



Delegated Report

Application No: 20210888

Location: Nurstead Hill Farm, Nurstead Lane, Longfield Hill, Longfield, Gravesend, Kent, DA3 7AN

Description: Application for change of use of storage building (B8) to provision of an equestrian water treadmill for horse rehabilitation.

Applicant: D Broomfield

Site Visit Date: Desktop assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

The applicant has submitted the following in support of the application:

Drawing no. 1839/20 (Site Location Plan) received 14 July 2021;
Drawing no. 1839/21 (Proposed Block Plan) received 14 July 2021;
Drawing no. 1839/23 (Existing Block Plan) received 28 July 2021;
Drawing no. 1839/25 (Site Plan) received 28 July 2021;
Photographs received 28 July 2021;
Application form received 28 July 2021;
Drawing no. 8365-000-50 Rev. 3 (Sheet 1 of 2) (Proposed Equipment Layout) received 29 July 2021;
Design, Access and Planning Statement (ref. 1839) received 1 September 2021;
Photos received 1 September 2021;
Drawing no. 8365-000-50 Rev. 4 received 1 September 2021; and
Drawing no. 8365-000-50 Rev. 4 (Proposed Equipment Layout) received 1 September 2021.

Relevant Planning History

<u>Application No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Decision</u>
20200052	Change of use from agricultural land to provide a touring caravan site for 10 pitches.	Permitted	13.03.2020
20190239	Change of use from agricultural land to provide a touring caravan site for 7 pitches.	Permitted	18.10.2019
20171236	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate in respect of the proposed siting of two additional caravans/mobile homes	Granted	17.10.2018

20131187	Application for Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed siting of an additional two caravans/mobile homes.	Granted	03.04.2014
20130469	Application for approval of condition 5 attached to planning permission reference number 20120896 relating to the method of disposal of waste materials.	Approved	17.07.2013
20120896	Construction of a sand school	Permitted	18.12.2012
20101095	Application for Lawful Development Certificate for the existing use of the southern yard as a residential caravan site.	Granted	23.05.2013
20101094	Application for Lawful Development Certificate for the use of Eclipse Yard to mixed use of land as a residential caravan site with use of open fronted building for caravan storage.	Granted	23.05.2013
19950454	Continued use of farm buildings for storage of touring caravans.	Permitted	15.09.1995
19950457	Application for Lawful Development Certificate in respect of stationing of mobile home for residential use.	Granted	06.09.1995
19950456	Application for Lawful Development Certificate in respect of storage of touring caravans.	Granted	06.09.1995
19930541	Conversion of tack room to single storey dwelling as ancillary accommodation to main dwelling house with use of new farm vehicular access.	Refused Appeal dismissed	21.02.1994 10.08.1994
19920509	Conversion of tack room to single storey dwelling.	Refused	26.01.1993
19870853	Application for Listed Building Consent for demolition of existing rear extension and erection of single storey rear extension to form tack room	Permitted	11.01.1988

19870676

Erection of single storey rear
extension to form tack room

Permitted

08.01.1988

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014

CS01 – Sustainable Development

CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development

CS11 – Transport

CS12 – Green Infrastructure

CS13 – Green Space, Sport and Recreation

CS19 – Design and Development Principles

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994

C11 – Change of Use of Redundant Buildings in the Countryside

T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network

P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF 2021 sets out that those policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and the review found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted, and the need to ensure a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan First Review 1994 generally conform with the NPPF 2021, the Council will also seek to replace these saved policies via the emerging Local Plan.

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development

Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land

Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

SPG4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)

Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

GBC Regulatory Services

Please consider applying the Code of Practice on Construction and Demolition.

Meopham Parish Council

No objection.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by individual neighbour letters to 9 properties, and on site. The consultation periods expired on 29 September and 20 October 2021 respectively.

No letters of representation have been received.

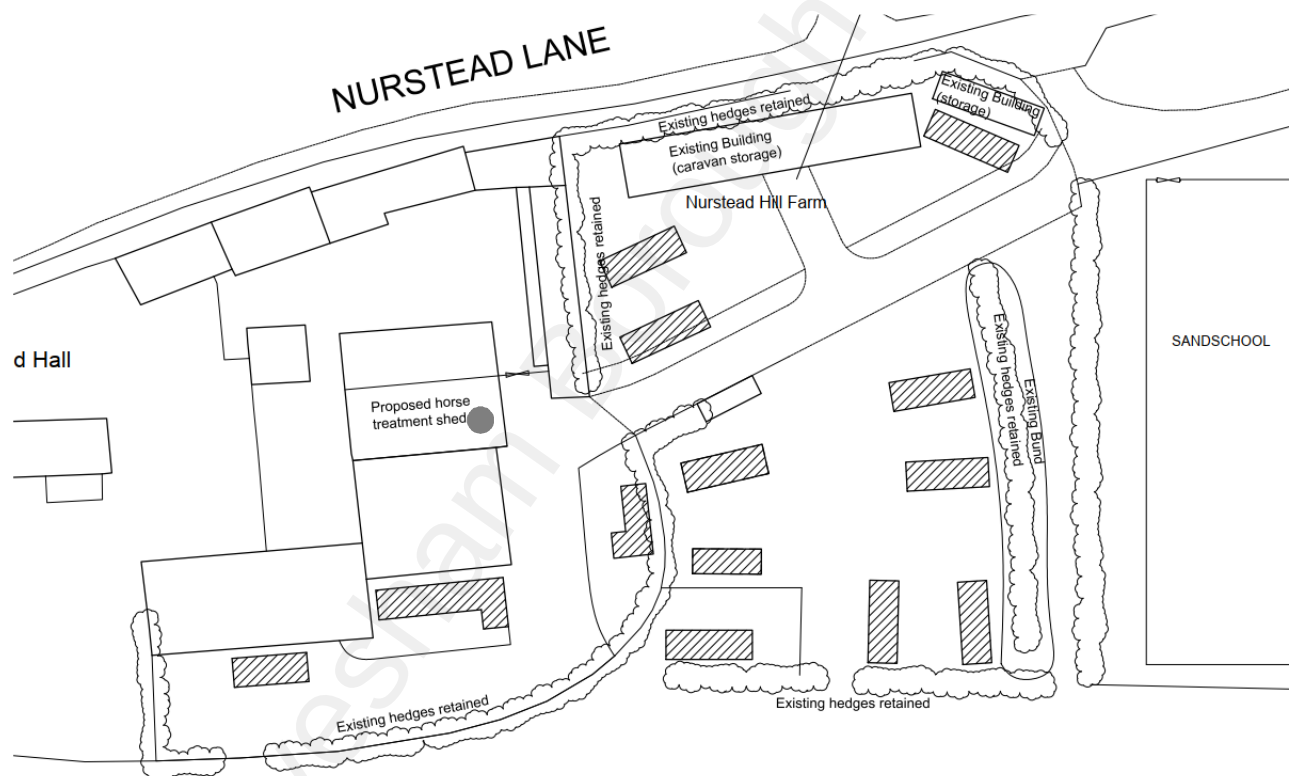
Local Ward Councillors were also consulted and no responses were received.

Analysis

Proposal

This application seeks permission for the change of use of a storage building (B8) for the provision of an equestrian water treadmill for horse rehabilitation.

The existing building consists of a former corn store that has more recently been used for storage. It is a detached portal framed building within the original farmyard.

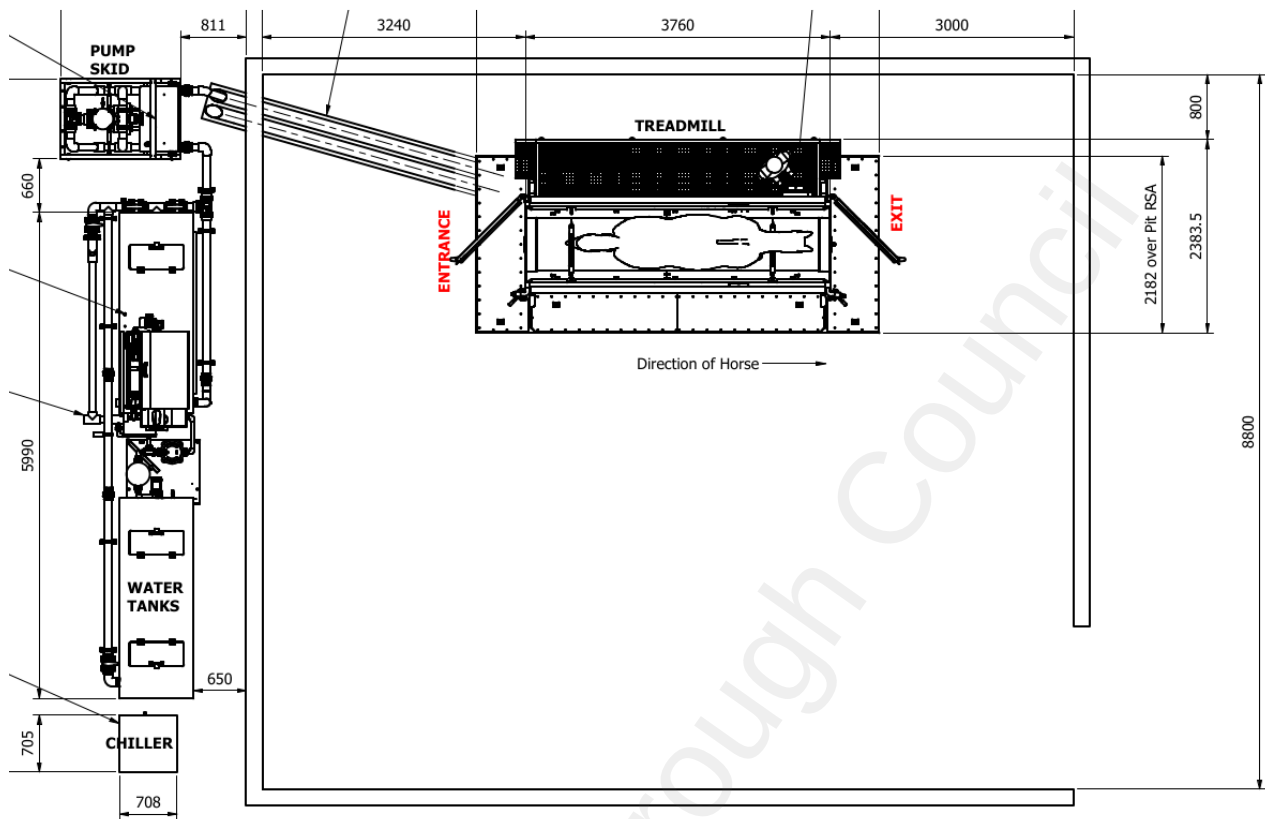


The proposed facility is primarily to serve the needs of horses kept at the site in connection with the applicant's horse breeding business, but it is also intended to offer the facility to local stable yards so that they can benefit from the ability to maintain horse fitness and provide for treatment of injuries.

The water treadmill will be installed within the existing building. It consists of an above ground container with glass walls that allows the horse to be viewed during training. The container allows for a maximum depth of 1m of water for resistance working. It also incorporates an incline feature of up to 12% and a trot rate of up to 12 kph.

The water is held in tanks at the base of the unit and is filtered so that it can be used for up to 6 weeks before there is a need to change the water. It is intended that when the water is drained

from the tanks it will be used for irrigation around the farm.



The procedure for each horse can last between 5 minutes up to 45 minutes and there will be time between each use of the facility to allow the horse to be cleaned down, the water pumped into the facility and then the water removed into the tanks and the horse taken out of the facility.

It is envisaged that the facility will be used for between three and eight procedures per day and it is hoped that some of these slots will be used by local stable yards to treat their horses.

There will be no external alterations to the building.

Principle

The site lies within the Green Belt. Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 states that development in the Green Belt will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt. The NPPF 2021 states that within the Green Belt inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. It goes on to state that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate development unless they fall within a specified range of exceptions.

One of the exceptions within paragraph 149(b) of the NPPF 2021 allows the “provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it”. It is considered that the keeping and exercising of horses can fall within the category of outdoor recreation, which is relevant in terms of the nature of this proposal.

In addition to this, certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt providing they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it (paragraph 150). These developments include (d) the re-use of buildings provided that the

buildings are of permanent and substantial construction. The application involves the change of use of an existing 'permanent and substantial' storage building to house an equestrian water treadmill, and would therefore fall under an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt.

Policy C11 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 precedes and is reflective of paragraph 150 of the NPPF 2021, and allows for the conversion of farm buildings provided in particular that their change of use does not reduce farm viability and that the impact on the landscape is minimised.

Policy C17 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 also states that proposals for the recreational use of land in the countryside for horse-riding, riding schools and the erection of stables will only be permitted if they are compatible with the agricultural, landscape and transport policies of the plan. Whilst the application proposal itself is not one of these specifically mentioned developments, the aim of the policy is relevant in terms of the protection of the landscape in particular.

Therefore the principle of an equestrian water treadmill within this existing (permanent and substantial) building in this location could be acceptable, subject to an assessment of the impact that the development would have on the openness of the Green Belt.

Impact on Openness and Character and Appearance of Surrounding Area

The application building comprises an existing and long-standing outbuilding used as storage. The building sits within a small complex making up Nurstead Hill Farm, which is located to the east of Nurstead Hall. The complex has become more built up since 2000, with the introduction of static caravans alongside the existing farm buildings, the change of use of former agricultural land to keeping horses (including the construction of a sand school) as well as the use of land as a touring caravan site. The site is part of a larger area of surrounding open countryside, and is located at the top of a valley which falls away to the north and to the south-east.

The application site itself is well screened from wider public view; it is located away from the site entrance and is enclosed by tall hedgerow planting and outbuildings around the site boundaries.



East elevation:



West elevation:



The proposal involves utilising an existing building to house the horse treadmill and there will be no changes to the exterior of the existing building, with the exception of the installation of the water tanks, pump and chiller on one end of the building.

Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and whilst there is no definition of openness in planning policy, it is generally accepted to mean the absence of development, both in spatial and visual terms. On this basis, and in considering the requirements of paragraphs 149 and 150 of the NPPF 2021, the proposal would have a negligible impact on the openness of the Green Belt, as the proposal involves the re-use of an existing building with little visual change to the exterior within an existing farm complex.

Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy 2014 also seeks to ensure that the overall landscape character and valued landscapes are conserved, restored and enhanced. The site lies within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area, where the key characteristics are a gently undulating topography with a mixture of arable and pasture land, broad irregular shaped fields and roads lined with hedgerows. The Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment states that these key landscape characteristics should be conserved and reinforced. As the proposal involves the re-use of an existing building, it would have no impact on these characteristics. Overall, it is a scheme that is functional and that will maintain the character and appearance of the site itself and the surrounding area. On this basis, the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, and paragraphs 130, 149 and 150 of the NPPF 2021.

Residential Amenity

The NPPF 2021 states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users (paragraph 130f). The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria within Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants, and those of neighbouring properties and land.

There is already likely to be noise and disturbance associated with the current uses around the site, which operate all year round.

There are residential occupants near to the site, in the mobile homes to the east and the detached dwelling (Nurstead Hall) to the west. However, no neighbour representations have been received in respect of the proposal and no objections are raised from an environmental health perspective. On this basis, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the impact on residential

amenities, and would comply with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2021.

Parking and Highways

There is an existing access to the site from Nurstead Lane, which serves the main site (mobile homes, storage units and equestrian use) as well as the touring caravan site. No changes are proposed to this arrangement. The proposed horse treadmill is largely to serve the horses that are kept on this site as part of the applicant's horse breeding business (stated to be 19 at the time of the application), though the submitted Planning Statement states it is hoped that local stable yards will also take advantage of the proposed facility. Given there is only one treadmill proposed, this is not likely to generate significant traffic levels.

There is space for turning, parking and loading/offloading horses within the existing site, away from the site entrance. The nature of the proposal is such that there is unlikely to be any significant traffic movements or obstructions on or around the site.

There would therefore be no conflict with Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Local Plan 1994 and Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Conclusion

The proposed change of use of the building from storage (B8) to the provision of an equestrian water treadmill for horse rehabilitation is considered appropriate development in the countryside and Green Belt and, due to the nature of the proposed use, is not considered to result in any adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt or landscape character. In addition, due to its nature, the proposal is also considered acceptable in relation to amenity and highway matters. The proposal therefore complies with the requirements of Policies CS02, CS11, CS12, and CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014, Policies C11, C17, T1 and P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994, and paragraphs 130, 149 and 150 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Recommendation:

Approval with conditions.

See draft Decision.

Case Officer: Katherine Parkin	Team Leader: Faye Hobbs
Signed: K. Parkin	Signed: 
Dated: 20/10/2021	Dated: 21 October 2021