

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2022/0103
Valid 22/02/2022

BROADHURST FARM LEEK
ROAD
WATERHOUSES

THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN
ARTIFICIAL OUTDOOR RIDING
AREA.

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

The impact on the character and appearance of the area.
The impact on residential amenity.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is within the countryside to the south-east of Waterhouses and to the south-west of A523. It comprises part of a field next to Broadhurst Farm which is reached via a narrow rural private lane, Common Lane which is connected to A523. The site is to the east of Common Lane and south-west of the Broadhurst Farm access track which leads to the buildings which are no longer used for agricultural purposes and area a mixture of dwellings and holiday lets. The buildings are a short distance to the east of the site. The land slopes upwards towards the south-west. There are large mature trees within the site along the boundary with Common Lane and in the south part of the site.

PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for a horse manege (all-weather horse arena) with a footprint of 40 x 20 metres with a dark grey rubber chippings finish and a 1.2m high timber post-and-rail perimeter fence. Due to the sloping nature of the site, significant extraction works would be involved to create a flat surface, resulting in the formation of a grass sloping bank to the south-west. A row of trees would be planted along the top of the proposed bank.

A covering letter with the application explains the following:

“The proposal is for a 40 metre long by 20-metre-wide artificial outdoor riding area. The applicant owns 15 acres around the farm on which they are 10 stables and 14 horses. The manège would be for personal and family use only. The proposal involves excavating into a slope. The excavated material would be spread on the 15 acres of the holding. The proposed manège has been carefully located to avoid damaging the existing trees along Common Lane. Tree planting is proposed on the southwestern slope of the development to provide biodiversity gain, stabilise the slope, and enhance the landscape.”

The application is also accompanied by a Tree Report.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffs Moorlands Local Plan (adopted September 2020)

SS10 – Other Rural Areas Strategy
SS11 Churnet Valley
DC1 – Design Considerations
NE2 – Trees, Hedges, Woodland

NPPF (Revised July 2021)

Sections 12 (Design) and 15 (Natural Environment).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None relevant for this particular site but a recent approval was granted for the change of use of one of the farm buildings into a dwelling.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 13.4.22
Neighbour consultation period ends: 13.4.22
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments (Waterhouses PC)

“Not object.”

OFFICER COMMENTS

The principle of horse arena's and other equestrian related development is acceptable providing this does not result in harm to the landscape or lead to any traffic or ecological problems. The site is in the Churnet Valley where the landscape is afforded significant protection.

Although the horse arena would be placed in an open field on a slope, the arena and proposed banking would be well screened from A523 by a row of tall conifer trees along the farm access track and farm buildings to the other side of the track. A proposed new row of trees would be placed along the top of the bank to screen the development from views down the sloping land from the south-west. From Common Lane the arena would also be cut into the ground alongside the lane reducing its prominence although it would be largely visible from the farm entrance off Common

Lane. It is therefore considered that some additional screen tree planting to the north west side of the development would be beneficial. This could be secured by condition. However, overall it would not cause significant harm to the landscape and would only be visible briefly from short range views. It would not be visible from the nearest public footpaths which cross fields a considerable distance away to the south and to the other side of the A523.

The extraction works would encroach into the root protection areas of one of the five large mature trees on site, the largest tree next directly to the west of the arena and next to Common Lane. A Tree Report has been submitted and categorises the quality and health of all five trees as being "fair". However, the report also considers that the margin of encroachment would not lead to significant harm to the tree.

As none of the trees or vegetation would be harmed and there are no ponds within 250m of the site, the proposal would not lead to any ecological or any other forms of environmental harms. As the arena would be for the private use of the farm property owners, there would be no traffic generation associated with the proposal.

It would not harm residential amenity as the horse arena would be used only for private use in connection with the equestrian use of the farm property which is currently being used for this purpose and would not lead to any noise generation over and above the current equestrian and nearby agricultural operations current occurring in this area.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the Churnet Valley and would not lead to any other environmental harms. The proposal would therefore comply with the Local Plan and the government planning guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston
Recommendation Date: 19.4.22

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council