

**17 DCSE2004/3630/F - PROPOSED HORSE RIDING ARENA, ARTHURS DINGLE, LEYS HILL, WALFORD, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 5QU****For: Ms S A Tottle per Mr M Keyse, Sawpits, Great Doward, Symonds Yat, Ross on Wye, HR9 6BP****Date Received: 18th October 2004    Ward: Kerne Bridge    Grid Ref: 58517, 18799****Expiry Date: 13th December 2004**

Local Member:    Councillor Mrs. R.F. Lincoln

**1. Site Description and Proposal**

- 1.1 The site is on a wooded valleyside just north of the river Wye in Leys Hill. The application site is surrounded by a paddock area in the applicant's ownership, which includes an access track along the upper edge leading to an existing stable and tack room. The site is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and an Area of Great Landscape Value.
- 1.2 The proposal is for a horse riding arena, measuring 37m by 20m, surrounded by a 1.4m post and rail fence. The arena will require some excavation and embankment creation, each around 1m in depth, to ensure a level surface. An embankment of approximately 21° slope will be created, extending some 9m in width along the lower edge of the site. The arena will have a silica sand finish.
- 1.3 Amended plans were received on 24th February, 2005 showing the lower embankment re-graded to a shallower pitch (now approximately 21°), together with a planting scheme of native trees and shrubs on the embankment. Full reconsultation on the amended plans was not considered necessary in this case.

**2. Policies****2.1 Planning Policy Guidance**

- |       |   |  |
|-------|---|--|
| PPS.1 | - | Delivering Sustainable Development     |
| PPS.7 | - | Sustainable Development in Rural Areas |

**2.2 South Herefordshire District Local Plan**

- |             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| Policy GD.1 | - | General Development Criteria                          |
| Policy C.5  | - | Development within Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| Policy C.8  | - | Development within Area of Great Landscape Value      |

**2.3 Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)**

- |             |   |                                     |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Policy S.7  | - | Natural and Historic Heritage       |
| Policy LA.1 | - | Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty |

### 3. Planning History

- 3.1 SE2003/0941/F Outdoor riding arena for private use - Withdrawn 20.05.03

### 4. Consultation Summary

#### Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 No statutory or non-statutory consultations required.

#### Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 The Traffic Manager has no objection.

- 4.3 The Conservation Manager raised concern at the visual impact of the original proposal upon the surrounding landscape which is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and an Area of Great Landscape Value. It was however acknowledged that the site is only visible as glimpses from a few public vantage points and the siting is the best on the paddock. It was suggested that the embankment should be graded much more gently. There were no comments on archaeology.

Further to this the agent has submitted amended plans with a shallower gradient on the embankment and additional planting. The Conservation Manager has been reconsulted and the response is awaited.

### 5. Representations

- 5.1 Walford Parish Council have "no objections if the development means, as stated in the accompanying letter, that there will be no further traffic on the road network and no exterior lighting."
- 5.2 Six letters of objection have been received from:

Mr. & Mrs. R. Dolman, Chequers Lodge, Leys Hill  
M. Amu, Yew Tree Cottage, Walford  
Mr. & Mrs. Penfold, Pen-y-Bryn, Bulls Hill, Walford  
G. Mitchell Esq, Oak Tree Cottage, Leys Hill  
S. Mitchell, 'CATS', Leys Hill  
Mr. B. Green, Oak Lodge, Leys Hill

The concerns raised are summarised as follows:

- concern that the use of the arena may become a commercial enterprise and will not just be used for private use
- the proposal may result in an increase in the number of horses in the area causing associated problems
- the proposal will increase the number of horse trailers causing traffic problems
- there are other horse arenas on Leys Hill, would be more appropriate and could be used
- this sloping site is unsuitable, the arena will require visually intrusive embankments
- the proposal would adversely affect wildlife

- the proposal devalues the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policy LA.1 states development in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty should be small scale, this is 1000m<sup>2</sup> which is not small scale
- there are parking problems at the entrance to the site.

5.3 Two letters of support have been received from:

Mr. Dunford, Pool Cottage, Coppett Hill, Goodrich  
Ms. Saxon & Mr. Macrostie, Upper Cottage, Leys Hill

making the following points:

- the arena would be well hidden by trees and would not be visually intrusive in the landscape
- an arena at a well established stables is an entirely appropriate use for the area
- the proposal will enable horses to be exercised off road which benefits local traffic.

5.4 The applicant has responded to the comments made in objection letters, reiterating some of the points originally made in support of the application. These points are summarised as follows:

- the arena is for private use only, for use by horses (no more than four) which are kept on the land. It is not for business use
- the arena would enable horses to be safely exercised off the road, minimising road useage
- the proposal site is on an existing enclosed isolation paddock. This was chosen as it is the flattest area so excavation is kept to a minimum and it is surrounded by trees, additional planting is also proposed. The site is well screened from the road and neighbouring properties
- there is no floodlighting and a neutral sand colour will be used
- the proposal is considered to comply with Policies GD.1, LA.1 and LA.2.

The full text of these letters can be inspected at Southern Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

## 6. Officers Appraisal

6.1 The proposal is for a private use horse riding arena on an existing paddock in the open countryside. There is no policy objection to the principle of such development and the main issue for consideration is the visual impact of the development.

6.2 The site is in a sensitive landscape, due to its hillside location and its designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and an Area of Great Landscape Value. Local Plan Policies aim to safeguard natural beauty and proposals should be small scale and have a minimal effect upon the special scenic quality of the landscape and environment. Further to concerns raised by the Conservation Manager regarding the visual impact of the proposal and particularly the embankments, the proposal has been amended slightly to create gentler embankments and provide additional planting. Comments from the Conservation Manager on the amended plans are awaited. However it is considered that these amendments will soften the visual impact of the development when viewed from the surrounding area. Existing belts of mature trees further screen the proposed arena and it is not considered prominent from surrounding

public vantage points. The size of the arena is not considered unduly large for such developments and it will replace an existing enclosed relatively level paddock area. (NB The existing enclosed paddock did not constitute development and a planning application was not required). Taking the above factors into account, the proposal is not considered to have an unduly adverse impact upon the landscape such that would warrant refusal.

- 6.3 The arena is a significant distance from neighbouring dwellings and relatively well screened and there is no objection in terms of the impact upon neighbouring residents.
- 6.4 The arena is for private use and therefore it should not generate additional traffic, the Traffic Manager has no objections.
- 6.5 The concerns raised by local residents regarding potential commercial usage of the site are noted. Conditions can be imposed to prevent commercial use and prevent any floodlighting.
- 6.6 Overall the amended scheme is considered satisfactory and conditional permission is recommended.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:**

1. **A01 (Time limit for commencement (full permission))**

**Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**

2. **A09 (Amended plans)**

**Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the amended plans.**

3. **B01 (Samples of external materials)**

**Reason: To ensure that the materials harmonise with the surroundings.**

4. **The arena shall be used to accommodate the applicant's own horses only and shall not be used for any commercial riding, breeding, training or other equestrian enterprise.**

**Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the area.**

5. **No form of external lighting or floodlighting shall be erected in association with the arena.**

**Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the area.**

**Informative(s):**

1. **N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission**

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.