

42/2005/045

MR & MRS B CRIDDLE

RETENTION OF FARM BUILDINGS WITHOUT COMPLYING WITH CONDITION 06 OF PERMISSION 42/2004/036, MILL LANE, TRULL

21922/22297

REMOVAL OF ONEROUS CONDITIONS

PROPOSAL

Two planning applications have been submitted, one for the variation of planning permission 42/2004/036 to enable the retention of farm buildings (that were to be demolished in association with the conversion of listed farm barns to a dwelling) and one for the change of use of farm buildings for stables, hay storage, lunge area and tack room and the construction of a outdoor dressage arena.

This application is for the retention of a group of three modern farm buildings (total 42 m x 19 m and up to 8.1 m high) as a horse training facility for the private use of the owner of Haygrove Barn contrary to condition 06 of planning permission 42/2004/036 requiring the removal of the farm buildings to enable a reduction in farm traffic using the Eastbrook Terrace junction and to provide a suitable setting for the listed buildings.

The application is supported by the following statement:- until we were successful in purchasing Haygrove Barn my husband and I had been trying for 2 years to find a suitable house or conversion proposition with enough land to keep my horses at home. All too often we found ourselves priced out of the market as any property with land in more rural areas carries a premium price. Haygrove is particularly suitable for me because it is on a reasonably level site with the house and proposed stables, stores and arena closely grouped together. It is not always obvious but I have injuries to my back and a leg which causes problems with mobility. As you are aware I am a member of the British Paralympic Equestrian Team and as such am supported by UK Sport through the Lottery Fund. I am expected to fulfil my obligations to UK Sport by bringing home Gold Medals. In order to achieve this I train with my horses 6 days a week. Being disabled means that preparing and travelling to training arenas takes me a great deal of time and takes a lot out of me physically. Having the correct facilities at home will allow me to spend more time on training itself and will be less draining on my body. Autumn and winter weather often wreaks havoc on schooling and completion schedules. On windy days horses tend to be more jumpy and on edge, which can lead to me falling off, and when you have frost, ice or snow or even driving rain an arena is impossible to use. Therefore the larger of the barns at Haygrove offers the ideal solution to keeping the horses working well all year around. The barn would also be used as a turnout area because the ground will get too wet and soggy for the horses to be turned out at certain times. If the horses have to spend too much time cooped up in their stables they become more unruly and difficult for me to handle. Having the larger barn to loose school or lunge the horses in will give them the feel of the type of places they can be expected to work in at international competition venues. There are not many

countries who can afford to provide the excellent facilities which we in the UK take for granted. This could mean that I would have that extra edge over my fellow competitors. The facilities that are proposed would be for personal use only and would also mean that we would not be continually going in and out through Eastbrook Terrace.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY no objection provided the development does not result in any increased traffic and is for private ancillary use only.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER the proposed dressage area could be re-sited to reduce its impact on the landscape and public right of way and this would make it easier to provide effective landscaping. CONSERVATION OFFICER if personal circumstances are deemed to warrant justification for non-compliance with the condition I consider that any permission should be made personal to Mrs Criddle, whilst engaged in training, exercising and schooling of horses.

PARISH COUNCIL no objection, provided it is a non-commercial use only and the adjacent footpath is retained and the recently removed stile replaced.

4 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- the modern buildings are of a substantial commercial nature with corrugated roofing and steel portal frames and are out of character with the curtilage of a listed, grade 2, building; the buildings tower above the barn conversion overpowering it; the buildings are tall and prominent in the landscape effecting the setting of and views from Cotlake Hill, a special landscape feature; the buildings are clearly visible from the footpaths adjacent to Haygrove farm and house (Grade 2 listed buildings) and Haygrove Mill; the buildings are in a designated green wedge and will effect views over a wide ranging area contrary to policy if the buildings are no longer needed for agricultural use; the buildings cannot be screened by planting as it will have no material effect in disguising the nature and structure of the buildings; the buildings are labelled as being used as an equestrian centre, including a wide range of activities, if used as a business or by friends it will generate significant traffic beyond that expected for a private dwelling; highways were concerned about traffic associated with one dwelling and various measures were suggested to remove the concern. This did not include improvements at the junction and visibility is hazardous with cars parked in the road adjacent to the junction and any increase in the use of the junction as may arise from this proposal would be dangerous to highway safety; any private use condition would be difficult to enforce inviting contravention; the previous condition should be upheld and the buildings removed from the site to result in a tasteful enterprise and not a commercial enterprise; the new owner was aware of the condition when buying the property; I would ask members of the planning committee to visit this site; removal of the southerly barn would restore views of the greenwedge for local residents and walkers.

2 LETTERS OF SUPPORT have been received raising the following points:- I look forward to a beneficial use for the buildings as long as the visual impact is improved.

BRITISH EQUESTERIAN FEDERATION I am writing to you in my capacity as the World Class Performance Manager for the GB Paralympic Dressage Squad. There are eight riders in the GB Squad and currently they are the Paralympic, World and European Team Gold medallists. Of the eight riders the most successful is Deborah Criddle, who, as well as being in the team, is also Paralympic and World Individual Champion. Deborah is an elite athlete and receives funding from UK Sport through the British Equestrian Federation. Deborah is a mainstay of the British squad, which is now training hard for the Beijing Paralympic Games. It is also highly likely that she will be representing her country at the London Games in 2012. However, her continuation in the squad is dependent on her being successful. Success for riders only happens with a lot of hard work, dedication and training of, not only their own sporting skills, but also those of their horse. Dressage is all about a harmonious and effective relationship between the horse and rider. It needs both of them to be operating at full capacity to be successful. Deborah and her husband Bruce have recently bought Haygrove Barn at Trull, near Taunton. They are in the early stages of renovating the barn and turning it into a lovely family home where Deborah hopes to keep and train her horses. In order for her to train effectively, and therefore have the best chance of continuing to compete for her country, it is important that she has the correct training facilities at her home base. There are not many suitable facilities in the West Country for Deborah to train at and if she has to travel too far it becomes totally impractical and takes up too much of her time (she is a full time mother, wife and bookkeeper for her husband's business). It is also very exhausting for her ~s she is not as physically strong as an able bodied rider. The only way for her .to put in the vital training she needs to do, is for her to have an outdoor manege at home that she can use six days a week. Therefore, I would be very grateful if you and your colleagues could look favourably at the revised planning applications that the Criddles are submitting to you. There are two existing agricultural buildings at Haygrove Barn. The smaller one could be converted into stables, wash down area, tack room and feed room. All these essential facilities would be under one roof and on the same level, making for easy access by a disabled person. The other larger building would be suitable for an indoor 'turnout area/lunging arena' and would be particularly useful to Deborah (who has a very weak right leg) in bad weather, reducing the possibility of her slipping and falling on uneven and wet ground. They will also be applying to build an outdoor manege. Externally these buildings would not change, thus the nature of Haygrove Barn would remain in tact. I hope you are able to help Deborah and Bruce Criddle and if I can be of any help, or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

POLICY CONTEXT

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy 49.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 (General Requirement), EN13 (Green Wedges), EN16 (Listed Buildings), EN17 (Alteration/conversion/extension of Listed Buildings)

ASSESSMENT

This application is for the retention of a group of three modern farm buildings as a

horse training facility to be used by the new owner who is a paralympic and world individual gold champion at Dressage. The application site would enable her to have continual and level access to the training/schooling facilities near to her accommodation in the converted barns. The new owner has argued that searches for other suitable property have been un-successful and that this site offers the buildings and situation that would provide an ideal location suitable for her personal need. In addition, in training at home, it is argued that the proposal would result in a reduction of her movements to and from stables elsewhere in order to train. The local farmer used the subject farm buildings intensively for agricultural purposes involving numerous farm vehicle movements. The existing permission secured the removal of those buildings resulting in a substantial reduction in the flow of traffic using the access.

The County Highway Officer has considered the traffic generation of the proposed use for the barns and raises no objection provided that the use is for a private use only. I consider that the proposed retention of the buildings is acceptable in highway terms. The Haygrove Farm Barns (both modern and traditional) were originally used in association with the agricultural use of the adjoining fields. The modern buildings are therefore in close proximity to the smaller listed traditional barns (5m). An advantage of converting the barns, in terms of the listed building, was the removal of the modern buildings and reinstatement of the less developed setting of the listed complex. In allowing the buildings to remain for the current occupants, this advantage will be delayed. The Conservation Officer has commented that, if a personal need is established it may be weighed against the benefits to the setting of the listed building and a personal, temporary permission may be justified. In considering the specific need of this applicant I am satisfied that this site would fulfil the needs of the applicant, arising from her disability, and that the removal of the modern building would result in the need for new buildings elsewhere in the green wedge. The buildings exist and there would be no positive harm to the open character of the area. On balance I consider that the retention of the barns is justified in this case provided they are demolished when that specific need has expired. Permission considered acceptable

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, personal permission with demolition of the barns when this ceases, private use only, landscaping.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- The barns are required for the personal and specific needs of Mrs Criddle (a paralympian) and it is considered that such facilities cannot easily be provided elsewhere. The retention of existing buildings would not result in a loss of the open character of the green wedge, nor an increase in highway danger. The proposal would result in the reinstatement of the setting of the listed barn in the longer term. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the requirements of Somerset and Exmoor National Park Structure Plan policy 49, Taunton Deane Local Plan policies EN13, EN16 and S1(A).

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

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NOTES: