



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 November 2009

by **David Ward** BSc(HONS) CEng MICE
FIHT

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State
for Communities and Local Government

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Decision date:
3 December 2009

Appeal Ref: APP/C3430/A/09/2111706/NWF
Keepers Cottage, New Landywood Lane, Essington, Wolverhampton,
WV11 2AW

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Susie Sanderson against the decision of South Staffordshire Council.
- The application Ref 09/00327/COU, dated 1 May 2009, was refused by notice dated 15 July 2009.
- The development proposed is the change of use from riding manege to parking of touring caravans (maximum total 24).

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are the effect of the development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it; and if the development is inappropriate due to this, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

Reasons

3. Local planning policies are set out in the South Staffordshire Local Plan. Those governing development in the Green Belt do not consider changes of use, but the plan refers instead to national policy which is in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2. This advises that inappropriate development should not be permitted except in very special circumstances. A material change of use (such as is proposed in this case) is stated to be inappropriate unless the openness of the Green Belt is maintained, and there is no conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt. The five purposes of the Green Belts are set out, and in particular they are to safeguard the countryside from encroachment.
4. The land to which the appeal relates is a part of development associated with the use of Keepers Cottage and its associated land for equestrian pursuits. The stabling has recently been granted change of use to a cattery, and at the time of my visit about a third of the manege contained parked caravans.

5. The most important attribute of the Green Belt is its openness. The manege stands in otherwise open country at the rear of Keepers Cottage, and although in summer the area may be well hidden, at the time of my visit the parked caravans were conspicuous in the view from Landywood Lane. Openness is not solely a concept of visibility, and even were the caravans to be well hidden at all times, there would still be an adverse impact on the openness of the countryside. The parked vans encroach upon the countryside as alien features. The proposal would spread them over a wider area, with further impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The development would not maintain the openness of the Green Belt, and to that extent would conflict with policy. The Appellant's offer to plant hedges or put up fences does not alter that conclusion.
6. In the same manner, the parked vans would encroach on the countryside to a more marked degree than the surface and floodlighting of the manege. These in any case are an appropriate use in the countryside, whereas large numbers of parked caravans are more appropriate to urban and warehousing land uses.
7. The proposal would be harmful, and should not be permitted unless there are some very special circumstances applying. No justification is put forward with the appeal. At the time of the application attention was drawn to the change in holiday habits brought about by the present recession. However, I see nothing very special about this occurrence, and do not consider that there are any circumstances of such weight that the harm to the Green Belt and its purpose would be overcome.
8. For these reasons the appeal has been dismissed.

David Ward

Inspector