



Shire Horse Stables Justification Statement



Property Address

Cannon Hall Open Farm, Cawthorne, Barnsley, South
Yorkshire

Grid Reference

Post Code: S75 4AT

Proposal

Erection of 5 Shire Horse Stables

1.0 Points for Consideration

1.1 This Statement provides supplementary justification to clarify the reasons for development and provides supporting information regarding the proposal for five new Shire Horse Stables within Cannon Hall Open Farm.

1.2 The Farm is located 120m northeast of Cannon Hall, a Grade II* listed building in Cawthorne, Barnsley.

1.3 The proposed oak frame Stables would add significant attraction to the Farm and would allow the Farm to expand its Visitor numbers and enhance the successful Leisure Facilities for the Barnsley Area. Shire Horses are proven to be very popular additions and are supported by an overwhelming number of visitors to the tourist attraction.

1.4 The Society 'Save our Shires' have raised awareness that the Shires are a breed under threat and encourage investors in helping the Society to continue in maintaining future breeds.

1.5 The oak framed Stables have been sensitively designed to integrate with the existing surrounding development and the immediate and wider landscape and is considered to present a sympathetic built form and style which echoes throughout the existing architectural language of the Farm.

1.6 The proposed Stables are simple in appearance and feature both traditional and contemporary elements which present a development both forward looking in terms of energy efficiency and construction methods yet sympathetic to their historic rural agricultural setting

1.7 The development is not considered to have a negative impact to any neighbouring amenities and its location has no impact on the existing Listed Museum Building setting

1.8 In order for Cannon Hall Open Farm to continue their ambition to expand and support the rare breed of Shire Horses and raise awareness via their visitors to the Farm attraction, the proposed development attempts to deliver the most effective and sustainable way to meet this goal.

1.9 The proposed buildings are low load structures with shallow foundations which will have very little impact on the root system of any adjoining trees

2.0 Supplementary

Heritage and Historical Context

Great Horses hold a unique place in European development and have featured significantly in European History from primary Military use for mounted Knights in the Middle Ages to heavy Agriculture and Transport up to the dawn of the Steam Age in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.

The National Shire Horse Society describes their importance as below:-

“Horses have been domesticated for many thousands of years. Indeed, late Bronze Age grave goods have included bits and bridles. They were used for riding and as pack animals, although it was not clear when they were first used in agriculture. Oxen were the traditional draught animal, as they were more readily available than horses.

By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries horses had become more common, especially for pulling carts and transporting goods. These animals had to be strong to cope with the appalling nature of medieval roads, although they were considerably shorter in height than the giant Shire we know today.

The seventeenth century saw a great deal of development in horse breeding. An increased demand for travel by coach, culminating in the development of coach springs in 1690 led to the breeding of a large and powerful horse that also had the capacity for speed.

By the eighteenth century the improvements in carriage design and road surface meant that lighter faster horses were used for long

distance driving, whereas the heavier, slower horses found a role for themselves on the farm.

Eighteenth century changes in the technology of farming implements, such as Tull's Seed Drill, made the horse the animal of choice on the farm, replacing the ox. These horses were by now of a height and stature recognisable as a modern Shire.

The second half of the Eighteenth century saw the construction of a nationwide system of canals which enabled heavy loads to be transported long distances. The Shire horse was the ideal beast to use as a Barge Horse, pulling the barges along the canals. They were also used to haul large wagons, drays, omnibuses and trams.

Although the Shire might now seem to us most at home in the fields, it must not be forgotten that up until the last half of the twentieth century, the horse was also the main urban means of transport, too.

The rise of urban living throughout history has always fuelled a demand for goods from the countryside. The coming of the railways is often thought to have signalled the beginning of the decline in horse-drawn traffic, but in fact horses were in great demand for transporting goods to and from the railway yards. In fact, in 1893, the railway companies 'collecting and delivering goods to the metropolis have amongst them a stud of 6,000 (horses).' These horses would have need to be capable of pulling large loads and so would have been Shires or a similar breed.

Carrier firms had around 19,000 horses in London alone, while the Capital's rubbish collection would have employed another 1,500 horses, all of whom would have been draught breeds.

Also in 1893 it was estimated that London's brewers used around 3,000 horses, many of which were Shires. Indeed, some brewers still use Shires today, not only for promotional purposes, but also for local deliveries.

The transportation of coal, the vital source of heating and cooking fuel, had to be done by horses, and with wagons weighing up to 3 tons, this was definitely a job for the heavies!

From the 1920s onwards the use of motorised transport rose rapidly and the need for the horse declined. Tractors replaced horses on farms and lorries replaced horse drawn wagon. Finally more and more road vehicles were powered by engines and the Shire horse's days soon seemed numbered".

Their huge Historical importance and potential total decline has only been preserved to pass down to future generations by the support of a few, dedicated, independent breeders despite the very high costs and investment involved in doing so.

Cannon Hall Farm is currently one of the few handful of sites currently registered as an Approved Centre with the UK National Shire Horse Society patroned by the Queen.

Breed rareness

General UK figures cited by the Rare Breed Survival Trust cite a decline in numbers from 2.6m at the turn of the Century to less than 10,000 today.

Unless urgent action is taken, three breeds of the UK's rarest horses could become extinct in the next 10 years. Numbers are worryingly low; just 240 Shire, 199 Clydesdale and 25 Suffolk pedigree foals were registered last year.

Cannon Hall Farm has contributed to the National stock with two adult Shires bearing 2 foals with two more foals expected to follow.

Rareness risk

The RBST generally acknowledges that further risk of decline to these Breeds is high and that Breed numbers are at a crucial tipping point. We would estimate currently that there is a 90% chance of extinction without further support.

Function

The Stables will provide permanent housing to successfully rear the Horses and allow a breeding programme to take place. This, in turn, also enables direct and easy Visitor viewing and makes possible future options to further showcase the breeds working farm functions for display haulage and ploughing. Inclusion of the Stables within the context of the Cannon Hall Farm facilities and its working context is an ideal partnering arrangement to showcase the breed.

Educational Value

Individual adoption packs for the Shires within the CHF animal adoption system are now the highest in number. This provides a clear guide as to their strong impact and generation of interest on Visitor Families and Children. CHF currently remains a key National and Local Centre as a unique Educational Farm Centre and the Shire Horse addition would strengthened and further enhance the facilities becoming available to the Educational work already well established at the Farm.

Biodiversity

Cannon Hall Farm has a long history of biodiversity at the heart of its operations. The Farm has a wide and extensive range of Farm animals, insects and reptiles which not only form valuable breeding platforms at many levels but provide a key Educational learning experience for current Visitors of all ages and especially children of School Age.

Adding Heavy Shire Horses further increases the range that CHF can make available to the Public and strengthens the Biodiversity gain for the Farm with the Horses themselves plus manure and animal bedding dependant insects.

Footfall impact

Specific footfall numbers for one area alone at CHF are hard to evaluate but initial assessment shows a footfall increase of around 5% due to Visitor number increases and the TV exposure made possible by the introduction and featuring of the breed at the Farm. This, in turn, generates increased value to the Barnsley District.

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Public Appreciation

The appearance of Shire Horses features strongly at National and Local Agricultural Fairs and is always received extremely well by the General Public as a show stopping events item.

The strength and beauty of these animals still speaks for itself to a large number of the Public as it has already done for such a long period of time. Complete disappearance of the breed would, undoubtedly, be seen as an avoidable National tragedy.

In this context, the gains for supporting the breed, in our opinion, outweigh any perceived disadvantages.

17/03/2020
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