

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0422
Valid 25/06/2021

CHURCH VIEW FARM
HOLLINGTON ROAD
FREEHAY
CHEADLE

ERECTION OF MANEGE AND
RETENTION OF EXISTING
STABLE BLOCK.

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

Impact on the character and appearance of the area and local ecology and biodiversity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Church View Farm is in the open countryside designated for the spatial strategy as an 'other rural area'. Surrounded by the scattered farms and cottages of Freehay with areas of quarrying to the north. The immediate land ownership to the small farm consists of open grazing parcels, irregular small scale parcels notably enclosed and screened by mature hedgerow.

PROPOSAL

To construct a 20 x 40m horse riding and exercise manege for the recreational enjoyment of the applicant and her household who live at Church View Farm. Following an amendment the manege would be located approximately 127m to the west of Church View Farm, in the corner of an existing paddock surrounded by mature hedgerow boundary, it would occupy existing land clearly used by the horses for rotational grazing, the land is relatively flat and level and so cut and fill would be minimal, if at all.

The original proposal was to locate the manege closer to the dwelling on land to the north, however, this would have required the removal of a considerable belt of mature hedgerow at the expense of ecology and habitat value. The alternative location would not present the same impacts in those regards but requires a stone access track to provide a link to the stable buildings following field boundary lines.

Its perimeter would be enclosed with a post and rail fence. The free draining substructure would be of stone and sand with an equestrian surface. Plans indicate that perforated drains would provide field drainage beneath.

The revised application is submitted with a prelim ecology survey.

Additionally, Planning permission is sought for development already carried out, a small two bay timber stable building has been constructed within tree cover within close proximity of a farm shed and the farm house.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS10 Other Rural Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape character
NE1 Ecology and biodiversity

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None Relevant

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 24th Sep 2021

Neighbour consultation period ends: 24th Sep 2021

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Chealde Town Council: No Objection

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

No objection subject to conditions that pick up the recommendations of the Absolute ecology report. Documents reviewed:

- Prelim Ecology Appraisal for alternative siting, Absolute Ecology September 2021
- Revised Site Plan and Construction Details - Alternative siting

No impacts to designated wildlife sites. The alternative location as proposed in the revised plan (drawing 1327/02 revision B) is much better from an ecological view. We have no objection to the manège being constructed in this new location based on the information provided within the PEA report by Absolute Ecology. Some precautionary measures have been recommended, see below.

The proposal will result in the loss of approximately 0.11 hectares of poor semi-improved grassland to the manège and access track. In order to ensure a net gain for biodiversity, landscaping should include enhancement of an area of grassland of the same size within the landholding. This could be around the manège or a margin around the field, alongside the track or elsewhere. Existing sward or bare areas of soil should be cut short, harrowed or raked and seeded over with a suitable wildflower mix. Tree or hedge planting along the new post and rail fence lines should also be considered. Landscaping to be secured via condition.

Great Crested Newts, Amphibians The PEA by Absolute Ecology found that the pond on site was of excellent value for supporting great crested newts with records also present. Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) are recommended. To be followed as per section 5.13 of the ecology report in full.

Bats No lighting is proposed. However, should this change care should be taken not to illuminate boundary habitats that likely support commuting and foraging bats. Recommendations as per sections 5.8 and 5.9 of the ecology report to be followed.

Birds As per the ecology report, no nesting birds are likely within the field itself. As per the section 5.10 of the ecology report, any works to boundary features or trees or hedgerows should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (March – August inclusive).

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Under Local plan strategy SS10 the other rural areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports rural diversification, promotes tourism or enhances the countryside. It sets a positive list of actions that the authority will take to achieve and deliver on the strategy. The list is not read as being closed or providing an exhaustive set of exceptions, which means that there may be other forms of development, not mentioned in the list, but which essentially need to be located in the countryside and would, broadly, deliver or fit within the strategy.

Clearly a small stable building and an exercise arena for the enjoyment of the landowner and householder on land that is owned and used to graze and keep horses within proximity of their dwelling and farm buildings, essentially needs to be located in this countryside location. The development would be compliant with the strategy.

Impact on Character and Appearance

The small timber stable building has been located within tree cover adjacent to a large farm shed. It is located sensitively and has no notable impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.



The manege would be located into the corner of the field against the mature hedgerow that encloses the field. The character of the applicant's grazing land is that it feels secluded and enclosed by trees and hedgerow that limit far reaching views into or out of the land. In these respects it would not be exposed, prominent or isolated. The manege would not be apparent from any right of way or other point of public Vantage. The stoned access track would amount to a modest private way adjacent to and following the hedge line of boundaries. The development would not have adverse impacts on the character and appearance of the area or countryside landscape.

Amenity

The nearest neighbouring dwelling would be over 150m from the development. No issues of amenity harm would be raised here.

Ecology and biodiversity

Staffs Wildlife Trust identified the app on the weekly list noting that the original proposal that would site the manege in an area where it would be necessary to remove a considerable area of trees and hedgerow could have impacts on ecology, they criticised the lack of any ecology report. Rather than request survey reports, the applicant revised their proposal to locate the manege in an area of open grazing land within their ownership. With that revision the applicant provided a prelim survey relevant to the revised location.

The Trust now have no objection, they endorse recommended mitigation in respect of great crested newts and nesting birds, and control over any lighting to protect bats. However, the trust also suggest a land scaping scheme to provide enhanced grassland with wildflower mix to compensate for land lost to the access track and manege. Additional landscaping however, is not necessary to screen the development existing hedgerow already functions in those regards, and the land that would be occupied the development is clearly maintained only as grazing land for the horses, used on a rotational basis, the ecological or biodiversity value of this land appears limited on site. The scheme does not include the removal of trees or hedgerow, the new location has been deliberately located to avoid that. Aerial photographs suggest that additional planting to supplement hedgerows has been considerable over the years, and additional landscaping in respect of this development would appear onerous.

A condition preventing the introduction of light sources or illumination without additional approval and control can be attached to protect bat habitat.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Compatible with the other rural area strategy at SS10 of the Local Plan. No adverse impacts on character and appearance or ecology and biodiversity.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 24/09/2021

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council