

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 5th October 2005
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/1539/05/F - Croydon
Riding Arena, Stables and Access, Land Adj. Portelet, High Street, For Mrs Wood

Recommendation: Refusal
Date for Determination: 30th September 2005

Members will visit this site on Monday 3rd October 2005

Site and Proposal

1. This full application, registered on 5th August 2005, proposes the construction of a riding arena, stables and access on land to the west of Portelet, High Street, Croydon, between the dwelling and Croydon Hill.
2. The proposed stables comprise an 'L' shaped timber building with a floor area of 84.24m² containing 5 looseboxes and a tack room. The building is to be located on land immediately to the west of the residential curtilage of Portelet and will be set behind an existing hedge on the site frontage.
3. The proposed outdoor riding arena, measuring 40m x 25m, is located further to the west, 80m to the east of the junction of High Street and Croydon Hill. The arena will be enclosed by a 1.37m high post and rail fence. The land is currently used for the grazing of horses and slopes away from north to south. The drawings state that the existing site is to be levelled.
4. An existing gated field entrance exists to High Street, 50m to the east of the junction with Croydon Hill, this entrance will be used to serve the proposed arena and stables with a new 3m wide access track being created into the site and then running immediately behind the existing frontage hedge for a distance of 160m. No details of the proposed treatment of the surface of the access track are provided.

Planning History

5. There is no relevant planning history

Planning Policy

6. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure") restricts development in the countryside to that which is essential in a particular rural location.
7. **Policy EN1** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan") states that the District Council will seek to ensure that the local character and distinctiveness of Landscape Character Areas is respected, retained and wherever possible enhanced. While recognising that landscape is a dynamic concept, the Policy states

that planning permission will not be granted for development which would have an adverse effect on the character and local distinctiveness of these areas.

Consultation

8. **Croydon Parish Council** recommends approval.
9. The **Chief Environmental Health Officer** has no objection.
10. The comments of the **Landscape Design Officer** and the **Environment Agency** will be reported at the meeting.

Representations

11. None received

Planning Comments – Key Issues

12. The key issues to be considered with this application is whether the proposal can be considered as essential in the particular rural location and the visual impact of the proposal on the countryside.
13. Although the provision of the outdoor riding arena cannot be considered as essential development in the countryside such proposals, along with stable buildings, are accepted as appropriate development in a rural location. In my view it is therefore necessary to concentrate on the visual impact of the proposed development.
14. The proposed stable building is located adjacent to the residential curtilage of Portelet and is well screened from High Street by existing boundary planting. It is important to ensure that the proposed siting of the stable building does not prejudice the retention of the planting on the front boundary and the views of the Landscape Design Officer have been sought on this point. If necessary the building can be repositioned further from the boundary.
15. The proposed outdoor riding arena is located within an attractive area of sloping countryside which is particularly open to view from Croydon Road. Although horses are currently kept on the land, in my opinion the formation of an outdoor riding arena, requiring a levelling of the land and additional fencing, will result in an alien feature that will materially detract from the character of the area. In addition I am concerned about the visual impact of the proposed access track.
16. A meeting is to be held with the applicant with a view to looking at whether there are possible alternative locations for the outdoor arena which will be less intrusive. The outcome of those discussions will be reported at the meeting but my recommendation is one of refusal of the application as currently submitted.

Recommendation

17. That the application be refused for the following reason.

The proposed riding arena and driveway is unacceptable as it would represent an alien and prominent feature in this area of attractive countryside, contrary to the aims of Policy EN1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2003

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning File Ref: S/1539/05/F

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