

Equestrian Design

PLANNING APPLICATION

**FOR THE PROVISION OF A NEW 15M X 30m
HORSE EXERCISE AND TURN OUT AREA TO
LAND ADJACENT TO THE GARDEN OF STORTH
MEADOW FARM, HIGH LANE, SIMMONDLEY,
GLOSSOP, SK13 6JN.**

DESIGN AND ACCESS AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION STATEMENT

**Equestrian Design
5 Wasley Close,
Fearnhead,
Warrington.
Cheshire
WA2 0DH**

**Tel: 01925 824523
Mobile: 07506 721770
Email: info@equestriandesign.co.uk
www.equestriandesign.co.uk**

Introduction:

Planning permission is sought for the introduction, upon the application site as indicated within the submitted drawings, of a 15m x 30m all weather horse exercise and turn out area (menage). The proposed facility is to be used in conjunction with the applicant's existing stables (at the adjacent Storth Meadow Farm) and as such to further support their personal equine interests. The applicant and their family have been involved with horses for many years and personal circumstances can be seen to give rise to a genuine need for the proposal. The proposed facility is to be used only for the exercising and training of horses and operated purely on a personal as opposed to any commercial basis.

It should be noted at the outset that whilst a similar proposal (for a 20m x 30m menage alongside new stables) was previously refused (app ref: HPK/2012/0405) to the western extremities of the application site in 2012, a clear distinction can and should be made between this and the current proposal. The existing proposal, not least being for a menage only, can be seen to directly and positively respond to the concerns which ultimately lead to the previous refusal including with respect to its size and siting. In this regard it is also considered pertinent to note that the current proposal has been meaningfully informed through positive preapplication discussions with the local planning authority.

This statement is intended to provide the additional information required in order to support the determination of the proposal and ultimately seeks to demonstrate that it complies with Development Plan policies of relevance. It therefore supports the contention that the proposal constitutes sustainable development for which national planning policies, in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework, make clear permission should be forthcoming for without delay.

Application Context:

The applicant purchased Storth Meadow Farm, including the house and adjacent land, with the sole intention of being able to provide their own equestrian facilities to satisfy their family's needs. The applicant's family have been involved with and owned horses for many years with the family's favoured equestrian disciplines, aside from pleasure riding, show jumping and showing.

The family currently own three horses, all of which are kept at stables set within their own residential curtilage which were approved in September 2013 (app ref: HPK/2013/0349). The horses are currently grazed at the farm on land within the applicant's ownership.

In terms of the family's favoured equestrian discipline of show jumping, this usually constitutes the third element of an eventing competition where competitors ride in a

grassed arena or ménage over a course of between 12 and 15 show jumping fences (depending upon ability), of varying height, width, complexity and layout within an allotted time. Time faults are incurred for exceeding the time allowance and jumping faults are incurred for knockdowns or refusals (where a horse stops before jumping a fence).

Progression through the various levels of competition for show jumping requires time and dedication to practice and train for both the horse and rider including their ground work techniques. The ability to use a ménage (and level surface) would allow the applicant and their family to train and practise more frequently, in a training environment which is like for like with a competition environment, and which ultimately therefore improves their standards enabling them to compete at higher levels.

Whilst it is relatively common to see show jumping competitions being carried out on grass, particularly at county shows and the like, grass arenas can get damaged very quickly and risk becoming unusable. Repeated and frequent training on a grassy area is therefore not a feasible option for the applicant. In contrast the use of the proposed level ménage would enable the correct training to take place throughout the year, in all weather conditions, on the correct competition surface.

Like many horse owners the applicant and their family have fallen from a horse on a number of occasions. The chance of injury when falling from a horse on a suitable ménage surface is significantly reduced when compared to the risk of injury when falling from a horse on a grassed arena. In addition to responding to the applicant's training needs, the use of the ménage can also be seen to be advantageous from a safety perspective, for both horse and rider.

Whilst not as significant a driver, but of relevance and therefore material all the same, is that the application site is not located near to an existing bridleway with the closest roads to the property deemed unsuitable, from a safety perspective, for hacking. This reflects the road alignments and the speed of traffic using them. Whilst there are proposals to create a route for the Pennine Bridleway along the western boundary of the field, there is currently no definite timescale for this to be provided due to ongoing funding issues. The provision of a ménage will therefore guarantee the horses can be exercised on a more informal basis in the depths of winter when doing so on the pasture is not appropriate but which would normally be mitigated by riding them on public roads.

Site Context:

Storth Meadow Farm is situated off High Lane, Simmondley, Glossop; just outside the settlement boundary area of Simmondley in open countryside. The fields associated with the former farmhouse to its west are designated as Green Belt land

and are also within a designated Special Landscape Area. The Green Belt boundary follows the field boundary to the west of the farmhouse. To the north of the site is a residential estate to which the settlement boundary of Simmondley follows. A Public Footpath also runs along this northern boundary. To the south of the site, and south of High Lane, is the Peak District National Park which is material for planning purposes.

Access to the former farmhouse and field is from an existing and well established access point onto High Lane, with vehicular access into the field being available from within the residential curtilage. The applicant's existing timber stables are sited to the north of the farmhouse, within its domestic curtilage adjacent to a stone barn and store.

The land is generally sloping in nature, from High Lane down towards Spring Rise. Whilst suitable for grazing the sloping nature of the field does make it extremely difficult for effective training to take place. Whilst land to the west is relatively flat this area is particularly susceptible to becoming waterlogged in times of prolonged rainfall, which makes it unsuitable for use for around 6 or 7 months of the year, without it becoming badly poached. This context exacerbates the need for a level menage.

There are a number of well established trees between the farmhouse and Spring Rise to the north.

Photographs of various views of the proposed site are appended to this supporting information.

The Proposal: Design Principles

Siting

It is proposed to locate the exercise area as close to and partially within the shelterbelt of trees to the west of the driveway where it will be partially screened from residential development to the north. This location is that which is most practical from the applicant's perspective, being close to their own property and stables, and as such avoiding the need for any significant length of connecting access track. The proposed siting also helps to ensure that from a design perspective the proposal does not risk being isolated, being well grouped with the applicants property and existing equine facilities. Furthermore the location also acts to ensure that the turn out area will be highly unlikely to result in any degree of disturbance for the nearest residential neighbours, being located far enough away from these to avoid doing so. Finally the proposed siting also acts to ensure that the facility will be well screened from views from the road to the north, with, at best, only occasional glimpses able to be seen.

Appearance

The surface of the turn out area will comprise of a sand and rubber mix, which is dark in colour in order to better blend into and integrate with the wider site. An example of the proposed finish is appended to this statement and a sample can be provided if necessary.

When not in use any training and exercise equipment can easily be accommodated in the applicant's existing outbuildings, which would negate the need for any such equipment to be left outside for prolonged periods. In this latter regard the applicant would willingly accept the imposition of a condition to secure such an arrangement if deemed necessary by the local planning authority.

Engineering Works

Engineering work in the form of cut and fill landscaping is required in order to provide a level surface due to the topography of the land. The approach to and form of the required retaining walls has been discussed at length with the local planning authority.

Consideration has been afforded to various alternatives, including retaining structures from concrete, stone gabions and timber retaining structures, but the preferred solution being from grass seeded earth slope, with the steepest angle being around 36 degrees.

It is proposed to reuse any surplus excavated material to raise low spots on other areas of the field. Where this occurs the final layer will be from topsoil and will be sown with grass seed to maintain the appearance of the surrounding field. There is no proposal to, and this approach should not be confused with, the creation of any earth bunds elsewhere on the site.

Enclosure

It is proposed that the exercise and turn out area would be enclosed by way of the erection of a timber post and rail fence, to the dimensions specified in the submitted drawings, stained in colour to match that of the existing fencing already in place to the field. This form of enclosure is relatively common in the immediate and wider surrounding area and countryside.

Lighting

There is no intention to install any kind of external lighting to the exercise and turn out area. It is recognised that to do so would require a further and separate permission.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is not situated in a known flood risk area which is recognised by the Environment Agency's flood risk designation mapping. There is no known significant risk of flooding from any other source.

An adequate degree of drainage for the proposed turn out area would be achieved through the use of two soakaways, as detailed in the submitted drawings, thereby negating the need to connect to any existing drainage network.

Access and Transport

There would be no need or requirement to alter the existing access arrangements into the farm, nor would the provision of the proposed area increase the number, frequency or amount of traffic either into the farm. To the contrary the proposal is likely to reduce vehicle movements as there will no longer be a requirement for the exercise and training of the horses to be carried out as frequently off site.

Pasture Management

The exercise and turn out area is to be provided in a paddock which is currently set aside from the available grazing. The loss of the land for grazing purposes will therefore have no impact on the quantity and availability of existing grazing pasture.

Trees and Hedgerows

The provision of the exercise and turn out area will require the removal of approximately 3 small deciduous trees together with 2 leylandi type trees (one of which has been severely damaged in recent storms), along with a small number of saplings, all as indicated on the submitted drawings. None of these trees are formally protected by legislative provisions.

It is proposed that any of the trees which are capable of being moved are done so and replanted prior to any construction works commencing. Compensatory planting is also proposed at a rate of 2 trees to be provided for any single tree removed, with the positioning of this new planting being as close as practically possible to the new exercise and turn out area. The applicant would willingly accept the imposition of a

condition, if deemed necessary, requiring the prior written agreement of the LPA with regards to any proposed new planting.

BS5837 suggests that excavation work in the root protection areas of trees will cause damage and advice has been sought regarding the proximity of the remaining trees to the proposed excavated area and as can be seen, the excavation works are well away from the untouched trees.

All the proposed untouched trees are to be protected from damage by the use of a temporary protection fence, provided in accordance with BS5837 Trees in relation to construction.

Ecology

The application site is not considered to be of any ecological value. Whilst a small number of trees are to be removed to facilitate the development, the proposed replacement planting will ensure that there is no net loss of habitat with an opportunity, through the selection of more appropriate native species, to improve the quality of habitat across the wider landscape.

Conformity with the Development Plan:

The Development Plan for the locality currently comprises of those policies from the High Peak Local Plan, adopted in 2005, which were saved under the transitional provisions of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Given that the Local Plan was adopted under pre 2004 regulations, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that due weight can only continue to be afforded to such policies where they are consistent with the Framework. Annex 1 of the Framework makes clear that where existing policies are not consistent, those in the Framework should be used as the basis upon which planning applications are determined.

Assessment against the Local Plan Policies Map identifies that the application site is located within the Green Belt. As such Policy OC2 is pertinent. Policy OC2 has now however been superseded by guidance of relevance within the Framework, albeit that the policy approach in so far as it relates to this proposal is not materially different. Paragraph 89 of the Framework identifies that local planning authority's should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt, but that exceptions to this stance include those proposals for the:

“provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it”.

Paragraph 90 also states that:

“Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These are:

- *mineral extraction;*
- *engineering operations...*”

It is widely accepted that small-scale equestrian facilities pursued in response to personal needs, including ménages and exercise areas, represent appropriate development within the Green Belt, in principle at least, by way of constituting appropriate outdoor recreational facilities. An acceptance of this notion was forthcoming by the local planning authority in response to the pre-application enquiry.

Policy LT5 of the Local Plan states that *“Planning Permission will be granted for stables, riding schools, equestrian centres and associated facilities provided that the development:*

- *will have adequate horse-riding, exercise and grazing areas and/or have suitable access to the bridleway network; and*
- *will not, either in its own right or cumulatively detract from the open character or amenity of the area or adjoining residential amenities”*

The proposal, even accounting for the engineering works, is tantamount in many regards to a change of use land and as such will ensure that the openness of the land is not compromised. For this same reasoning, and alongside the careful regard afforded to the siting and design of the area, it is contended that the proposal would not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt nor individually or cumulatively detract from landscape character.

In particular the siting of the proposal should ensure, as well as its nature being for personal use only, that its use does not result in any disturbance and therefore compromise the residential amenity of any of the nearest dwellings.

Ultimately it is therefore contended that the proposal, both in principle and in all detailed regards, can be seen to comply with all of the development plan policies of relevance. Regard has also been afforded to the emerging High Peak Local Plan Submission Draft (April 2014), but it is not considered that this introduces any new or additional requirements to which the proposal needs to respond.

Summary:

In conclusion it is contended that the proposed turn out area evidently complies with development plan policies of relevance in that the introduction of this modest facility responds proportionally to genuine needs, in doing so constituting appropriate development within the Green Belt which can importantly be sensitively located within the existing landscape without entailing any detrimental impact on its character, openness, wider amenity or biodiversity value. Given this and that no other adverse impacts are considered to be forthcoming, the proposal is considered to wholly conform with the relevant provisions of the statutory development plan and as such should be regarded as sustainable development, for which the Framework makes clear planning permission should be forthcoming.

In the event the local planning authority do not concur with this view, the applicant looks forward to positively engaging with the authority to secure a solution, as is advocated by the Framework. In this regard the applicant considers the submission of this application as constituting the start of a positive dialogue with the local planning authority, and looks forward to any potential issues being communicated at the earliest possible opportunity.

APPENDIX 1 – General views of the site



looking towards the proposal site from the field



looking towards the leylandi from public footpath (showing damaged tree)

APPENDIX 2 – General impression of retaining slope



grass retaining slope

APPENDIX 3 – Proposed Surface of Turn Out Area



Equestrian Design
5 Wasley Close,
Fearnhead,
Warrington.
Cheshire
WA2 0DH

Tel: 01925 824523
Mobile: 07506 721770
Email: info@equestriandesign.co.uk
www.equestriandesign.co.uk