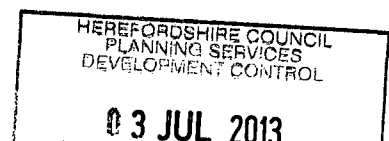


Planning Statement & Comments on Sustainability

1. Application 130317/F was refused in April 2013 on landscape grounds. This re-application has changed the orientation of the menage which has reduced the amount of cut and fill, reduced the width of the menage from 24 m to 20 m and we have forwarded a suitable landscaping scheme.
- 1.1 PPS7 has been succeeded by the National Planning Policy Framework which places sustainability at the core of planning decisions and positively supports rural developments that are sustainable and that maintain and enhance the landscape character.
- 1.2 The design and access statement comments upon the landscape issues to which we add:
 - 1.2.1 Rural areas such as this typically accommodate farm buildings and equestrian developments that have a similar or greater foot print than the proposed menage. The menage is a low lying structure bounded by 1.1 m high post and netting fences. A menage has no bulk or mass. The eye passes through and over. The public view points of the site are from higher ground where the menage does not harm the views across the valley or change the landscape character of the area as it is sited close to hedgerows, blocks of woodland and existing buildings rather than in an open field situation
- 1.3 The Herefordshire Council does not have a specific policy for horse related developments. Policies E12 (farm diversification) and E13 (agricultural development) address similar types of development. Menages for private use are suitable developments for agricultural land as they provide all year round safe exercising for horses stabled on the holding. Those policies support similar developments where they are sited as part of a group of buildings and are sited where they will have the least impact upon the landscape and can be assimilated into the landscape and they should avoid isolated locations and skyline sites whilst taking advantage of natural landforms and retain a functional relationship with the existing buildings.



- 1.4 Through a combination of siting, re-orientation of the menage, reduction in its overall size and provision of suitable fencing and landscaping we believe that the

objectives of policies E12 and E13 are met in respect of a menage. A menage lacks the bulk and mass of a building and allows views through and over it to be uninterrupted. A menage is therefore less prominent in the landscape than a typical agricultural building and its siting accords with those policies as the site is not on a skyline and is close to existing development and uses the natural landform to its best advantage.

- 1.5 Policy DR1 (Design) addresses the need to promote or reinforce the distinctive character and appearance in terms of layout, enclosure, scale, mass, height, design and materials. The locality is not subject to policies that strengthen landscape protection. Nevertheless the countryside is to be protected for its own sake and the layout and design coupled with the choice of materials for fencing, the menage surface and the landscaping scheme combine to make this development acceptable and to accord with policy DR1.
- 1.6 Policy LA2 (Landscape character and areas least resilient to change) refers to the affect of a development on the overall character of the landscape or its key attributes. The intention of LA2 is not to prevent necessary development, but to ensure that development respects landscape character. Therefore the siting and design is of much importance along with the proposed mitigation.
- 1.7 The key characteristic of the Wooded Hills landscape area are:
- Primary - varied, sloping topography, field boundary hedgerows are visually very prominent because of the topography.
- Secondary - mixed farming land use, ancient wooded character, tree cover, pattern of large, discrete woods, medium-framed views, sparsely clustered settlement pattern.
- 1.8 The distinctive character of this landscape type is due to its often steeply sloping topography and dominant woodland cover. They are highly visible landscapes, framing middle and long distance views and therefore their visual integrity is of paramount importance in the rural landscape.

- 1.9 The enhancement works sought are to: strengthen the wooded character of the hedgerows and streams by additional planting and/or regeneration and to conserve and restore the ancient broadleaved character of the woodland. Emphasis should be placed upon both restoring the ancient semi-natural character of the woodland cover and maintaining an overall interlocking pattern of woodland and grazed fields with a high proportion of hedgerow and streamside trees. The three aspects of conservation, restoration and enhancement are therefore applicable to this landscape type.
- 1.10 The proposed menage is part of a group of buildings near the top of a slope set beneath a well hedged and tree lined boundaries. The development does not cause the loss of middle or long views, hedgerows or trees. It would be seen against the back drop of a new stable block and the existing former farmstead. Once the gently sloping banks have matured, they will be indistinguishable from the natural ground form.
- 1.11 The colour of the menage's surface is a soft neutral rural colour with an open post and netting fence surround. The additional planting proposed strengthens the landscape character type of a well treed area with strong hedge lines separated by smaller sale fields and enclosures. One option would be to plant a new hedge around the menage as part of the landscaping scheme. Policy LA6 (Landscaping Schemes) and LA5 (Protection of trees and hedgerows) have we believe both been satisfied. .
- 1.12 Policy T6 (Walking) is satisfied as the menage allows the applicant to walk to the exercise area rather than transporting his horses out of the area to find suitable places to exercise them during the winter.
- 1.13 The NPPF is now a major material consideration in making planning decisions. Paragraph 109 requires development to protect and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.
- 1.14 The development avoids a skyline location, avoids the loss or damage to hedgerows or trees, avoids using a site with too great a change in levels and uses a design that minimises the change in levels and thereby protects the overall landscape and conserves the natural hedgerows and woodland features.

- 1.15 We have enhanced the key characteristics of the site by using a sympathetic planting scheme and through the use of gentle banks sown with grass and wild flowers.
- 1.16 The menage does create a flat level area akin to that formed for the nearby former farmstead, but any harm that small area causes is more than offset by the retention of key features and the provision of a good planting scheme that reinforces the key characteristics of the area. Overall the landscape quality and attractiveness of the area is not diminished and the wooded hills and farmed landscape nature of the area is maintained and enhanced.

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