

Application No: 21/00357/FULL Full Application

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

Proposal: Horse walker

Applicant: Miss Broadway

Case Officer: David Williams

Parish: SWAY

1. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Application linked to 21/00356/FULL

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, but would accept the decision reached by the National Park Authority's Officers under their delegated powers (unanimous)

The applicant has sought the services of a visual architect to ensure that suitable native planting could be located very specifically to provide screening, and confirm that the metal structure will be painted matt black to remove glare and reflection. With these measures in place the committee are comfortable in recommending approval. The committee also raised the question of whether the horse walker was in fact a building or a machine, in which event does it constitute development as per the definition in the NPPF?

8. CONSULTEES

8.1 Landscape Officer: Objection. The additional mitigation does not address the adverse landscape impact.

9. REPRESENTATIONS

9.1 Five representations objecting on the following grounds:

- No significant difference to previous refusal.
- Eastwoods is a commercial business venture and over intensification of the site.
- Level of historical equine activity of the site was very low key
- Unsightly intrusion in the landscape expanding the building envelope
- Horse walker sits on elevated plateau and is visible from open heathland
- Abuse of process to proceed without permission
- Horse walkers and intensive equestrian developments are not characteristic of the National Park.
- Proposed roof colouring to black and more hedging is inadequate to address the landscape visual impact
- Works facilitate ever increasing commercial use of the site. More shelters, fencing, cross country obstacles and over-intensive use of the site.

9.2 Two representations in support, summarised as:

- Additional measure of hedge planting and colouring of roof address any perceived visual impact.
- Horse walkers are common features in the National Park
- Structure has a rural appearance appropriate in a rural setting
- Fully supportive of owners intentions and circumstances.

10. RELEVANT HISTORY

- 10.1 Manege (21/00356)- 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 21/00356 (manege) and 21/00358 (paths; trackways; hardstanding; landscaping). By way of background, the applications follow planning application 20/00646, which was refused on 21 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 horse walker in the front field with additional hedgerow planting and colouring of the roof to black.

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 as set out in the application.

- 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 equestrian 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 set outs 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. Whilst 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, outweigh the harm previously identified. This is considered further below.

Impact on landscape character

- 11.8 This application considers the horse walker with proposed additional landscaping adjacent to the access track, frontage and a black paint/colouring applied to the "shiny roof." A Landscape Visual Assessment (LVA) has been submitted by the applicant to assess the impact of the development. The metal horse walker is 13.7m in diameter with a galvanized metal finish with a height of 2.65m to eaves height and 2.85 in total. The structure is relatively open in nature due to the mesh construction and the roof element covers the walking area with the centre of the structure open.
- 11.9 Whilst the applicant's LVA considers that the amended proposal with additional landscaping will cause minimal harm, the Authority's Landscape Officer has strong objections to the works in their amended form. The structure is considered to form an intrusive feature in the landscape which is at odds with the rural scene. The metal industrial style structure topped with a polycarbonate roof has no reference to the rural vernacular and sits tall and wide on the highest part of site, leading to visual intrusion, that in my opinion, is harmful to the landscape character of the site and harms the intrinsic value of the landscape. The construction and positioning of the horsewalker is not considered to have been informed by the New Forest National Park Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and is not compatible with the distinct features and type of landscape in which the horsewalker is located. The size, shape, industrial

design and materials used do not reflect any natural features of the landscape. 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 horsewalker was completely screened from public gaze, the intrinsic value of the landscape would be harmed. Commenting upon the proposed mitigation the landscape officer comments and questions whether the use of a dark colour here will add to a more solid silhouette on the skyline and extended views and hedge planting is unlikely to be effective.

- 11.10 The proposal is therefore considered to be harmful to the landscape character of the National Park contrary to Policy SP7.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

- 11.11 Increased movement in and out of the site on the upgraded track (farriers and vets, large horse boxes, staff cars) in association with the combined proposals for the site will be having a detrimental impact on tranquillity. Notwithstanding these observations, the separation to neighbouring residential properties is such that the main elements the subject of the applications are not considered to be materially harmful to residential amenity from a planning perspective.

11.12 Ecological mitigation

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

Conclusions

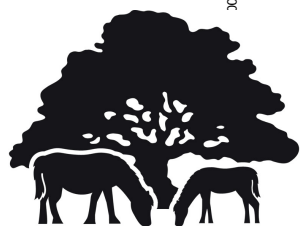
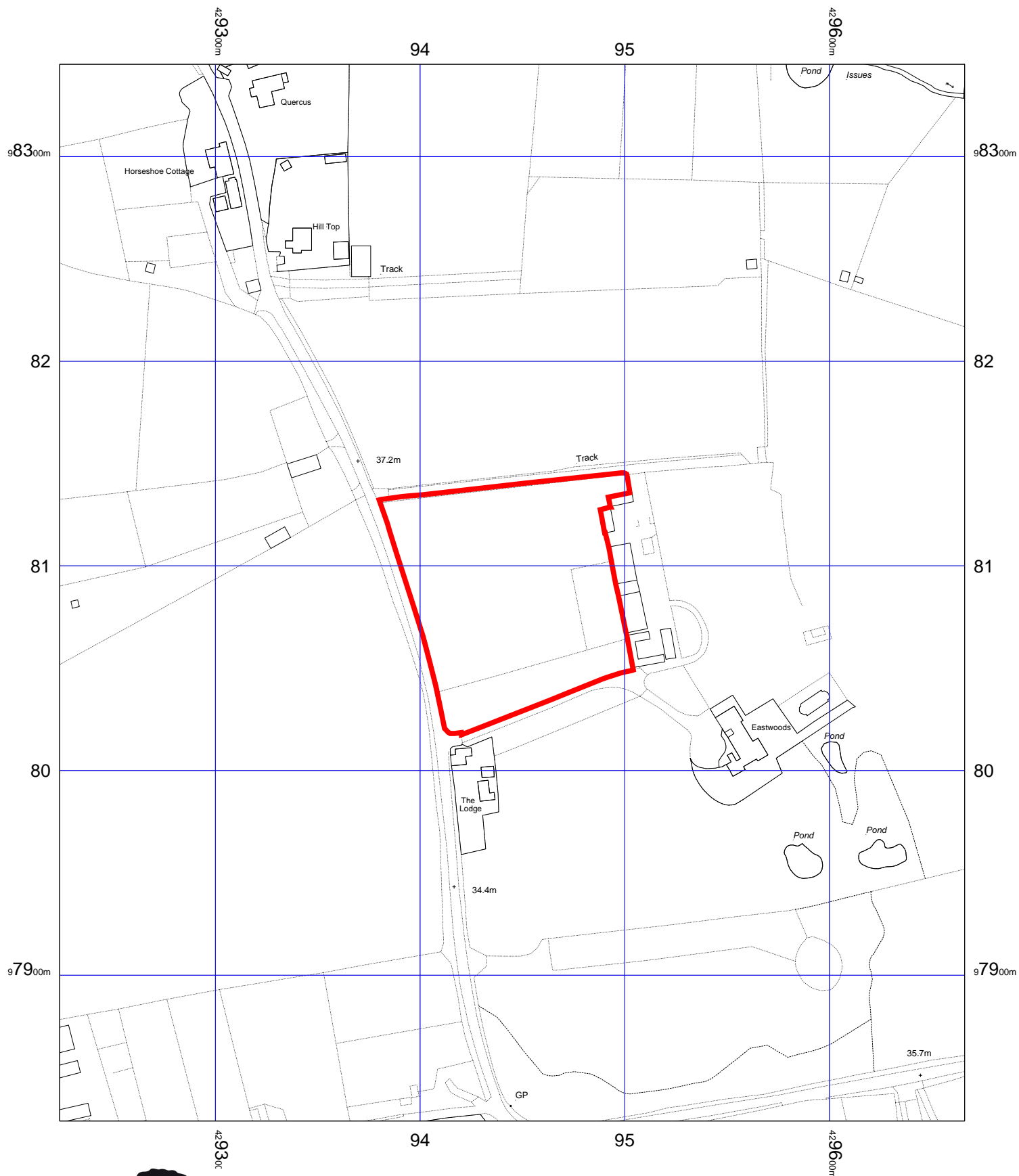
- 11.13 The application seeks the retention of a key element of development which contributes to facilitating a more intensive use of the site. Whilst regard has been had to the history of the site and the personal circumstances of the applicant, these do not outweigh the associated detrimental impact 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.
- 11.14 Overall, the horsewalker in its amended form remains harmful to the landscape character of the National Park contrary to Policies SP7 and SP15 of the adopted Local Plan. The horsewalker forms part of the wider works which result in a poor form or development in a prominent rural location, 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)

The horse walker results in a 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. The cumulative effect of the horse walker with other works contributes 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).



NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

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