KEN WAINMAN ASSOCIATES Ltd

Planning Consultant

PLANNING STATEMENT

Including Design and Access Matters.

Client: Ms. S Gibson.
Location: Land to the east of Winterfield Lane, Werrington.

Proposal: THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN OUTDOOR ALL-WEATHER RIDING AREA (50 x 30 metres) AND AN ACCESS TRACK.



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application seeks permission for the construction of an all-weather outdoor riding area and an access track. A site and location plan drawing; a block plan of the proposed manège; and a letter written on behalf of the applicant are submitted with the application.

1.2 The manège would be located in the first field to the east when travelling northwards from Leek Road in Weston Coyney. The proposed manège would be located in the north-west corner of the field close to Winterfield Lane. To the immediate north of the field is a ditch and a field boundary containing several mature hollies. On the west of the field there is a roadside hedge. The land slopes away to the east. The ditch to the north is not shown on the Environment Agency flood risk map. The ditch has been dug out to improve water flow. Drainage from the proposed manège would go partly into the ditch and partly into French Drains/soakaways.

1.3 The applicant together with her mother, Mrs. R Gibson, owns 0.8ha. (2 acres) and lease a further 18 acres (7.3ha) or thereabouts on a 20-year lease on which there is still 15 years to run. The applicant and her mother own six horses for personal use. The six horses graze on the land; about 8 acres (3.2ha) of which is used for grazing with the rest (4.9ha) used for the production of hay for their own use and for sale. Notice No.1 has been sent to Mrs. R Gibson and the landlord. The proposed manège and proposed track are located on the owned land. Appendix 1 contains a plan showing the land owned by the applicant and her mother as well as the leased land.

1.4 The applicant and her mother keep, ride and train horses including carriage - driving horses on the land. A manège is needed on which to train the horses all year round and to provide dry ground in winter. The ground at this time of year is sodden and so they cannot train the horses. Without a manège the applicant and her mother have nowhere to train the horses.

1.5 Mrs. Rosemary Gibson and Miss Sinead Gibson are very keen horse riders, Mrs. R Gibson has owned horses all her life, and her daughter Sinead Gibson has followed the same interests and owned her own horses from a very young age. They both enjoy the local horse community; ride for recreation; like to attend all the local shows to compete in both in-hand and ridden classes; and Mrs. Gibson enjoys competing in cone courses with her driving horses.

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1.6 Unfortunately it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep the horses trained and fit for competing and recreation; when hacking out around the surrounding area over the past few years they have found that riding out locally is becoming increasingly dangerous on the local lanes and bridle ways due to drivers deliberately spooking the horses by speeding past with passengers shouting and beeping as they go past on numerous occasions making it very unsafe. Winterfield Lane is often used as a “rat-run” and at times can be very busy.

1.7 Inconsiderate dog walkers and cyclists on the bridle ways not controlling their dogs or cyclists not slowing when they are coming past with their bikes can be problems. On one occasion. Miss Gibson's horse was badly spooked and the horse began to bolt resulting in Sinead having a bad fall and being air-lifted to hospital with a broken pelvis. With the recent death of a friend, who was riding as a passenger on a horse drawn carriage on the road Miss and Mrs. Gibson are both even more reluctant to put their selves and their horses at risk on the roads.

1.8 They have been trying to manage the horses training and keep them fit and in show and driving condition on the land but it is impossible because during the autumn and winter the land is prone to flooding and becomes sodden putting the horses at risk of injury trying to work in boggy wet ground. In in the dry months the ground is very uneven and too hard under foot making the horses uncomfortable.

1.9 Mrs. Gibson and Miss S Gibson currently own 4 horses that are established and go competing and used for recreational riding and driving and 2 younger home bred horses which are now ready to begin their ridden and driving training but as the ground is unsuitable to ride and train on, and it been too dangerous to hack them, they have not been able to start their training. The result is that all the horses have become unfit and difficult to ride/drive.

1.10 The reason for the ménage is to create a safe and suitable environment for the horses to be trained in throughout the year without the risks and dangers involved with taking the horses out on the roads and bridleways. Sinead and Rose would really like to once again be involved in the local community, ride their horses for recreation on the local lanes and bridleways, and take their horses to events, shows and competitions something which they have not been able to do due to the horses not been kept in regular work.

1.11 Sinead and Rose have provided a photograph collage which shows the flooding and waterlogging on the land during the wet months. This is submitted separately as part of the application.

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2 PLANNING POLICY

2.1 The site is located in the Green Belt and the Green Belt policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) apply together with other polices in the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014). The starting point when considering planning applications is the Development Plan which in this case is the Core Strategy.

2.2 The following Core Strategy policies have been considered when putting together the scheme.

- S01 Spatial Objectives
- SS1 Development Principles
- SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- SS6c Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
- DC1 – Design Considerations
- DC3 - Landscape and Settlement Setting
- R1 - Rural Diversification.

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2.3 The Core Strategy does not contain a specific Green Belt policy and the national Green Belt policy as set out in Section 11 of the NPPF, particularly paragraph 145, applies.

2.4 For the sake of brevity, the Development Plan and NPPFs policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to as appropriate. The Council is also in the later stages of producing a new Local Plan and where relevant these policies are mentioned but until the plan is adopted these policies do not carry full weight. There do not appear to be any specific policies in the emerging Local Plan relating to equestrian facilities and therefore the Green Belt policies prevail.

3 DESIGN ISSUES

- **Access -** via existing gateway from the road. Sight-lines have been discussed in the past with the Highways officer and they were considered suitable/satisfactory. Some pruning of roadside vegetation may be needed and could be conditioned.
- **Appearance –** The access track would be constructed of crushed hardcore down to fines. The specifications for the access and all-weather riding area are shown on Drawings No. 3607-01A and 3607-04.
- **Scale** – The proposed manège is 50 x 30 metres in area.
- **Layout** – as shown on the Site Plan, drawing no. 3607-01A.
- **Landscaping** – none proposed. If the Council require landscaping please let the agent know during the consideration of the application.

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3. THE CASE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT

3.1. The key issues addressed in this section are:

- Whether the proposed development is appropriate in the Green Belt.
- Its effect on the character and appearance of the area
- Ecological Impact.
- Other similar developments which have received approval in the Moorlands Green Belt.

3.2. The case in support of the development is that:

- **The proposed development is appropriate development in the Green Belt.**
  Paragraph 145(b) in the NPPF indicates that appropriate built facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation are acceptable in the Green Belt. The proposed development is for outdoor recreation – riding and training horses for personal use.

  The development would be screened by the well-developed hedge along the roadside and would be seen against a partial backcloth of holly trees. It is also located in a slight dip in the landform – see the front cover of this document. Any visual impact would be limited and not adverse and the design is appropriate to, and common in, the rural landscape including the Green Belt.

  There is no proviso in paragraph 145 in the NPPF that the exceptions listed there are subject to the requirements that they should preserve Green Belt openness and should not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. In contrast, the exceptions listed in paragraph 146 of the NPPF are subject to these requirements.

- **The development is small scale; appropriate to a rural location; and would not harm the countryside or its appearance.**
  The design of the proposed development is in accord with the design policies in the Development Plan. The manège would respect the countryside location and would be located in a corner of the field where it would be least visible and where the land slopes away from the road. The photograph on the front-cover shows that the manège would also be located in a slight dip in the land which would reduce any visual impact.

  The development would also be screened by the well-developed hedge along the roadside and would be seen against a partial backcloth of holly trees. Any

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visual impact would be limited and not adverse.

The access track would be screened from the road by the dense roadside hedge to the north of the ditch. The proposed track is needed to enable machinery to maintain the manège to access the development and to enable construction.

- **Similar developments in the Green Belt**
  - Manège at the northern end of Winterfield Lane (planning permission SMD/2010/0290) about 1.7 kilometres to the north.
  - Manège at Stanley Bank, Stanley, where stables and a manège were permitted in 2016 (SMD/2016/0223). This site, like the application site is away from buildings.
  - Stables and manège at Bailey's Bank, Biddulph. Permission (SMD/2018/0796) was recently granted for 3 further stables on this Green Belt site in addition to two existing stables and a manège.

- **The proposal is rural diversification.**
  Rural economies are changing. Horse grazing and the use of the land for equestrian purposes is commonplace and occurring more often.

  Section 6 (paragraph 83) of the NPPF supports the diversification of agricultural operations. Policy SS6c of the Moorlands Core Strategy seeks to sustain the rural economy by supporting diversification of existing farm enterprises, and the partial use of land for keeping horses is one such example of diversification.

- **There would be no adverse effect on ecology.**
  The land is species poor improved grassland with few flowering species. Those there include dock and creeping buttercup.

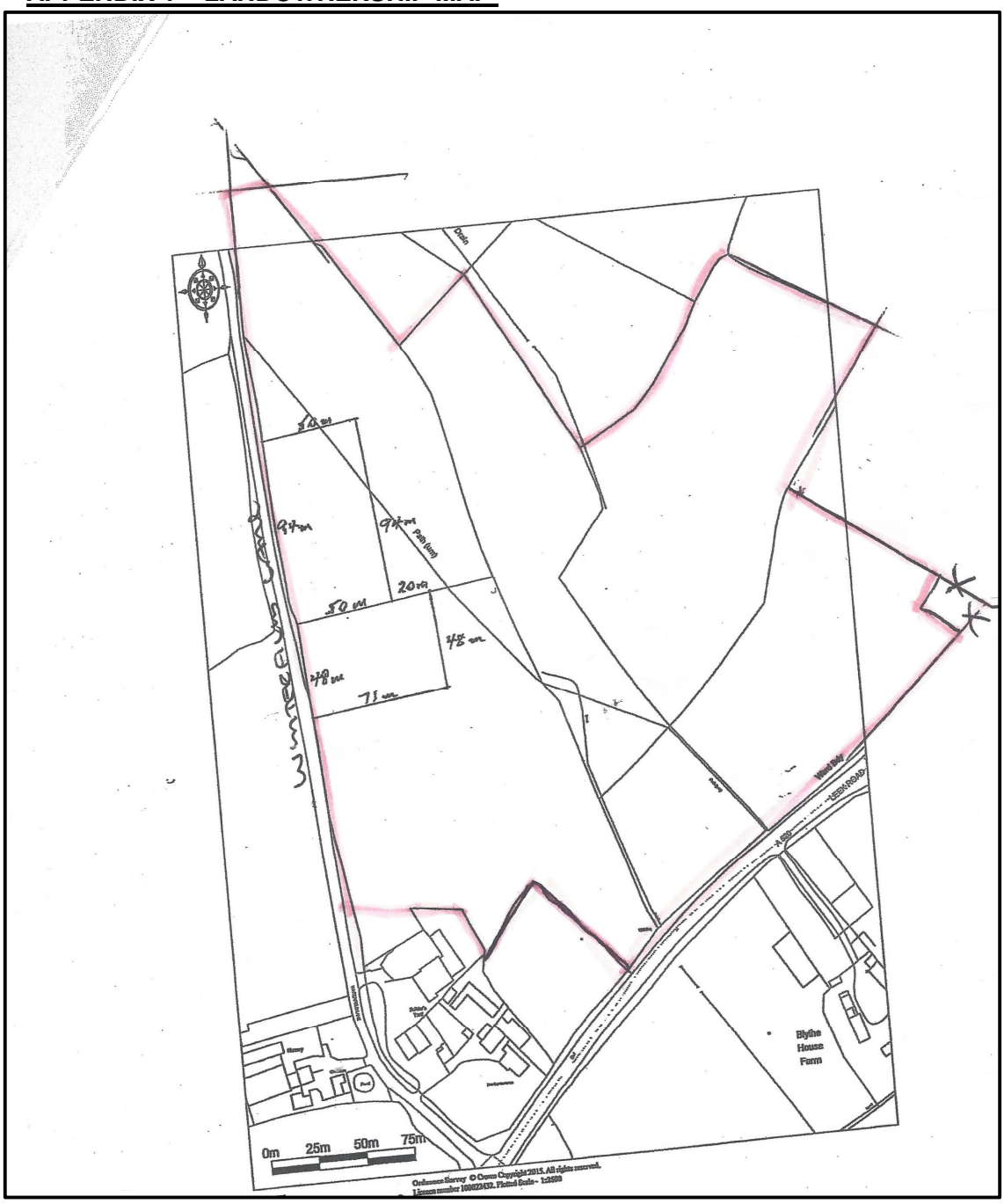
  There would be no adverse effect on the nearby trees or hedgerows. As can be seen from the Site Plan the proposed manage would not be close to the trees/hedges to the north and the west.

- **The proposed development is in accord with the Development Plan and the NPPF** and as such is sustainable development which should be approved.

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APPENDIX 1 – LANDOWNERSHIP MAP



N.B. The two measured rectangles drawn in pencil are the owned land. The red edge indicates the boundaries of the entire holding.

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