

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0193
Valid 08/04/2021

COPELAND FIELD FARM
SALTERS LANE
HULME
WERRINGTON

CONSTRUCTION OF A
EQUESTRIAN ALL-WEATHER
OUTDOOR RIDING AREA (40M
X 20M).

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Whether or not the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- The impact on the rural character and appearance of the area
- The impact on residential amenity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is in the open countryside a short distance to the south of the large village of Werrington. It comprises part of an open field immediately to the south of farm buildings on the east side of Salters Lane and the Salters Lane/Hulme Lane junction of the two country lanes. The site is otherwise surrounded by open fields although there is a dwelling a short distance to the north within different land ownership. There is a farmhouse at the property close to the lane. The land in the area slopes downwards gently towards the south. The site is in the Green Belt.

PROPOSAL

This is a planning application for a 40m x 20m horse manage/exercise yard/arena immediately to the south-east of the farm buildings. The applicant wants to use the manege for her private equestrian use as she considers the surrounding lanes are becoming increasingly unsafe for the exercising of her horses due to traffic and road alterations. The application forms explain the following:

“The suggested floor construction to be recycled 2” clean stone as a base layer incorporating herringbone drainage system to existing ditches. Proposed surface finish to be recycled cleaned mixed silica sand with layers separated by geotextile membranes. Proposed fencing around the perimeter to be 75 x 125 posts at no more than 1800 centers with 3 38 x 87 rails and 150 x 38 retaining board.”

The application is accompanied by a Great Crested Newt Survey Report and a Coal Mining Risk Assessment Report (due to historical coal mining close to the site which has caused some potential land stability).

Later on in the process, an Amphibian Methodology Statement (which sets out the proposed methods of construction to avoid harm to amphibians that may be present

due to the proximity of the site to water bodies) along with sectional drawings to show the ground extraction and cut and fill for the development, was also submitted.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (Adopted September 2020)

SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy

DC1 Design Considerations

NE1 Biodiversity

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

Sections 12 (Design), 13 (Green Belts) and 15 (Natural Environment)

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 27.5.21

Neighbour consultation period ends: 27.5.21

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments

None.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

No objection subject to conditions which require the submission of an Amphibian Method Statement and sectional drawings.

On receipt of the above, SWT raised no objection to the details submitted.

Coal Authority

No objection.

Severn Trent Water

No objection.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Policy SS10 requires strict control over inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The NPPF in paras 145 and 146 lists the forms of development which are not deemed to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and harmful to its openness. Engineering operations, required to create a flat surface on sloping land and the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor recreation are both listed. Equestrian uses are a form of outdoor recreation and I consider that the applicant has sufficiently justified the need for the manege and the connection between the development and its equestrian purpose. I therefore consider the proposed horse manege/arena would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and which is not harmful to its openness.

With regard to the actual impact on the character and appearance of the area, the manege would appear as a conventional standard 40m x 20m horse arena with a surface which is typical of such arena's found elsewhere in the rural locality. It is a form of development which is not out of keeping with the area. As the development would be flat it would not be harmfully prominent in the landscape and would not appear harmful when viewed from the nearest roads and public footpaths. Its distance from Salters Lane to the west is sufficient to lead it to be barely visible and there is a good level of tree/hedge screening a short distance to the north. There is a footpath a short distance to the east and the manege would be visible from there but overall it would not significantly harm the character and appearance of the area and it is closely positionally related to the far more prominent complex of farm buildings adjacent to the site. As the site is on a slight slope going downwards towards the south, some extraction and possible fill would be required but this need not be excessive as the gradient is not extreme. The applicant proposes hedge planting around the perimeter and this would effectively screen the development including areas of extraction. I consider this would only be needed for the west, east and south perimeters of the site as there is already screening and farm buildings to the north. A condition can be added requiring the hedge planting via the submission to the Council of a landscaping scheme for approval and another condition should be added requiring sectional drawings to demonstrate the amount of extraction required to be undertaken to create a flat surface for the horses.

I do not consider the residential amenities of the area would be harmed as the manege is only required for the private use of the occupant of the farm and is not to be used commercially. There is a dwelling outside of the property a short distance to the north of the site but it is not close enough to be affected by any noise or nuisance (or manure smells) given the nature of the farm surroundings where there is much greater potential for noise and nuisance from the everyday workings of a farm and also the existing equestrian use of the site.

Although there is a pond a short distance to the west of the site, a Great Crested Newt Survey report has been submitted which Staffs Wildlife Trust has been consulted on and considers there would be no significant harm to the newts (a protected species) and no overall harm to the ecological value of the site subject to an "amphibian method survey" being undertaken. The planting around the arena would mitigate against any harms caused by extraction.

Although the above matter could be dealt with by way of a planning condition, the applicant decided to submit an Amphibian Method Survey statement along with sectional drawings of the manege to show extraction (also requested by SWT). Those details were submitted and considered satisfactory to SWT.

The Coal Authority does not object to the proposal as although there are High Risk zones of ground instability in the area, caused by historical coal mining, the proposed arena is not in the high risk zones.

Conclusion

The proposal would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would not harm the rural character and appearance of the area or the amenities of the area in general or the natural environment in general, with the safeguard of conditions. The proposal would therefore comply with the Council's Local Plan as well as being in line with the government planning guidance in the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston

Recommendation Date: 20.8.21

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council