

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2025/0297
Valid 23/06/2025

LAND OFF ALWOODLEY
EDGE LANE
ENDON

PROPOSED RIDING ARENA
(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on Green Belt
- Impact on Character and Appearance
- Impact on Amenity
- Drainage

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises of an irregular shaped parcel of land which extends to some 1,500 sq metres. It comprises of a part of a larger agricultural field which lies on the eastern side of Edge Lane. The larger field is bound by a drystone wall to the southern, eastern and western boundaries of the land holding with the northern boundary, which lies contiguous to the development being depicted by the remnants of a drystone wall supplemented with post and wire fencing and a broken tree line dividing this parcel of land from that to the north. A timber stable block has been erected to the northwest of the application site (without planning permission). An agricultural field gate provides access to Edge Lane. The application site is bounded by open fields on all sides. A short ribbon of sporadic dwellings lies on the western side of Edge Lane with the dwellings at the end of Stoney Lane backing onto, and sharing boundary with the application site to the lying to the east and southeast. For the purposes of the Development Plan the site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt.

PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application which seeks consent for the erection of a riding arena. The proposed riding arena which would measure 40m x 20m would be positioned alongside the eastern edge of the existing stable block and run parallel with the existing tree lined boundary to the north.

The proposed riding arena which would be contained by 1.5m high post and rail fencing with five bar timber gate proposed in the southern elevation would be surfaced with silica sand. The proposed development would be served by the existing agricultural access off Edge Lane. Due to the sloping and undulating ground levels a small degree of cut and fill will be required to facilitate the proposed development as shown on the submitted plans. The proposed riding arena would be utilised in conjunction with the adjacent stables and used solely by the applicant for personal and private use.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles

SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
NE2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

Unable to locate any planning permission for the existing stable building that was built post Aug 2023 (within last 4 years). The development does appear to be a reinstatement or renewal of an old shed/stable that was removed sometime between Aug 2012 and 2015.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 8th Aug 2025
Neighbour consultation period ends: 8th Aug 2025
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

3 objections have been received. Following comments are raised:

- Inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- Harm to the openness of the Green Belt
- Land is not previously developed or grey belt
- Adverse impact on local character/landscape and biodiversity
- Set a precedent for further equestrian development
- Ground water currently flows into back garden landowner has not taken any action
- The development would disrupt ground water flow down hill
- Lighting would be out of character with the rural area
- It is misleading to say the site is surrounded by open fields, there are dwellings on Edge Lane and Stoney Lane that have gardens that back onto the land
- The development would not be used by the elderly applicant who lives at Alwoodley the stable is used by his extended family and friends
- Adverse visual impact from Stoney Lane gardens
- Noise disturbance from the enjoyment of the development

Town / Parish Comments

Endon and Stanley PC: No response before end of consultation period

Environmental Health

No objection subject to conditions

Drainage and Leachate: The proposed arena is in relatively proximity to a well and up a gradient from residential properties. Although there will be no increased surface water introduced to the site than already exist, we would advise that surface water is adequately addressed during the planning and construction phase to ensure no adverse impact to the well and residential properties. (Condition)

There is no information provided on the material which will be used to fill the base/foundation but the arena surface would be filled with silica sand according to the DAS. Due to the relative proximity of a well and residential properties to the site we would advise against the use of any material in the construction which might cause contaminated leachate. (condition advised)

Manure: There is no information provided regarding the disposal of horse manure. It may be advisable to apply the condition set out below to protect the local environment, soil and water (Condition)

Light: The site is relatively remote but there are a number of properties which might be impacted if floodlighting is installed at the arena. Any lights installed should be appropriately selected and directed to avoid light spillage and glare. (Condition)

Noise: Some equestrian arenas use music and amplified sound. We propose the condition below to ensure any amplified music is played at a suitable level. (condition)

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objection/conditional

Riding area is proposed adjacent to existing stables. Horses are already used in this area. Design and access statement states that vehicles will park at Alwoodley. As use is restricted to family, additional vehicles are likely to be few and this will be acceptable. Edge Lane is a narrow rural lane which would be unsuited to traffic associated with open, public competition. Condition recommended above is intended to prevent this. Current records show that there was 1 personal injury collisions (PIC) on B5051 Clay Lake within 50 metres either side of the Edge Lane junction in the previous five years. Although all PICs are regrettable, the overall volume of collisions does not suggest there are any existing safety problems that would be exacerbated by the proposed development.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Impact on the Green Belt

The site is in the Green Belt where development is inappropriate and, by definition, harmful unless it is provided for by one of the exceptions that appear in the closed lists at Chapter 13 of the NPPF.

The development would involve a material change of use, an engineering operation and the provision of a facility for outdoor sport and recreation. There are exceptions for all of those development types – providing the development preserves openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

Due to the prevailing land levels that fall and slope down significantly to the east, the proposed arena would involve significant cut and fill engineering operations and the development would take on substantial and imposing 3 dimensional structural form.

The arena's sides and bottom edge would have a height of 2m above natural ground level in places.

In these regards, the development would not preserve openness. The visual and spatial aspects of Green Belt openness would be harmed. There would be conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt because there would be encroachment into the countryside.

The development would therefore, be inappropriate and harmful to the Green Belt. Substantial weight is attached to the harm to the Green Belt, planning permission shall not be granted unless there are other considerations, amounting to very special circumstances, that clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harms that would result from the development.

The private enjoyment of the applicant is not a benefit or a consideration that clearly outweighs the Green Belt harm.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

The development would be carried out, centrally, within an open ancient slope and valley farmland landscape. From the high ground of Eaves Lane to the west, there are open views over the drystone wall across the whole of the applicant's land ownership. To the southern edge of the land public footpath Endon and Stanley 14 runs between Eaves Lane and Stoney Lane. The land is open undeveloped pasture/grazing land, a rolling hillside falling to the valley below in the east enclosed by mature hedgerow, scattered tree line and woodland edge. The development would be carried out adjacent to a small stable building positioned against the field's hedgerow boundary to the north – the stable is a small rural timber building but has been built without planning permission.



Within this setting the development would be an imposing 3 dimensional structure with cut and fill building up 2m high banked edges above surrounding ground levels. The

development would cause prominent intrusion into the landscape. It would appear as an artificially built up structure that would be at odds with the surrounding landscape.

The development would be exposed to and apparent from public vantage along Eaves Lane, the public footpath 14 to the south and the dwellings on Stoney Lane to the east.

In these regards there would be conflict with Local Plan policies SS10, DC1 and DC3 and the terms of the NPPF.

Impact on Amenity

The development would provide an elevated recreational surface within 40m of residential dwellings that share a boundary with the site to the east. The built up edges of the arena would appear intrusive and imposing from area of gardens at the lower ground level (Stoneywood and Gateways). There is no proposal to provide artificial flood lighting for riding at night or to play amplified music. Nevertheless, a concentration of noise associated with exercise, enjoyment and the training of horses would cause disturbance that would unacceptably affect the amenity and living conditions of the these neighbours.



There would be conflict with SMDC Local Plan policy DC1 in these regards.

Drainage

The proposed arena is in relative proximity to a well and up a gradient from residential properties. Although there will be no increased surface water introduced to the site than already exist, the cut and fill operations and the built up land level has the capacity to disrupt the rate and direction of ground water flow toward the lower ground level and the neighbour's properties. A built up substructure has the potential to hold volumes of groundwater causing it to build up before overflowing and running down hill in volume. There is no drainage plan or detail submitted with the application and the cross sections do not detail with construction or substructure material. The use of rubble or waste material has the potential to introduce contamination to the land and

ground waters. Environmental Health officers suggest this could be a matter that is addressed with conditions.

There is no information provided regarding the disposal of horse manure. On site it was observed that there was open pile of horse manure adjacent to the stables that was to the edge of the field drainage brook. Environmental Health officers suggest that it may be advisable to apply the condition set out below to protect the local environment, soil and water.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The development would be inappropriate and harmful to the Green Belt, it would be harmful to both the visual and spatial aspects of openness and cause countryside encroachment. There would also be an unacceptable impact on the amenity of residential neighbours and harm to the character and appearance of the area because the development would form an imposing and substantial structure in an open landscape setting and cause a prominent intrusion in the landscape that would be visible from public vantage and nearby dwellings. There are no other considerations that amount to very special circumstances and clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the other harms that would result from the development. There would be conflict with policies SS10, DC1, and DC3 of the SMDC Local Plan and the terms of the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date:

X 

Signed by: Jane Curley

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council