

10. FULL APPLICATION – CONSTRUCTION OF HORSE EXERCISE ARENA AT LAND IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO FORD HOUSE, FORD, CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH (NP/HPK/0315/0205, P.3571, 407581 / 382275, 29/05/2015/AM)

This item was deferred at the June Planning Committee to allow Members to conduct a site visit.

APPLICANT: MRS ANDREA HODGSON

Site and Surroundings

Ford House is a detached dwelling that is located at the north-west side of the hamlet of Ford, outside Chapel-en-le-Frith and off the road to Edale and Hope Valley. Ford is a small hamlet which is centred around Ford Hall (a Grade II listed building) and a number of other residential properties. Ford House (previously known as 'Fairacre') was formerly within the grounds and ownership of Ford Hall and therefore remains as a curtilage listed building despite now being in separate ownership from Ford Hall. Ford House is also located within the Slackhall and Ford Conservation Area.

The field to the north west of Ford House is used for the keeping of horses by the applicant. The field is located outside of the Conservation Area. The northern boundary of the field facing the lane is bounded by mature lime trees and part of the western boundary is bounded by west corner of the field is bounded by dry stone walling and mature Sycamores.

Access to the site is via an existing gate access onto the lane. The nearest neighbouring property is a dwelling known as 'Cobstones' which is located approximately 35m to the east of the application site and on the northern side of the lane.

Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for the provision of a horse exercise manège together with ancillary timber perimeter fencing and landscaping.

The submitted plans show that the proposed manège would be sited in the northern corner of the field to the west of the applicant's property. The proposed riding surface would measure 37.4m long by 18.6m wide. A level surface would be created by cutting into the slope of the field as it falls away from the level of the boundary with the lane. A maximum cut of approximately 2m would be required to the western corner of the riding surface and a raised earth bund with a maximum height of 2.4m would be created to the eastern corner. The height of the earth bund would decrease to approximately 1m along the length of the riding surface.

A timber perimeter fence and gate is proposed around the riding arena and the surface would be finished with a mixture of clean sand and fibre material which is designed for riding surfaces.

The submitted plans show that two sycamores within the field would be felled to accommodate the proposed development. The line of lime trees and sycamores along the field boundary would be retained and protected during the course of the development. The submitted plans also show that two new oak trees of a height of 3 – 3.5m would be planted to the south of the manège.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions or modifications.

- 1. Statutory three year time limit for implementation.**

2. **Development to be carried out in accordance with specified approved plans and arboriculture survey.**
3. **Landscaping to be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans within the first planting season following completion of the development.**
4. **The use of the manège hereby permitted shall be ancillary to the domestic use of the dwelling known as “Ford House” only. The manège shall not otherwise be used for commercial purposes or livery at any time.**
5. **The new timber fencing and kickboards shall be tanalised and left untreated to weather naturally and maintained as such throughout the lifetime of the development hereby approved.**
6. **Notwithstanding the provisions of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no horse jumps, field shelters, or other structures shall be erected on the application site, other than those hereby permitted.**
7. **There shall be no external lighting or floodlighting erected, and the manège shall not be provided with any other external source of illumination at any time.**

Key Issues

- The visual impact of the proposed development and whether the proposed development would conserve the landscape character of the area and the setting of the designated Slackhall and Ford Conservation Area and the listed buildings within the Conservation Area.
- Whether the proposed development would have an adverse impact upon the amenity, security or privacy of any neighbouring property and whether the development would be acceptable in all other respects.

Relevant Planning History

2014: Planning permission and listed building consent granted conditionally for renovation of curtilage listed outbuilding to form ancillary habitable accommodation and proposed new build link to main dwelling

Consultations

Highway Authority – No objection subject to all use remaining private and ancillary to Ford House.

Borough Council – No response to date.

Parish Council – Make the following comments.

The Parish Council are seriously concerned about the problems which could arise from a horse manège located in such a restricted area of the countryside and have asked for the application to be called in and referred back to the National Park Planning Committee for consideration.

The Parish Council has no objection to the proposal on an individual residential basis but are concerned over the loss of amenities to local residents and the very restricted access to the site especially for horse boxes should other horse owners become involved.

The Parish Council ask that the following conditions be imposed if planning permission is granted.

- Site not to be used commercially as access is very restricted and the use of lighting in the evening would cause light pollution to the local area.
- No increase in horses kept at the property.
- Manège to be used solely by property owner.

Authority Tree Officer - No objection provided that development is carried out in accordance with amended plan and tree survey to ensure that the trees around the riding arena are protected during development.

Representations

A total of five letters of representation have been received at the time this report was written. Three of the letters make general comments about the application but do not offer support or object and two of the letters raise objections. The comments and objections given in the letters are summarised below. The letters are available and can be read in full on the website.

General Comments

- The development has the potential to increase the volume of traffic on the very narrow lane.
- The development should be restricted to prevent use by any commercial venture at any time.
- The riding arena should not be illuminated.

Objection

- The site can be seen from a footpath on the hill above and from many other vantage points. The development would harm the scenic beauty of the landscape.
- The proposed development is likely to cause road safety problems.
- The use of the proposed development would constitute a nuisance to the occupants of the nearest neighbouring property 'Cobstones'.
- Occupants of 'Cobstones' will suffer a loss of privacy because riders using the development will be able to overlook the property.

Main Policies

Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP3, DS1, L1, L3 and RT1

Relevant Local Plan policies: LC4, LC5, LC6, LC20 and LR7

The Authority's adopted development strategy is set out in Core Strategy (CS) policy DS1 which states that recreation and tourism development is acceptable in principle in open countryside. CS policies L1, L3 and GSP3 set an overarching requirement that all development conserves and enhances the valued characteristics of the National Park including the scenic beauty of its landscapes and its cultural heritage.

CS policy RT1 says that (A) the National Park Authority will support facilities which enable recreation, which encourage understanding and enjoyment of the National Park and are appropriate to the National Park's valued characteristics. CS policy RT1 (B) goes on to state that in open countryside, clear demonstration of need for such a location will be necessary.

Saved local Plan (LP) policy LR7 refers specifically to facilities for keeping and riding horses and states that domestic facilities will be permitted provided that:

- i. The development does not detract from the landscape or valued characteristics of the area, either individually or cumulatively; and
- ii. is located adjacent to existing buildings or groups of buildings; and
- iii. is not likely to cause road safety problems; and
- v. Does not constitute a nuisance to local residents, landowners or farmers by noise, smell or other adverse impact.

There is no conflict with the above policies and national policies set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) because both seek to promote appropriate and sustainable recreational development in the countryside while giving great weight to the conservation of the National Park.

Assessment

Relevant Development Plan policies are supportive in principle of facilities for riding horses and in this case the proposed riding arena is in accordance with LP policy LR7 (ii) because the proposed riding arena would be sited adjacent to the applicant's property and the group of buildings which make up the hamlet.

Concern has been raised about the potential impact of the proposed development upon highway safety. The highway which runs past Ford Hall and the application site is a narrow single track lane and Officers agree with the Parish Council and the representations that the access to the application site would not be suitable for commercial purposes or livery. The agent has confirmed that the intention is that the riding arena would be for the personal use of the applicant rather than any commercial venture. Therefore if permission is granted a condition would be recommended in accordance with advice from the Highway Authority to ensure that the use of the riding arena remains ancillary to the domestic use of Ford House.

Concern has also been raised about the potential impact of the development upon the amenity of the nearest neighbouring property which is a dwelling known as 'Cobstones'. The edge of the proposed riding arena would be located approximately 35m from the boundary of 'Cobstones' at the nearest point. Given this distance it is considered that any disturbance from noise, vibrations or smells associated with riding horses on the arena would not have an adverse impact upon the residential amenity of the occupants of 'Cobstones' especially bearing in mind that the applicant already keeps and rides horses on the land. Furthermore, given the intervening distance it is considered that the occupants of 'Cobstones' would not suffer any significant loss of privacy.

The key issue in this case therefore, is the visual and landscape impact of the proposed development and the potential impact upon the setting of the designated Slackhall and Ford Conservation Area and the listed buildings within the Conservation Area including Ford House and Ford Hall (Core Strategy policies L1 and L3 and Saved Local Plan policies LC5, LC6 and LR7 (i)).

The proposed riding arena would be sited in the northern corner of the field. Views of the proposed riding arena from within the Conservation Area would be limited due to the topography

of the field which is at a lower level than the adjacent lane. The submitted plans show that the level of the riding surface would be set 2m lower than the level of the adjacent lane and therefore the majority of the riding surface and the perimeter fencing would be effectively screened by the existing stone boundary field wall.

Other more distant views from within the Conservation Area and along the track to the north would be filtered through the existing mature lime and sycamore trees which would be retained. The existing trees would effectively mitigate the visual impact of the development from these vantage points.

There would be more distant views into the application site from the lane to the south as it drops down from Slackhall and from a public footpath located approximately 480m to the south west. From these vantage points the proposed riding arena would be viewed in the context of the Conservation Area and the listed buildings within. However the proposed development would be viewed in the context of the nearby buildings and would not appear as isolated or remote within the landscape. Views into the site would also be filtered through the mature sycamore trees along the boundary and to the south of the riding arena.

The submitted plans show that the riding surface would be constructed using a mixture of sand and fibre which is designed for this use. The proposed surface would have a dark appearance which would mitigate the visual impact of the development. The earth bunds around the riding arena would be re-seeded with meadow grass which when established would effectively mitigate the impact of the bunds from distant viewpoints. The application also proposes to plant two new oak trees to the west of the riding arena which would further mitigate the development by filtering views especially from the south west when established.

The proposed timber fencing would not have an adverse visual impact provided that the timberwork is treated in a dark stain when erected and maintained thereafter. The existing dry stone field boundary walls would be retained.

The submitted application is supported by a tree survey and a plan showing the positions of trees which are to be retained and removed as part of the development. Two sycamore trees within the field are to be removed but the existing line of mature lime and sycamore trees are to be retained along with the larger of the sycamores within the field. The trees that are to be retained would be protected by barriers during construction and Officers are satisfied that the proposed riding surface would be sited a sufficient distance from the mature trees to avoid damage to their roots. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not harm the mature trees around the site provided that the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted tree survey and plan.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse visual or landscape impact or have an adverse impact upon the setting of the designated Slackhall and Ford Conservation Area. The application proposes the planting of two new oak trees which would be appropriate in landscape terms and when established, would further break up views into the site from public vantage points. If permission is granted, a condition would therefore be recommended to ensure that the proposed landscaping is implemented, that the timber fencing is dark stained and that no lighting is installed at any time.

It is therefore considered that subject to conditions that the proposed development would not have a harmful visual or landscape impact, would not harm the setting of the Slackhall and Ford Conservation Area or the setting of nearby listed building, including Ford House and Ford Hall, and that the development would not constitute a nuisance to or harm the amenity of any residential property or land owner.

Conclusion

It is considered that subject to conditions, the proposed development would not have a harmful visual or landscape impact or harm the setting of the Slackhall and Ford Conservation Area. The proposed development would otherwise not constitute a nuisance to or harm the amenity of any residential property or land owner in accordance with Core Strategy policies GSP1, GSP3, DS1, L1, L3 and RT1 and saved Local Plan policies LC4, LC5, LC6 and LR7.

In this case there is no conflict between relevant Development Plan policies and the more recently published National Planning Policy Framework. In the absence of any further material considerations the proposal is therefore recommended for approval, subject to the conditions outlined in this report.

Human Rights

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Nil