

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

For the construction of a Manège on the land at:

**Chatsworth Farm
Lask Edge
Leek
Staffordshire Moorlands
ST13 8QJ**

Applicant: **Mr Dominic Cooney**

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This document supports a planning application submitted to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council via the online Planning Portal.

This Design and Access Statement supports a planning application for the construction of a “Manège” (an arena for exercising and training horses) on the land at Chatsworth Farm

The design and access statement covers both the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed Manège and although it is a private development, it also briefly covers access to the development.

AMOUNT

The amount of development proposed is a single Manège of the standard dimensions of 20 metres by 40 metres; consisting of constructional layers (drainage, blinding, geotextile material, and working surface); with a total area of 800 square metres.

The area is the minimum size for a Manège as it is the smallest useable size for dressage training for standard British Dressage tests. Larger Manèges are sometimes built, e.g. 60x20m or 60x40m but these are usually to allow extra space for jumping or for riding schools where more than one rider needs to use the arena at the same time.

LAYOUT

The layout of the proposed Manège has been chosen to fit in with the alignment of the existing buildings on the site, and is on the lowest part of the land to reduce the visibility from any of the nearest residential properties as well as from the wider area, and there is also existing screening provided by mature trees on the boundaries on two sides.

The topography has been taken into account in determining the layout; the Manège will be dug into the slope on the west side and filled up on the east side to create a level area. However both the area to be excavated and the area to be filled are outside of the crown spread of any of the trees on the boundaries.

SCALE

The scale of the Manège is the minimum required for training for a standard British Dressage Test.

The perimeter of the Manège will be fenced with a post & rail wooden fence typical of this type of equestrian arena, with 2 horizontal rails, 4 feet 6 inches high (1.4m high).

LANDSCAPING

It is proposed to improve the existing landscaping on the site, by planting up gaps in the existing hedge to the eastern boundary (No hedges or drystone walls are proposed to be removed as part of the development or to enable its construction). This will also improve the visual screening of the proposed Manège from the wider landscape to the east. This new section would comprise a double row (staggered) of native mixed species of local provenance such as Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Holly and Hazel.

Management of new hedgerow planting would be: first allowing the new hedge to grow for several years, then laying the hedge to thicken and rejuvenate it, whilst making it stock-proof at the same time. Subsequently it would be trimmed every other year, outside of the bird nesting season.

Additionally, a small area of under-storey coppice will be planted in the irregular space left at the south-eastern corner of the field (created by the field boundary angles).

APPEARANCE

The appearance of the proposed Manège would be of typical construction with wooden fencing, with the surface material to the approval of the Local Planning Authority. It would be identical in appearance to other manèges constructed across the Staffordshire Moorlands District.

POLICY

The site is located in the Green Belt where development is deemed to be inappropriate unless it falls within certain the categories as specified in the National Planning Policy Framework as being appropriate. The NPPF lists “appropriate facilities required for outdoor sport and recreation” as being appropriate development. Saved Policy N2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 1998 follows the same approach as the now superseded PPG2, although the main theme remains the same in the NPPF.

Appropriate facilities should be genuinely required for uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it. Possible examples of such facilities include small changing rooms or unobtrusive spectator accommodation for outdoor sport, or small stables for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation.

The main Local Plan policy relevant to this planning application is policy B22 - Stables and Ancillary Buildings

IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE GENERALLY, PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A STABLE OR LOOSE-BOX OR OTHER ANCILLARY BUILDING SUBJECT TO THE BUILDING NOT HAVING A DAMAGING EFFECT ON THE CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF THE LANDSCAPE AND SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF POLICY H13(C).

Manèges are not specifically covered in this policy; however they could be considered ancillary buildings (given that they are largely engineering operations).

The proposed manège would not have a damaging effect on the character and quality of the landscape due to its typical scale, the acceptability of its design and choice of vernacular materials, its setting into the slope of the hill to reduce its impact, and the existing screening and proposed landscaping improvements.

DESIGN

The design of the manège is determined by its function and is typical for the purposes of outdoor recreation and leisure.

USE

The use of the proposed Manège is for the exercise and training of horses for dressage.

The relationship to other uses surrounding the site is clear – there are several other properties in the immediate vicinity that have a manège built for equestrian purposes, and it is a popular area for small scale private horse ownership.

The proposed Manège would therefore not appear out of context in relation to uses surrounding the site, the relevant planning policies for the location, the choice of materials and design details, and the proposed landscaping treatment.

ACCESS

Access to the proposed Manège for construction purposes would be through the existing gate near the stable building and across the field surface.

Access to the site itself from the public highway is via the existing farm lane serving 4 properties, across the farmyard and through a gate into the field.

It is hoped that this level of detail provided in the access component of the statement is proportionate to the nature and scale of the access that will be required to the site. (For proposals which will have no public access, the access component need not be long).

CONTEXT APPRAISAL (CONCLUSION)

The proposed Manège is of an appropriate design for its intended purpose, is of an acceptable scale, and the proposed materials are typical of Manège construction that are considered acceptable in the area and therefore within the Local Plan policies. Its setting into the slope of the ground level helps to reduce the visibility in the wider area, and its orientation parallel with the existing buildings complements the existing built infrastructure on the farm. The combination of existing screening and proposed landscaping results in no harm to the landscape or the character of the area, and in fact an improvement. The use of the proposed manège is an appropriate use of land in the Green Belt for the purposes of outdoor sport and recreation.

Any outstanding issues can be controlled by condition, and the applicant would greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide any further information or clarification that is required during the consideration of the application, prior to determination.

If any further information or explanation is required please contact
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