

Application No: 21/00356/FULL Full Application

Site: Eastwoods, Pitmore Lane, Sway, Lymington, SO41 6BW

Proposal: Manege

Applicant: Miss Broadway

Case Officer: David Williams

Parish: SWAY

1. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Contrary to Parish Council view

2. DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATION

No specific designation

3. PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

DP18 Design principles
DP50 Agricultural and forestry buildings
DP51 Recreational horse keeping
DP52 Field shelters and stables
DP53 Maneges
SP17 Local distinctiveness
SP7 Landscape character
SP5 Nature conservation sites of international importance
SP6 The natural environment
SP15 Tranquillity
DP2 General development principles

4. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Sway Village Design Statement
Guidelines for Horse Related Development SPD

5. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Sec 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Sec 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
Sec 12 - Achieving well-designed places

6. MEMBER COMMENTS

None received

7. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Sway Parish Council: Recommend permission for the reasons listed below (unanimous):

Policy DP53 in the new local plan covers maneges, and does not contain any overt restrictions on size. Previously the 2011 SPD gave maximum sizes for domestic maneges, but in drafting the new local plan that previous guidance was not carried forward into DP53. Therefore, the original guidance is materially out of date and should be afforded minimal weight in this consideration. The committee considered that the manege complies with the two tests as set out in Policy DP53.

8. CONSULTEES

8.1 Landscape Officer: Objection. The construction of the arena has eroded the character and appearance of the location and harmed the intrinsic natural beauty of the National Park. The proposed mitigation, illustrated in the submitted drawing Landscape Proposals Drg. No. EE719/Drg 01 Rev. P3, does not outweigh the harm caused by the arena. The basis on which the harm has been assessed in the submitted Landscape Visual Appraisal is incorrect in my opinion. The construction of the arena is contrary to the policies in the New Forest National Park Local Plan and also does not conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the New Forest National Park.

9. REPRESENTATIONS

9.1 Two representations in support, summarised as:

- Long standing equestrian site - natural expansion
- Site often used for equestrian events and activities historically
- Minimal visual harm within the landscape in particular with the additional landscaping and mitigation proposed
- Similar schemes have been allowed in the National Park
- Positive enhancement to see riders and equestrianism in the Park

9.2 Four representations objecting on the following grounds:

- No significant material change to that previously refused. A bit of landscaping and cosmetic changes do not alter the fundamental principles.
- Existing manege should be refurbished.
- Enterprise at Eastwoods is a commercial business with associated lorries, commercial movement of vehicles, staff deliveries, and support. Also bonfires and storage of animal waste.
- Unauthorised works deliberately undertaken during lockdown should not be supported when contrary to local policy
- Size of manege, its bright colour and prominence represents

- an alien feature in the special landscape of the National Park.
- Landscape character is not defined by what is visible from a publicly accessible location
- Dangerous precedent is set for similar large intrusive developments throughout the Park
- Questions are raised with regards the degree of equine activity at the site. Always low key, owner/occupier related.
- Owner rents out property for holiday let
- Personal circumstances are not unique. No justification for wholesale commercial venture on this site in the National Park. More suitable locations away from the designated landscape.

10. RELEVANT HISTORY

- 10.1 Horse walker (21/00357) - concurrent application
- 10.2 Paths; trackways; hardstanding; landscaping (21/00358) - concurrent application
- 10.3 Riding arena, horse walker, alterations to stables barn doors, 8 new windows cladding; raised bank mound, new wetland habitat, replacement gate, fencing and associated landscaping (20/00646) refused on 21 December 2020
- 10.4 Enforcement Notice served on 10 February 2021 against the manege arena, horse walker structure, earth mound and hard surfacing areas. This is now subject of an outstanding Appeal to the Planning Inspectorate.
- 10.5 Formation of ponds and erection of aviaries & ancillary buildings (NFDC/94/54673) granted on 14 September 1994
- 10.6 Change of use of land to residential curtilage (NFDC/94/54272) granted on 18 May 1994.
- 10.7 Additional use of land for mixed farming and horse breeding riding and driving (NFDC/85/28809) refused on 15 May 1985
- 10.8 Formation of ponds and erection of aviaries & ancillary buildings (NFR/XX/14835) granted on 6 December 1965

11. ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 The application site comprises the main grounds of Eastwoods which is a smallholding on the south eastern side of Sway outside of the defined Village boundary and within the open countryside.
- 11.2 The property comprises a residential property set in large grounds with fields, woodland and a relatively large stable yard which has been established over a number of years. The property has been

used for equestrian purposes to varying degrees over time but largely providing equestrian facilities for the owner/occupiers of the property Eastwoods.

- 11.3 The property changed hands in 2020 and the current owners undertook works during the initial lockdown period. This application has been submitted concurrently with planning applications 21/00357 (horse walker) and 21/00358 (paths; trackways; hardstanding; landscaping). By way of background, the applications follow planning application 20/00646 which was refused in December 2020 for the following reasons:

"1.The manege arena results in poor form of development in a prominent rural location which by reason of its size, siting, design and use of materials with associated equipment, results in a visually intrusive and harmful visual urbanising impact upon the locality and intrinsic landscape quality of the National Park. It would therefore be contrary to the requirements of Policies DP2, DP18, DP51, DP53 and SP17 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-32036 (August 2019).

2.The horse walker, earth mound and hard surfacing to tracks results in a poor form of development in a prominent rural location which by reason of their size, siting, design and use of materials with associated equipment, results in a visually intrusive and harmful visual urbanising impact upon the locality and intrinsic landscape quality of the National Park. The cumulative effect of these works contribute to the more intensive use of the site creating a more intensive enterprise more akin to a commercial equestrian use. It would therefore be contrary to the requirements of Policies DP2, DP18, SP6, DP51, DP53, DP52 and SP17 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-32036 (August 2019)."

Whilst all three applications must be considered separately on their individual planning merits there is an element of overlap with the background information and interconnectivity of the activities and use at the site.

- 11.4 This particular application seeks consent for the retention of the manege arena (with dimensions of 50m by 60m) in the front field. Landscaping additional to that contained in the 2020 refused scheme is proposed adjacent to the access track, frontage and earth mounding to the edge of the arena. The applicants state that the works undertaken are due to the specific circumstances of the applicant who trains and competes at an international level taking part in several international events a year at various venues including competing for Team GBR.

- 11.5 The key planning considerations are:

- The principle of the development;

- The impact on the landscape character of the locality and the National Park;
- Ecological implications; and
- The impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

Principle of horse related uses

- 11.6 The site has a history of related horse grazing and stabling. Whilst the basis of the stable yard is well established, it has been very much a facility for the personal use of the owner/occupiers of Eastwoods. The applicant sets out that this will remain the case. It is, however, important to consider that the nature of the applicant's personal use is very different to the normal incidental use associated with a domestic property owner with a paddock and one or two horses who enjoys recreational horse riding. The current set up at Eastwoods employs several people to look after and run the enterprise. It is considered that the development the subject of this application would facilitate a much more intensive use of the site for professional equestrian purposes which, in tandem with the large facilities provided, would notably change the character of the site and the nature of the use of the property.
- 11.7 Whilst the horse keeping policies in the Local Plan (Policy DP51, DP52 and DP53) do not necessarily preclude commercial facilities, they are very much designed to cater for the needs of the recreational horse keeper, farmers and commoners, where the emphasis is on limiting the proliferation of buildings and ensuring they are modest in scale. The site has a mixed history with equestrian related activities, consideration needs to be given as to whether the personal circumstances of the applicant outweigh the normal guidance and harm identified. Similarly whether the additional enhancements and mitigation proposed addresses the previous objections raised. The applicant has put forward a case that personal circumstances, together with the mitigation proposed in the form of additional landscaping, outweighs the harm previously identified. This is considered further below.
- 11.8 Following the formal adoption of the new Local Plan in August 2019, Members in October 2019 endorsed the "Guidelines for Horse Related Development Supplementary Planning Document (2011)", amongst others. The Local Plan (2019) policies on horse-related development are consistent with those in the previous Core Strategy (2010); and given that the policy hooks are unaltered with the adoption of the Local Plan, the Guidelines for Horse-related Development SPD should continue to be given full weight as a material planning consideration.

Impact on landscape character

- 11.9 This application is for the manege with proposed additional landscaping adjacent to the access track, frontage and earth

mounding to the edge of the arena itself. A Landscape Visual Appraisal has been submitted by the applicant. The development comprises large scale works which, cumulatively, intensify the use of the site and the harm to the landscape character of the locality. The riding arena is a large bright coloured sand arena (50m x60m) set within raised timber edges which sits prominently in the front field close to the Pitmore Lane road frontage and occupying a large proportion of the front field. Due to its siting and surfacing, it comprises an alien feature within the landscape. The arena is considerably larger and is not sited particularly close to the cluster of stable buildings. It is also larger than recommended (as advised in the New Forest National Park Guidelines for Horse Related Development Supplementary Planning Document 2011) (40m x20m) and contains brightly coloured horse jumps which are clearly visible from Pitmore Lane. There is already an existing arena in the front field which follows the guidelines. The large arena is considered to have a detrimental impact on the established intrinsic landscape character of the locality and wider National Park to an unacceptable degree even with the proposed additional landscaping put forward. The arena and its use do not protect the small scale field or the landscape's pastoral character, which is set out in the New Forest National Park Landscape Character Assessment (2015).

- 11.10 The proposed additional mitigation works to the previous application are not considered to overcome concerns and a strong objection has been maintained by the Authority's Landscape Officer. The intrinsic value of the landscape is important and as set out in the New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019) in Chapter 5 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment, items 5.30 and 5.31 clearly state that landscape character cannot be solely determined by what is visible from a publicly accessible location. Even if the arena was completely screened from public gaze, the intrinsic value of the landscape would be harmed.
- 11.11 Whilst the applicant's submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) states that the existing treated light cream and buff coloured sand surface of the arena will become less reflective over time, even a 'light grey colour' that it is stated may become would still be an unnatural feature in the landscape and have reflective qualities. The surface could also be changed at any time and would be expected to be 'refreshed' or replaced over time which is not something that could be realistically monitored by the Authority via a condition and would consequently not be possible to control. Whilst the existing hawthorn and blackthorn hedge does provide some screening, it is a deciduous hedge which becomes more visually permeable in autumn and winter.

The manege and its associated use are at odds with the prevailing small scale field pattern and the pastoral character of the landscape, as defined in the New Forest National Park

Landscape Character Assessment (2015). Overall, the amended proposals for the manege will be harmful to the landscape character of the National Park contrary to Policies SP7 and DP53 of the adopted Local Plan. This impact is exacerbated by the proposals in applications 21/00357 and 21/00358.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

- 11.12 Increased movement in and out of the site on the upgraded track (farriers and vets, large horse boxes, staff cars) will be having a detrimental impact on tranquility. There is inevitably a more intensive use of the site as a result of the recent works undertaken with the potential for more noise generation from on-site activities and vehicle movements. However, some of this would be possible without recent works undertaken. Increased lighting and glare has been observed from outside of the site. Notwithstanding these observations, the separation to neighbouring residential properties is such that the main elements subject of this application are not considered to be materially harmful to residential amenity from a planning perspective.

11.13 **Ecological mitigation**

The additional hedgerow planting and landscaping would help to offset the wider cumulative impact of the works. However, these do not outweigh the landscape harm caused by the development.

Conclusions

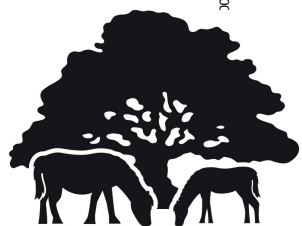
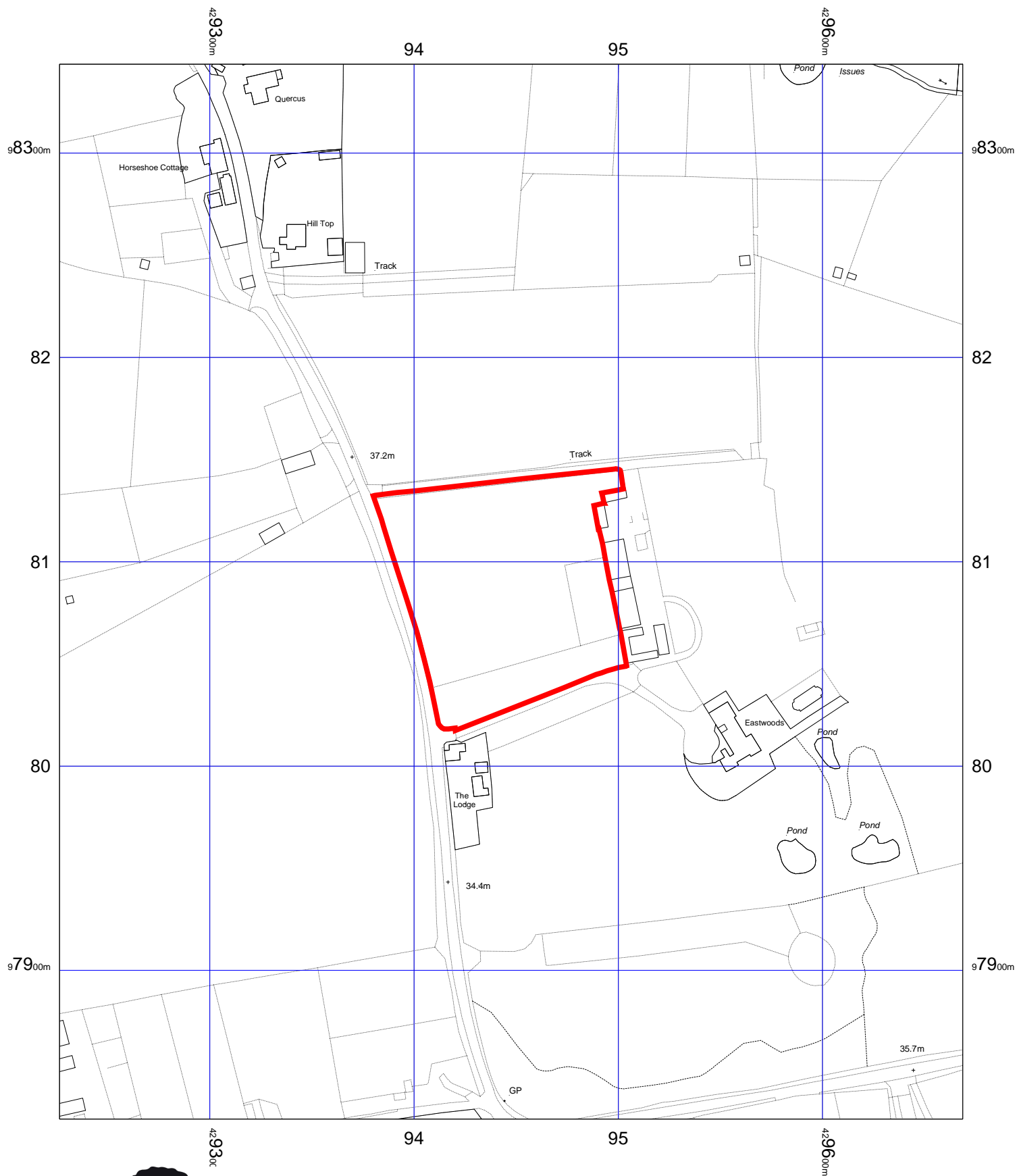
- 11.14 The application seeks the retention of a key element of development which facilitates a more intensive use of the site. Whilst regard has been had to the history of the site and the personal circumstances of the applicant, these do not outweigh the associated detrimental impact of the proposed development on its surroundings and the wider landscape character of the National Park. Whilst further landscaping works are proposed, this would not overcome the harm identified above.
- 11.15 Overall, the arena and associated works are considered harmful to the landscape character of the National Park contrary to Policies SP7, SP15 and DP53 of the adopted Local Plan. The arena forms part of the wider works including the horsewalker, paths, tracks, hardstanding and landscaping in a prominent rural location which result in a visually intrusive and harmful urbanising impact on the locality contrary to Policies DP2, DP18, SP17, DP51, DP52 and DP53 of the adopted Local Plan.

12. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

Reason(s)

- 1 The menage arena results in poor form of development in a prominent rural location which by reason of its size, siting, design and use of materials with associated equipment, results in a visually intrusive and harmful visual urbanising impact upon the locality and intrinsic landscape quality of the National Park. It would therefore be contrary to the requirements of Policies DP2, DP18, DP51, DP53 and SP17 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-32036 (August 2019).



NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

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