the proposals accord with policy GEN2 of the ULP 2005
- 10.9 The use is a rural one and, as such, will be appropriate to the countryside. The site layout shows the retention of the hedgerows and additional landscape planting to strengthen the offsite boundary to Little Canfield Hall. Other elements of Landscape are proposed that add visual mitigation to vehicle parking areas. The boundary treatments are also suitable to the rural environment and the use. The level of detail for the new areas of hard and soft landscaping is not satisfactory and will require a condition to be imposed on a grant of permission to provide certainty over both the suitability of trees and plant species as well as the suitability and sympathy of hard surface materials for the rural environment. The drawings indicate that permeable surfacing is to be used but have not submitted a surface water drainage strategy. Members may wish to impose a condition to any grant of permission that requires a satisfactory means of surface water drainage is submitted and approved by the local planning authority prior to commencement of the proposals. Providing satisfactory landscaping can be agreed the scheme would be in accordance with Policy GEN2 of the ULP 2005

## **F Impact upon Listed Buildings (Policy ENV2 of ULP)**

- 10.10 The impacts on Little Canfield Hall have been considered by the Councils Conservation Officer and following the amendments to the scheme and relocation of the stable block there is considered to be no adverse impacts on the setting of the listed building. Additional landscaping is proposed to strengthen the existing hedge to the boundary of the Hall, through which glimpses to the Ménage are possible. As such the proposals are in accordance with Policy ENV2 of the ULP 2005

## **G Impact on Archaeology (Policy ENV2 of ULP)**

- 10.11 Members will see from the consultation response form the County Archaeologist that the potential for archaeological interest in the location is high and that a series of works are recommended prior to commencement to investigate. Conditions recommended by the County Archaeologist would ensure the application accords with Policy ENV4 of the ULP 2005.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 The application provides a diversification for the farm business that currently uses the site. The proposals have been amended to include sufficient vehicle parking which is suitably placed within new landscaping. The revised arrangement of stable block and ménage is considered appropriate in the countryside and suitably placed to not harm the setting of Little Canfield Hall (listed building).

## **RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS**

### Conditions/reasons

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from

the date of this decision.

REASON: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. No Flood Lights shall be erected on the site.

REASON: to preserve the openess and character of the countryside and to be in accordance with Policy S7 of the ULP 2005

3. Prior to the commencement of the development a full scheme of hard and soft landscaping shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. Thereafter the scheme shall be completed in accordance with the approved landscape plans.

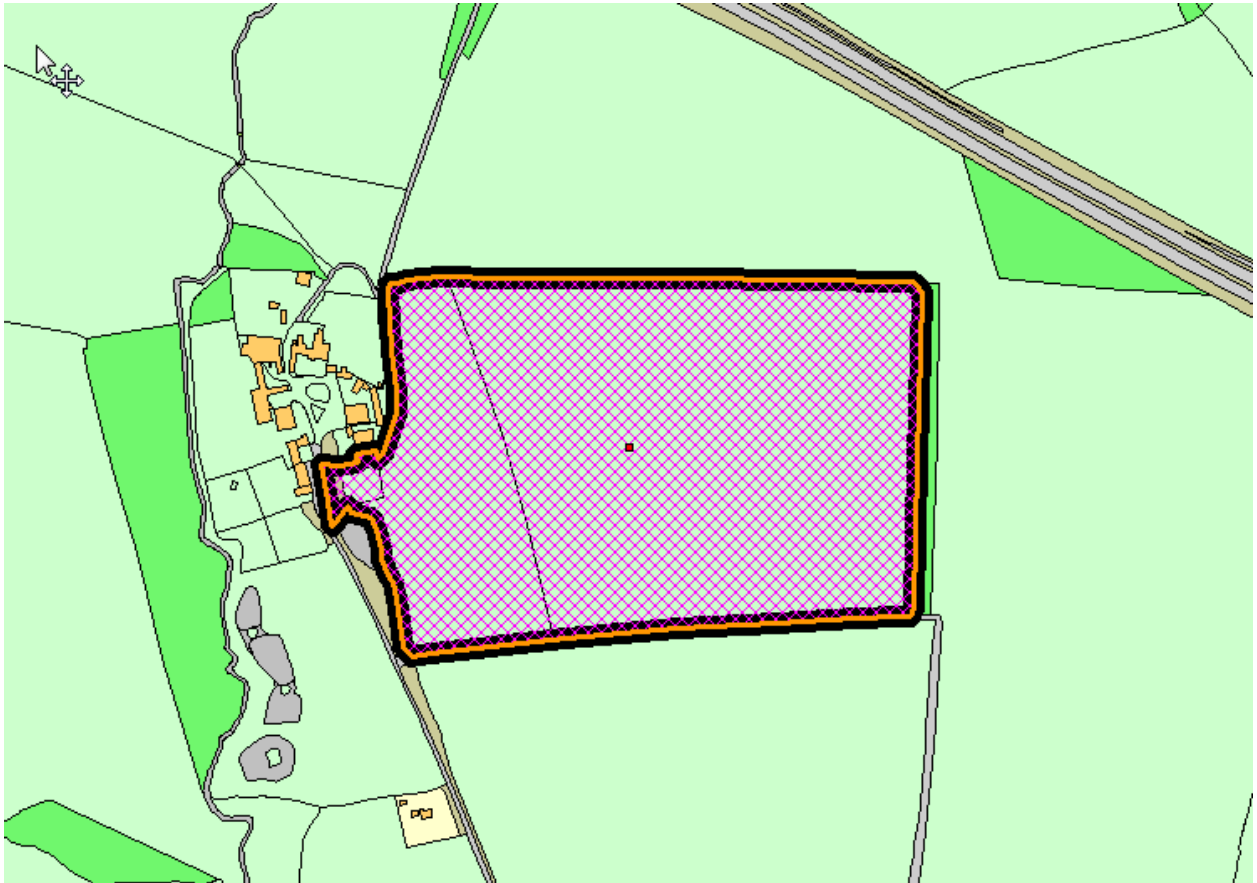
REASON: to ensure that a satisfactory scheme of landscaping appropriate to the countryside setting is created and to be in accordance with policy GEN2 of the ULP 2005

4. Prior to the commencement of the development a scheme of Surface Water Drainage shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the scheme shall be constructed in accordance with the approved surface water drainage scheme.

REASON: to accord with policy GEN3 of the ULP 2005.

Application no.: UTT/14/3326/FUL

Address: Land east of Ladlers, Stortford Road, Little Canfield



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