



BOB HULL
PLANNING

Planning Statement

Land at Acorn Fields
Crabbswood Lane
Sway

Ref: BHP/0157

April 2022



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This application relates to an area of land at the junction of Crabbswood Lane and Arnewood Bridge Road totalling some 2.1 ha (5.2 ac) as shown on the enclosed application plan.

The application is made on behalf of the owner of the land in relation to her intended use of the land and building for rehabilitating and training of horses. This is a much needed service within the New Forest and nothing similar exists. Horses and ponies are kept across the forest by individuals for recreational riding, by commoners, and by others for sporting purposes such as polo.

The applicant grew up riding with the New Forest Pony Club, progressed through to completing British Horse Society Assistant Instructors exams, qualified as a Monty Roberts preliminary certificate holder and is also a qualified Western Equestrian Society instructor. She has experience with a variety of disciplines from foal handling to breaking and backing youngsters, eventers, racehorses, polo ponies and western competition horses. She also worked for the Fortune Centre of Riding Therapy for three years where horses were used to help many young adults with learning difficulties learn important life skills.

The speciality she offers is re-educating the horses with behavioural issues, for example, they won't load into a trailer, they rear, buck, bolt, bite or kick, dangerous for the farrier or vet to treat. Often horses are brought to her that have been 'written off' as so unrideable that they would have been euthanised. It takes a skilled person and a lot of time and patience as well as specialist facilities to give these cases the best chance of success. Some horses who have had pain or discomfort and have been treated by a vet, heal physically but are left with mental or emotional trauma .

Permission was granted in March 2013 (ref.98214) for an extension to the barn in the western corner of the site, and there was a condition imposed that no commercial use should be made of the building.

This building is sufficient for the intended business being large enough partly for storage of equipment and partly for stabling. The only external alterations would be the cladding of the remaining open fronted part.

New stabling would not be required.

A manege for exercising horses would be required in the middle field. The manege ideally would have to be 40m x 30m as it would need to allow a horse to be safely ridden around the outside of a removable pen as part of the progressive training. The mobile round pen would only be needed for short periods and then can easily be stored away . Due to having some larger horses in work, the training area fences need to be 1.5m high to prevent them from jumping out. No lighting would be needed.

As well as the fencing, it is proposed that new planting of native species of trees and hedging would be carried out around the manege as well as infilling of any gaps in the perimeter hedges, along Arnewood Bridge Road and Crabbswood Lane, which ensure that the manege would not be particularly visible in the landscape.

There would be an average of no more than 5 client's horses in training at the land at any one time. Not all the horses will be needing grazing as some may be 'overflow' patients from the vets

that have Laminitis or are on box rest for weeks with a tendon injury that may need dressing every day. The horses would usually stay for 6 to 8 weeks rehabilitation on average but some will stay much longer or shorter periods. The clients would only be visiting their horses on an occasional basis as otherwise, it would disrupt the flow to the concentrated work involved.

The intention is to remain small-scale, secluded and private. One part-time person would be taken on to help with the general yard and field duties.

There would be no DIY, part or full livery yard and the use is not that of a riding school. It needs to be a peaceful and healing environment for helping the young horse or traumatised horse develop into a useful safe and willing partner whether its future is for competition, a lovable fun family pony or part of commoner's stock.

As mentioned above we are not aware of any similar service being provided in the New Forest that can offer a rehabilitation service from local vets, breaking, training and behavioural therapy without also being a livery yard. It would not therefore have the usual noise and traffic attached to a livery yard use.

This is an "bespoke proposal" but one which is wholly relevant and not provided for in the New Forest where equestrianism is so popular. It is important that animals to be exercised on the forest are properly trained and that animals which have been ill or injured can be rehabilitated in a safe secure environment whether owned by individuals for recreation or by commoners.

In terms of the impact of this use, the low level proposed is such that the land would continue to appear much the same as it has for many years whilst it was providing grazing for private owners and their animals.

With regard to traffic generation, the reality is that the movements onto and off Crabbswood Lane would not be dissimilar to those that have taken place historically whilst the previous owner has used her land. Given the number of animals that can be treated at any one time, the visits by clients to deliver and collect would be spaced out and visits during treatment would be discouraged. With the applicant and one part time employee visiting and leaving at each end of the day traffic movements would be minimal.

Guidance in the Horse Related Development SPD is as follows :-

"Where possible, existing buildings should be used and new stables and other structures kept to a minimum. If new buildings are required then they should be as inconspicuous as possible to minimise their impact on the landscape - careful siting can greatly reduce the impact."

In this case it is fortunate that the use can rely entirely on the existing barn and no additional buildings are needed given the low level of the rehabilitation service to be offered.

Pre-application advice was sought last year. Reference in the response was to two policies of the local plan being SP42 and SP48.

Whilst SP42 relating to "Business and Employment Development" directs such developments to the four designated villages, clearly some can only be accommodated in the countryside beyond the villages. This is one such proposal where the service to be provided needs land for the exercising of the animals and a manege to assist with rehabilitation.

The re-use of an existing building also falls squarely within the terms of the policy.

Policy SP48 refers to "The Land Based Economy". The aim of the policy is to encourage local businesses and enterprises that support the existing cultural and land use practices across the forest. This includes the many residents who keep animals for recreation as well as commoners and farmers.

The proposed use should therefore be considered to accord with the local plan policies in that it clearly requires a countryside location with sufficient land for the horses under care, and it makes use of an existing building.

Whilst the manege is larger than that generally thought to be reasonable in the "Horse Related Development SPD", in this case it is to provide sufficient space for exercising a variety of animals as part of the rehabilitation process and not simply for recreational riding. It would comply with Policy DP53 as it would not have an adverse impact on the landscape if suitably landscaped, will use suitable materials and not require lighting.

In summary, this is a proposal for a much needed service in the New Forest and which is not currently provided. It is a service which goes beyond the capabilities of local vets and owners of animals and needs the specialist work and experience of the applicant.

The site has long been used for recreational grazing and the scale of the business is such that it will not be unduly intrusive in the landscape nor have any adverse impact on nearby properties.

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