

Def Item 2 REFERENCE NO - 19/501551/FULL		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Erection of a building to be used as a forge workshop and associated hardstanding		
ADDRESS 122 Scrapsgate Road Minster-on-sea Sheerness Kent ME12 2DJ		
RECOMMENDATION Refuse		
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION/REASONS FOR REFUSAL The proposed development is located in a rural area, made up of equestrian and agricultural uses and the introduction of a new forge in this location where it has not been demonstrated that it is necessary for the needs of rural communities or that there are no other sites available is unacceptable.		
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE This application was deferred by the Planning Committee on 23 rd July 2020.		
WARD Minster Cliffs	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Minster-On-Sea	APPLICANT Mr B Pugh AGENT The Rural Planning Practice
DECISION DUE DATE 11/07/19		PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 02/09/20

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Committee held on 23rd July 2020, this application was deferred. The minute from the meeting reads as follows:

Resolved: That application 19/501551/FULL be deferred to allow the Applicant more time to submit noise attenuation measures; details of pollution; and the hours of use.

The agent was contacted to request the additional information and on receipt of this information the Environmental Health Manager was consulted.

- 1.2 The original report is appended to this report as Appendix A.

2. CONSULTATIONS

- 2.1 Environmental Health Manager:

"I note the content of the additional information provided. The noise readings taken would not normally be accepted as a report by a competent person, however the sound level measurements indicate that the use as a forge is unlikely to cause a nuisance to the nearest residents approximately 150 metres away. The applicant states that the use of the site will be restricted to 09:00 to 18.00 Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 13.00 Saturday.

I have concerns that a different B2 use in this location could cause a nuisance issue for local resident and would recommend that if approval is to be granted the consent is personal to the applicant and the farrier business. I would also recommend a condition restricting the hours of operation to those requested."

3. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

3.1 Design of Building and Use

The need for a large roller shutter door was questioned by one member, the forge and anvil are large and heavy and need to be positioned in the building using a forklift attachment on a small tractor. This is also used to transport coke and lengths of steel bar to the forge. The door is also required for ventilation when the forge is in use, especially in hot weather. The forge is only intended for the applicant to practice the traditional skills of making horseshoes not for general steel fabrication. The only machine tools are the forge blower, a cut off saw for cutting bar stock, a drill press for drilling stud holes in shoes and a small bench grinder.

Members should note that the applicant cannot progress to become an Associate of the Worshipful Company of Farriers (AWCF) without access to a forge. Only holders of AWCF qualifications are allowed to become training farriers and take on an apprentice. Training farriers have to be able to teach apprentices in forging techniques and this requires a spacious forge building in which to work.

3.2 Noise

The proposed location to the rear of the existing stable block (relative to Scrapsgate road) should reduce noise levels to the houses in Scrapsgate Road.

The forge blower (fan) is to be fitted with a speed controller which will reduce noise levels when the forge is throttled back (about 50% of the time the forge is in use). The amount of heat produced is normally regulated with an air valve which does not offer this noise benefit.

The primary shop anvil weighs 100KG and is mounted on a rubber pad and bedded with silicone caulking, both the mass and the mounting system help to minimise ringing impact noise when the workpiece is struck.

A report on noise readings taken at various locations while the forge was in use has also been provided.

3.3 Emissions

The fuel burnt in the forge is “Monkton Beans” which is usually obtained from the closest supplier R.A. Blackford of Uckfield. <http://rablackford.com/fuels/forge-and-breeze/>. This fuel is listed by The Environment Agency as an “Authorised Fuel” for use in a “Smoke Control Area”. <https://smokecontrol.defra.gov.uk/fuel-details.php?id=18> .

The proposed site is not in a smoke control area but this fuel is environmentally better than coal and functions better in a farrier's forge.

Coke is the least polluting fuel for traditional forges producing less sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide than coal. These nitrous oxide and sulphur dioxide figures are from a Journal of Chemistry paper discussing the benefits of coke over clean coal in reducing environmental pollution. <https://www.hindawi.com/journals/jchem/2019/7142804/> Coke consumption is expected to be less than 700 KG per year, the forge consumes approximately 1KG an hour, this equates to about 700 hours of operation per year. This would produce about 1.7 tonnes of CO₂. To further reduce emissions a propane gas poker is used to light the forge rather than kindling.

3.4 Hours of use

Use of the coke forge, and the attendant anvil work would be restricted to the hours between 09:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday and 09:00 - 13:00 Saturday. The forge will not be operated continuously during these hours for the following reasons:

1. Sessions in the forge are normally limited to a maximum of about four hours due to the physically demanding nature of the work.
2. Most of the applicant's income comes from trimming horses' feet and fitting shoes as part of their mobile business, this restricts the amount of time they have to forge.
3. Handmade shoes and therapeutic shoes are not profitable for the farrier, the service is provided for the good of the horse and to keep the skills alive. Standard machine-made shoes are available at a small premium over the cost of the basic steel used to make them. Standard concave shoes made in Malaysia are available for about £3.50 a pair, bar stock to make these costs £2.50, add in £0.50 for coke and the farrier would only earn 50 pence for the twenty minutes work to make them.
4. The main use of the forge is to practice traditional techniques needed for career progression.

3.5 Other matters

In response to the comments from Environmental Health the agent wished to raise the following points (summarised):

- Do not consider the use to be B2 and therefore any change of use from a farrier's forge would require planning permission from the LPA so there is no need to restrict the use
- Any personal condition imposed would need to relate to the farrier Ms Pugh and not the applicant Mr Pugh.
- Any condition restricting the hours of operation should relate to 'forging operation' as the farrier may require access to the building out of these hours for stock-taking, stock replenishment, planning/design and general business administration.

4. APPRAISAL

- 4.1 The applicant has provided additional information with regards to details of noise, details of pollution and the hours of use. The Environmental Health Manager is accepting of the proposal from an amenity perspective, subject to the inclusion of conditions. I am happy to accept their expert advice.
- 4.2 I refer to the comments raised by the agent in response to the Environmental Health comments and would once again reiterate that the use class is still disputed, as Officers consider the operations to constitute a B2 use.
- 4.3 Notwithstanding the additional information supplied by the agent/applicant the proposed development is still located in a rural area, made up of equestrian and agricultural uses and the introduction of a new forge in this location where it has not been demonstrated that it is necessary for the needs of rural communities or that there are no other sites available is unacceptable.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 In view of the above, it remains my opinion that the proposal is unacceptable in principle. I therefore recommend that the application be refused.

6. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the following reasons:

- (1) The proposed development is located in a rural area, made up of equestrian and agricultural uses and the introduction of a new forge in this location where it has not been demonstrated that it is necessary for the needs of rural communities or that there are no other sites available is unacceptable. The development would therefore be contrary to policies DM3 and DM14 of 'Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017'.

The Council's approach to the application

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019 the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and creative way by offering a pre-application advice service, where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome and as appropriate, updating applicants / agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the Committee and promote the application.

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.

The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.

