

Design & Access Statement

Proposed Riding Menage

Lower Wickens Farm, Wickens Lane, Upperthong, Holmfirth, HD9 3RB

Existing Site

The existing site is part of the land owned by Lower Wickens Farm situated within the total land holding of 12 acres.

The proposed site is accessed through the existing main entrance to the house situated on Wickens Lane and through the stable yard into the field all in the ownership of Lower Wickens Farm. There are no proposals to alter or replace the existing vehicle or pedestrian access to the property.

The application is for a small arena 20 x 40m for the owner's private use in exercising and development of their horses. The all-weather surface will allow year-round use of the facility to maintain their fitness and wellbeing.

The area of pasture where the proposed arena will be situated is used predominantly for the grazing of horses and sheep and will continue to be used for that purpose.

The location of the arena has been chosen to minimise visibility from Wickens Lane and the Village Hall as it is located on the other side of the field boundary wall and effectively screened from view. The location has also been chosen to ensure minimal groundworks and the least possible impact on the openness of the surrounding land.

It is not anticipated that the use of the arena will affect the number and type of vehicles using the site and no additional parking is required as part of these proposals.

Residential parking at Lower Wickens Farm will be unaffected.

Access to the proposed arena will be provided from a horsewalk positioned under the existing field boundary wall which will link the existing stables to the arena at the same location that the horses are currently turned out into the field.

Construction

The arena will be bound on all sides by a timber and post-and-rail fence with a single gate access to the Northern boundary linking to the horsewalk back to the stables. There is a gentle gradient from the West to the East along the length of the arena and the levels have been optimised to reduce groundworks and visual impact. Excavation of up to 850mm will be undertaken on the Western boundary and the excavated material placed in a cut and fill arrangement to form a level surface. A small grass bank will be formed along the Eastern boundary.

The surface will be silica sand laid over a built-up bed of hardcore and geotextile membranes. The proposed surface is porous and within the build-up of the hardcore base there will be a herringbone land drainage system to ensure adequate drainage.

There is no proposal for external lighting under this application.

Horse droppings arising in the arena will be cleaned out and taken to the muck trailer already situated in the stable yard.

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out within paragraph 133 that “the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence². Paragraphs 143 and 144 of the NPPF also state that “inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Such circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the proposal is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

The proposed arena represents a recreational and personal use, therefore the proposed use considered in relation to paragraph 145 of the NPPF which outlines that outdoor sport and recreational use can form an exception to inappropriate development provided that these are: “appropriate facilities and “...as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of land included within it”

These points are also reflected within Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP56, which refers to appropriate facilities associated with outdoor recreation –[“Such facilities will normally be acceptable as long as the openness of the Green Belt is preserved and there is no conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Proposals should ensure that; a. the scale of the facility is no more than is reasonably required for the proper functioning of the enterprise or the use of the land to which it is associated; b. the facility is unobtrusively located and designed so as not to introduce a prominent urban element into a countryside location, including the impact of any new or improved access and car parking areas; c. in the case of all-weather riding arenas or other facilities for the exercising of horses, the degree of engineering operation required and the resultant re-grading of land, including any earth mounding and retaining

structures, does not result in incongruous or discordant landform out of character with its setting that cannot be mitigated through the use of appropriate hard and soft landscape techniques”

Specifically the Policy and Justification go on to say that:

“19.22 Facilities for the exercising of horses, (usually referred to as manages), riding arenas, training facilities and horse walkers may be acceptable in the Green Belt as they are associated with an open land use, provided that they can be unobtrusively located and designed and do not detrimentally impact on residential amenity, highway safety and landscape quality. They are structures that require a large, flat surface and in many cases this cannot be achieved without a significant degree of engineering involving the realignment of slopes and erection of retaining structures. This can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the local landscape and any proposal that would result in a detrimental impact will not be acceptable. Where the degree of engineering and impact can be accepted, it will be expected to be mitigated through the use of appropriate hard and soft landscaping. This will include consideration of the type of surfacing and boundary treatment proposed which should be appropriate to the character of the surrounding landscape. Floodlighting at manages will not be accepted as this is deemed to have an undesirable urbanising effect and can lead to unacceptable light pollution in the countryside.”

Summary

The proposal submitted:

- Is unobtrusively located and preserves the openness of the Green Belt
- Involves minimum excavation and groundworks with minimum grading works
- Is accessible from the properties existing stable facilities
- Requires no additional highways access works
- Accommodates the present use of the land for sheep and horse grazing.
- Does not include floodlighting.