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PLANNING STATEMENT INCLUDING DESIGN & ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

DATE ISSUED:

MARCH 2018

SITE ADDRESS:

HURSTON HOUSE, HURSTONS LANE, ALTON, STOKE ON TRENT, ST10 4AP

APPLICANT:

MR S MASSEY

PROPOSAL:

ERECTION OF OUTDOOR RIDING ARENA

JOB NUMBER:

2018-2308

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a planning application for an outdoor riding arena on land adjacent to Hurston House, Hurston Lane, Alton. The application has been submitted by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of Mr S Massey and is accompanied by a full set of detailed drawings.

1.2 This statement analyses the site, the proposals and the policy context within which the proposals are made. Thereafter, it provides justification for approval of the proposal, primarily on the basis that the development would be in accordance with Development Plan policies as it would result in the provision of appropriate sized and suitably located facilities for equestrian purposes within the open countryside with little, if any landscape impact. Furthermore, it is not considered that the proposed development would be prejudicial to residential amenity, detrimental to highway safety, adversely affect any protected trees or harm any established ecological interests.

2. SITE & ITS SURRUNDINGS

2.1 The application site consists of agricultural land which forms part of a much larger field. It lies to the south east of the applicant's dwelling Hurston House. The site is served by a crushed limestone track which leads from Hurstons Lane, running contiguous with the northern boundary of the application site before terminating with a section of blue brick paviours. A native hedgerow forms the eastern boundary of the site with all other boundaries denoted by timber post and rail fencing. A public footpath runs contiguous with the southern boundary of the site. The land is undulating falling away gradually in a north to south direction. For the purposes of the development plan the application site lies outside any designated settlement boundary within an area of open countryside.

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 This is a full application which seeks consent for the erection of an outdoor riding arena. The proposed arena, which would measure 50m x 40m would be located centrally within the application site. It would be enclosed with a 1.2m high post and rail timber fence. The outdoor arena will be finished with rubber chippings. Due to the topography of the site some cut and fill will be required in order to create a level area and this is shown on the submitted sectional drawings. The proposed development is for the sole use of the applicant's and their family for the riding and exercise of their privately owned horses and is not for commercial use.

4. PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27th March 2012 and replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy advice with immediate effect. It is the Government's clear

intention that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and as such carries particular weight where development is not addressed by planning policies in the existing Development Plan.

4.3 Whilst the recently published NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making it does provide guidance to LPA's and is a material consideration in determining planning applications (para 12). The NPPF confirms that at the heart of the guidance is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 14) and that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the Staffordshire Moorlands comprises of the adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (March 2014) saved policies of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (1998), saved policies of the Minerals Local Plan (1999) and the Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent Joint Waste Core Strategy (March 2013).

4.4 The most relevant policies of the adopted Core Strategy are considered to be SO1 (Spatial Objectives), SS1 (Development Principles); SS1a (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development); SS6c (Rural Area Strategy; DC1 (Design Considerations); DC3 (Landscape and Settlement Setting); NE1 (Biodiversity and Geological Resources); R1 (Rural Diversification), T1 (Development and Sustainable Transport) and T2 (Other Sustainable Transport Measures). For the sake of brevity these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section.

5. KEY PLANNING ISSUES

5.1 The key issues for consideration in the determination of this application are considered to be the principle of development, landscape impact, impact on residential amenity and highway safety.

5.2 The application site lies in an area of open countryside designated as Special Landscape Area where restrictive Development Plan policies apply. Planning policy is consistent at all levels in so far as it gives qualified support to equine use in such locations provided that such facilities would not result in any landscape harm. Whilst the adopted policies of the Core Strategy does not have specific policies on equestrian use it does have policies relating to design and landscape.

5.3 Core Strategy policy DC1 requires that development should be of a high quality, be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote the maintenance of biodiversity. Core Strategy policy DC3 requires that development which would harm the character and local and wider landscape should be resisted and important views as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment should be protected.

5.4 Core Strategy policy R1 (Rural Diversification) also applies. This states that "all development in the rural areas outside the development boundaries of the towns and villages will be assessed according to the extent which it enhances the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside, promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy, facilitates economic activity, meets a rural community need and sustains the historic environment . Appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area.

5.5 The proposed outdoor riding arena is considered to be of an appropriate size to meet the need for which it is intended. It has been located centrally within the flattest part of the field to minimise the amount of any cut and fill required and would extend across the site in an east to west location. The location of the outdoor riding arena also makes use of the existing access track thereby reducing the potential for any further landscape harm with additional accesses or tracks. The proposed arena would provide an area where the horses can be turned out in winter and where horses can be ridden and trained without damage to the surrounding pasture. In addition the riding arena would provide a safe and secure area for riding which is required due to the local roads being narrow and traffic speeds unrestricted.

5.6 Outdoor all weather riding arenas are a common feature in today's countryside and are accepted as part of modern rural landscapes. Whilst the proposed development would be visible especially from the adjacent public footpath which runs contiguous with the southern field boundary of the site it would be seen against the backdrop of the existing mature field boundary hedge to the east and read within the context of Hurston House to the north. Furthermore, the open nature of the proposal and muted surface treatment means that visually there would be little change to the existing character and appearance of the site. Whilst attractive the area in which the proposed outdoor riding arena is located has no special landscape designations and is not identified as a key open space or view within the Authority's Landscape Characters Assessment.

Highway Safety

5.7 In terms of highway safety considerations Paragraph 32 of the NPPF states that "development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residential cumulative impacts of development are severe". Core Strategy Policy DC1 states that development proposals should provide for safe and satisfactory access whilst also meeting the parking requirement for the necessary car use. The proposed development does not proposed to make any alterations to the existing access or track which currently serves the site.

Residential Amenity

5.8 Policy DC1 states that new development should protect residential amenity in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping. Given its isolated positioning the proposed development is not considered to raise any adverse amenity issues nor be prejudicial to the reasonable enjoyment of any of the surrounding dwellinghouses.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle and consistent with adopted Development Plan policies. its size and scale is commensurate with the land holding it serves and it has been sensitively located within the rural landscape. The proposed development will provide a safe and secure environment for the applicant to undertake equestrian activities and prevent damage to the surrounding pasture. The proposed development will be seen against the backdrop of the existing built and natural features within the site including the adjacent hedgerow and the dwellinghouse to the north. For these reasons it is considered that the proposed development would comply with the adopted development plan policies and constitutes sustainable development which should be approved without delay.

AMOUNT

The proposed riding arena would be 50m in length x 20m wide and would be used solely for accommodating and exercising the applicants and his family's horses.

LAYOUT

The orientation and location of the proposal has been determined by the ground contours and the requirement to minimise the cut and fill required in order to facilitate the development.

LANDSCAPING

The general site layout is to remain unaltered. Due to the undulating site levels minor changes are required to the existing ground levels to accommodate the proposed riding arena. Sections through the site have been provided as part of the proposal. The proposed development has been located to minimise changes in ground levels and any proposed batters will be grassed to blend any banks back into the adjoining field.

APPEARANCE

The proposed surface finish of the riding area is to be recycled black rubber mixed with washed silica sand which is a standard specification for this type of use. The proposed perimeter fencing will be standard agricultural grade, timber post and rail fencing, stained dark brown with the provision of a 1.27m high five bar agricultural gate. The graded banks around the arena will be grassed in full conformity with the surrounding fields. No external lighting is proposed as part of this development.

ACCESS

The riding arena is for private use and will not generate any increase in traffic onto the site and therefore no changes are required or proposed to the existing car parking or circulation areas within the site. The existing access into the site from Hurstons Lane is to remain unaltered.