

<b>App.No:</b> 150585 (PPP)	<b>Decision Due Date:</b> 28 October 2015	<b>Ward:</b> Meads
<b>Officer:</b> Jane Sabin	<b>Site visit date:</b> 2 October 2015	<b>Type:</b> Planning Permission
<b>Site Notice(s) Expiry date:</b> 2 October 2015 <b>Neighbour Con Expiry:</b> 27 September 2015 <b>Press Notice(s):</b> 22 September 2015		
<b>Over 8/13 week reason:</b> N/A		
<b>Location:</b> Moira House School, Upper Carlisle Road		
<b>Proposal:</b> Erection of a stable block adjacent to rear boundary to facilitate equine activities for students.		
<b>Applicant:</b> Moira House Girls School		
<b>Recommendation:</b> Approve		

### **Executive summary:**

The proposed development would have no adverse impact on visual or residential amenity, the character and appearance of the conservation area or the South Downs National Park, or on highway safety. As such it complies with local and national policies.

### **Constraints:**

Meads Conservation Area  
Source Protection Zones  
Adjacent to the South Downs National Park

### **Relevant Planning Policies:**

National Planning Policy Framework

Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan Policies 2013

B1: Spatial Development Strategy and Distribution

B2: Creating Sustainable Neighbourhoods

C11: Meads Neighbourhood Policy

D1: Sustainable Development

D9: Natural Environment

D10: Historic Environment

D10A: Design

Eastbourne Borough Plan Saved Policies 2007

NE14: Source Protection Zone

NE28: Environmental Amenity

UHT1: Design of New Development  
UHT2: Height of Buildings  
UHT3: Setting of the AONB  
UHT4: Visual Amenity  
UHT5: Protecting Walls/Landscape Features  
UHT15: Protection of Conservation Areas  
HO20: Residential Amenity  
LCF2: Resisting loss of playing fields  
LCF8: Small Scale Sport & Recreation Facilities  
LCF18: Extension of Educational Establishments

### **Site Description:**

Moirs House Girls School is located on the north west side of Carlisle Road, and extends beyond the junction with Upper Carlisle Road. The site slopes steeply up from the road to the rear boundary with the Downs (close to Paradise Reservoir) in a series of terraces. The site comprises a wide range of building types (largely pre-1948) set in a site which hosts a significant number of mature trees and vegetation.

### **Relevant Planning History:**

EB/1995/0509 (950536)

Erection of a single-storey stable block comprising eight loose boxes, feed store, WC and tack room at the rear of the main school building in Carlisle Road and the provision of a 40 m x 20 m fenced manege (outdoor riding school) on land at the rear of 22-26 Denton Road

Approved conditionally 21 December 1995

### **Proposed development:**

The application site comprises a flat area adjacent to the rear boundary wall, currently occupied by a large outbuilding used as a maintenance shed, together with a route through the grounds to join up with an existing vehicular route from Carlisle Road. This area is screened by a row of conifers to the rear and three large beech trees to the front

It is proposed to replace the existing shed with a single storey stable block for eight horses, measuring 21.2m deep and 10.5m wide under a pitched roof 2.6m high to the eaves and 4.1m to the ridge. Formed from a metal frame construction, the building would be clad in horizontal shiplap boarding under a profiled metal sheeting roof. To the rear of the building (between the building and the boundary wall) an over ground cesspit is proposed to service one toilet in the stable block.

The route through the grounds from the existing tarmac area to the stable would be formed from loose material (rolled MOT).

The formation of the vehicular route would result in the loss of three of the smaller trees on the site (one Holm oak, an ash and a beech).

In support of the application, the agent makes the following points:

- The benefits of riding to young people are well documented.
- It promotes good physical and mental health, helps with homesickness and exam pressures.

- It is intended to include the facility in the school curriculum, including BHS examinations in stable management.
- There is a strong demand in the school for riding and horse management
- The facility is intended for ponies, not horses (i.e. not exceeding 14 hands)
- The existing gate to the Downs will provide easy access to bridle paths, and it is not intended to use the road network, unless accessing the proposed manege (**see application 150594**).
- The route to the manege will be via an existing path which runs down the eastern boundary, on equine granulated rubber tiles, and across Carlisle Road in front of Dunn House to the playing field.
- The site chosen is discreet, set on lower ground than the Downs, and shielded by a 1.5m wall and mature trees; whilst the top of the roof would be a little higher than the wall, it would present a clean unobtrusive roofslope. Other buildings are visible above the wall, but the new building would not harm the setting of the Downs or be over prominent in views from the Downs.
- The site lies within the Meads Conservation Area but the structure would be sited behind the school buildings and would not be prominent in this context.
- The stable block is, by necessity, utilitarian; the materials will complement the school buildings. Its' precise siting, sitting well below the level of the Downs and tucked behind the school buildings, means that it will not be visible in long views, thus preserving the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- The stable will not be close to any residential neighbours, so there will be no impact on residential amenity. Waste (muck) will be collected regularly and taken off site.
- The loss of three trees in the centre of the site will have no impact on the wider area, given the amount of tree cover on site and near the boundary.
- There will be no additional traffic associated with the proposal, except for construction and maintenance traffic, which will use the existing entrance already used by large delivery vehicles. The use is intended for Moira House pupils only.
- The scheme has been carefully considered and addresses the need for the facility and the constraints of the site. It complies with local policies regarding facilities for schools and recreation, and would have no adverse impact on residential and visual amenity or highway safety.

Further information has been submitted by a member of staff who has been involved with the scheme:

- With 40 years of experience of horse ownership, the project has been risk assessed within British Horse Society guidelines. The crossing point is suitable, with double yellow lines, zig-zags and good visibility in both directions. The busy times for vehicles will not coincide with activity times, which will be between 12.30pm and 3pm.
- Only ponies will be used as they are suitable for beginners; they will be safe, older, placid obedient cob geldings. They will be led across the road by highly qualified staff (not ridden); both the staff and ponies will have hi viz jackets/strips. As the manege is small, only four ponies will be used at one time.
- The route to the manege is along the boundary with Castle Mount; it is a safe easy slope, but will be surfaced with equine rubber tiles as the surface is in need of repair, and will be a slip-free surface which would deaden any noise. All droppings would be cleared away immediately.
- There will be no riding on the roads.

- The ponies will be on site Mondays to Thursdays, and out on grass Fridays to Sundays in Jevington. The ponies will be hacked to and from Jevington.

## **Consultations:**

### Internal:

Specialist Advisor (Arboriculture) notes that the plans indicate the path to the stable block is positioned where T15 (beech) is situated, and that this tree is to be retained. The tree is in such condition that it should not prevent development but it requires removal. It is also indicated that the turning area is now the area where T15 and G14 are currently situated. G14 which is a group of 2 Yews and should be considered a constraint to this development, therefore the plans require adjusting to ensure the turning area and path are situated outside the root protection area of G14. Providing the plans are amended, the impact on the visual amenity of the area would be minimal with the loss of T15 Beech, G16 Leylandii, T1 Ash and T2 Beech. The loss of G14 would significantly reduce the screening of the proposed development from the downland. Should the application be approved, conditions should be attached to safeguard the trees.

Highways ESCC considers that the main issues are access to and from the site, traffic generation and ponies/horses crossing Carlisle Road.

In terms of vehicle access the proposal would use the existing access from Upper Carlisle Road which is acceptable. There is also space within the site for vehicles to turn so they can enter and exit in a forward gear. The access arrangements are therefore considered acceptable.

It is intended for the ponies and manege to be used exclusively by pupils and staff from the school. The traffic generation will be limited to construction vehicles, servicing vehicles and on occasion horse boxes. The main traffic generator will be from construction and as this is fairly minor the amount of traffic generated will be low and would not create significant issues. It is envisaged that there will be one vehicle per week for waste removal and approximately one visit per term to empty the septic tank. Again this level of traffic generation is very low and therefore acceptable.

It is noted from the submitted drawing that it is planned for ponies to cross to and from the manege at an existing access in Carlisle Road. This access is located in a section of road that provides adequate visibility and is approximately 90m from the junction with Upper Carlisle Road and Link Road. Double yellow lines and school keep clear markings also help to keep sections of the road clear of parked cars although they are parked on at school pick up and drop off times. Although the visibility is acceptable, there is still concern with horses crossing the road as drivers will not be expecting to meet horses in this urban area. In order to warn drivers it is suggested that warning signs are installed at the applicant's expense on the approaches to the crossing on lamp columns 11 & 13. It is also suggested that a condition is attached to ensure that this is the only access that horses can use to cross to and from the manege.

Specialist Advisor (Downland) notes the plans show an access to bridle paths, however the land immediately outside the schools gate does not form part of the bridleway, but is in a Higher Level Stewardship Agreement with Natural England – this body would have to consent to direct access by horses and riders (straying from a bridleway may constitute

trespass). Eastbourne Downland Byelaw 13 states that horses shall not be ridden on the Downs; equine traffic originating from a commercial enterprise is not excluded from using the public bridleways.

Specialist Advisor (Planning Policy) notes that the proposal complies with Borough Plan and Core Strategy policies, and raises no objections to the proposal.

Specialist Advisor (Conservation) considers that, due to the siting of the stable block to the rear of the site, its scale and massing would have limited impact on the character of Upper Carlisle Road and the contribution it makes to the Conservation Area. Furthermore, it is accepted the use of timber weatherboarding to the elevations, to ensure immediate views of the stable block from within the school grounds are in keeping with the function of the building and character of the immediate area, particularly during the winter months following loss of the leaves of the existing mature vegetation. However, the roof of the stable block would be visible from the Downs, located to the rear of the site. Whilst the immediate area is currently screened through the benefit of mature vegetation, this screening is limited to sycamore trees, as the conifers are proposed to be removed as part of the works. In reducing the natural screening (conifers) as proposed, the expanse of the stable block roof would be visible, particularly during the winter months, in immediate and wider views from the bridleway which historically provided access to the Downs. Whilst the applicant has agreed to overcome this concern with the use of a russet brown, metal profile sheet to the roof, RAL colour 3013, to compliment the colour of the existing roofscape, which is mostly clay tile. Concerns remain in terms of the extent of metal roofing and its inability to weather into its surroundings, as a man-made material. It is therefore strongly recommended a cedar shingle, is used as an alternate roofing material.

At its meeting on 6 October 2015, the Conservation Area Advisory Group raised no objections in principle to the stable, but expressed strong concerns regarding the roof material, which was considered to be out of keeping when viewed from the South Downs; a sedum roof was suggested as an alternative.

External:

South Downs National Park Authority – no response.

Neighbour Representations:

Nine objections have been received and cover the following points:

- Strong objections on the grounds of impeding traffic flow along Carlisle Road, and adding to the huge congestion in the area; parking restrictions are generally ignored; Carlisle Road is used as a rat run to and from Beachy Head Road by cars and commercial vehicles.
- It is simply a serious, if not fatal, accident waiting to happen.
- The road cannot cope with more traffic with the possibility of horse boxes and trailers, and access by emergency vehicles is already compromised.
- Additional parking facilities for the school, let alone an equine centre, is essential. The school should free up some land for parking. If ponies are to cross the road, traffic calming/control measures are needed.
- The use of the path adjacent to Castle Mount may have an adverse impact on residents unless conditions are imposed requiring ponies to use the path only twice a day at the beginning and end of the school day, and in term time only; manure

on the path must be cleared away immediately, and urine must not be allowed to run off into the grounds of Castle Mount.

- Offensive smell of collection and storage of manure.
- Adverse impact on the schools ecological area and protected species (pond/stag beetles/dragonflies) – the path is too narrow for horses without cutting back on the habitat; a field adjacent to the stable could be used.
- The website makes it clear that girls other than Moira House pupils will use the facility, increasing congestion and the length of duration. It also intimates that gaining planning permission is a *fait accompli* – how can this be so? It also states that the equitation centre would be open by August.
- Dangerous for pupils crossing the road trying to get to school

Nine emails and letters of support have been received and cover the following points:

- Fantastic opportunity for the school; excellent for pupils
- Horses are not noisy animals
- Sure that the school have the safety of children and horses at the forefront, and the scheme will have been well thought through
- A wonderful sight to see on the beautiful South Downs; the National Park should be used for such activities
- Will attract more students and boost the local economy
- The crossing is already used by pupils to access the playing fields – 22 girls probably take longer than four horses would to cross

A further three general observations have been received, all reiterating that crossing the road with horses is a concern that needs to be addressed.

### **Appraisal:**

The main issues to take into account in determining this application are the impacts on visual, residential and environmental amenity, and highway safety.

#### Principle of development:

There is no objection in principle to the provision of additional sports facilities within educational establishments. The area proposed for the stable is currently occupied by a shed and an area of hardstanding, so there would be no loss of existing sports facilities.

#### Visual amenity:

The proposed stable building has a simple, utilitarian appearance, which fulfils its function. Notwithstanding this, it is to be finished in timber shiplap, and whilst it would only be seen from within the site, it would sit comfortably within the heavily treed area at the top of the site. The roof has been of some concern, as the proposed profiled metal sheeting is at odds with the finish of the exterior of the building and the rest of the site. It has been agreed to change the colour from dove grey to russet brown to help it blend in more, but suggestions of a sedum roof or the use of cedar shingles have been rejected on the grounds of cost (and in the case of the former, the strengthening of the whole structure to support the extra weight). Assurances from the agent that the row of conifers behind the building would be kept, and negotiations to resite the cesspit and the surfacing of the road and turning head so that the mature beech trees to the front of the building can be safely retained, have led to the conclusion that even in winter there would be sufficient screening from all public areas – including the South Downs National Park – to mitigate the use of profiled metal sheeting. It should be noted that the site is

also screened by a row of substantial sycamores which grow on the downland, which would be unaffected by the development.

#### Residential amenity:

The closest residential property is Castle Mount, a large block of flats in substantial grounds which shares a boundary with the school, and adjacent to which the proposed access path for the horses is located. The stable would be 45m from the common boundary at the top of the garden, and 70m from the nearest point of the building. Generally horses make little noise, and it is unlikely that any smell from the stable would be noticeable at this distance. Residents have expressed concern regarding noise and smells from the use of the path, however this has been addressed by the use of rubberised tiles, and the applicant has stated that droppings would be picked up immediately. The garden of Castle Mount has the benefit of substantial screening along most of its boundary, which is within its control; the top lawned area has no screening, and it is already possible for anyone in the school grounds to look directly into this part of the garden. It is not considered that the level of usage proposed would result in loss of privacy over and above the existing situation. As the site forms part of the school, it is considered extremely unlikely that droppings would be left laying around the site. One objector has pointed out that it is intended to use the horses during the summer for residential courses; whilst this may be the case, it is not considered that this in itself would be unacceptable, if the use is appropriate during the rest of the year, as the stables can only accommodate eight horses. It is therefore concluded that there would be little or no impact on residential amenity.

#### Environmental amenity:

The development would require the removal of three relatively small trees to provide access to the site. These trees are located well within the site, and their removal would have little impact on the overall tree cover, nor do they meet the criteria for a tree preservation order. The trees closer to the stable on the upper level are more important because of their size and capacity for screening the stable. One of these is in decline (a large but heavily reduced beech), and should be removed as the building works and surfacing of the turning/access area would only hasten its demise; it would also be in front of the stable doors and therefore not completely practical. The others require retention and their root protection areas to be safeguarded. Negotiations have resulted in the provision of an access that would not be used by vehicles larger than a 4X4, and this would do much to reduce the long term impact. On this basis it is considered that the impact on environmental amenity is acceptable.

One objector has raised the issue of the impact on an ecological area within the school grounds. It is a relatively small area in the corner of the grounds, but has become sadly neglected. The route through for the horses will require some cutting back, but it is considered to be minimal, and should not be regarded as a constraint to the proposal.

#### Highway safety:

The main source of objection is the issue of parking and safety. Given the information provided in the application, it is not considered that the development would result in a significant increase in traffic on a daily basis. It is unlikely that the busiest times for traffic, i.e. the start and finish of the school day, would coincide with the times horses would be led across the road. The safety of pupils would be of paramount importance for the school, and it is clear that this has been thoroughly considered. Officers (including

Highways) have visited the site and carefully walked all the routes, and have concluded that the existing crossing point outside the main entrance where the double yellow lines and zig-zag markings are already in place for pupils is a safe place for horses to cross. The only issue raised by the Highway Authority is the provision of standard highway warning signs for road users and the route for the ponies, and these can be controlled by condition.

### **Human Rights Implications:**

The impacts of the proposal have been assessed as part of the application process. Consultation with the community has been undertaken and the impact on local people is set out above. The human rights considerations have been taken into account fully in balancing the planning issues; and furthermore the proposals will not result in any breach of the Equalities Act 2010.

### **Conclusion:**

The proposed development would have no adverse impact on visual or residential amenity, the character and appearance of the conservation area or the South Downs National Park, or on highway safety. As such it complies with local and national policies.

**Recommendation:** Approve

### **Conditions:**

1. Commencement within three years
2. Compliance with approved plans
3. Tree protection measures
4. Submission of details of site office, storage area for materials, and access route.
5. Submission of details of routes for services and external lighting
6. No burning on site
7. Submission of details of excavations/foundations/drains
8. Submission of samples of materials
9. Provision of rubberised surface to route adjacent to Castle Mount
10. Restriction of size of vehicles accessing the site
11. Provision of traffic signs
12. Restriction of route for horses in and out of the site

### **Informatives**

The applicant should contact Natural England regarding consent to access the bridleways from the school.

### **Appeal:**

Should the applicant appeal the decision the appropriate course of action to be followed, taking into account the criteria set by the Planning Inspectorate, is considered to be **written representations.**