

Proposed Menage and Column Mounted Lighting, Welch House Cottage, Hothersall Lane

Introduction

Complaints have been made regarding an illuminated menage at Welch House Cottage and subsequently the Planning Enforcement Officer has visited site and determined that a planning application is required for the development to be retained.

Existing

The all-weather paddock/menage was completed in October 2016 and has been in use since that date.

More recently in October 2019 the client erected 4 nr lights on 6m high columns to illuminate the menage. The reason for this is because it is now being used the owners' grandchildren for riding after school during the darker winter months. This hasn't been a problem previously due to their age and interest in horse riding hence the reason for the lights being installed some 3 years later.

The lights also assist with cleaning out the stables when this is being done later in the day as the horses can be moved to the menage to allow this to be done safely.

The menage is domestic in nature for family use only associated with the house owner and immediate family, there is no commercial use associated with the stables or menage.

Proposal

As the menage has been in place and used for 3 years it is believed that this is not the issue for the recent complaints, but it is understood that this element does need to be formalised by way of planning consent. As one of the neighbouring properties already has an all-weather paddock in front of their property on the roadside it is considered that this one to the rear of Welch House Cottage will be permitted as it is not really visible from anywhere so not impacting on the landscape. For that reason, no works are proposed to alter what currently exists.

It is believed that the recently erected lighting is the element that has caused concern and led to the complaints and this is the issue that needs to be addressed.

The lighting has been designed and erected to have minimal impact on the landscape and neighbouring residents. The columns are 6m tall and have 200W LED flood light fittings mounted on top angled towards the ground to allow light to be spread over the menage without spillage too far outside the fencing. This also prevents lights shining directly at neighbouring property.

The lighting drawing and calculations document illustrate this.

Whilst the lighting has been designed as effectively as possible to respect neighbouring properties there could also be more protection provided. This comes in the form of lighting control as at the moment the lights could be turned on at any time and also left on which could potentially cause issue.

It is proposed to fit a time control to the lighting circuit so that they can only be used up until 19.00 hours after which they will automatically turn off. The lights could also be fitted with a photocell so they only turn on during hours of darkness up until 19.00 hours. However, this would mean that the lights would turn on every night from around 4/4.30 during the darker winter days and the menage wouldn't be used that often. This would be unnecessary and not energy efficient.

It is thought that the lights are best simply operated on by a switch so that they are on for the fewest possible hours and fewest possible days but still fitted with the override, so they automatically turn off at 19.00 hours. The lights will not be used in the morning at all so the time control allowing lights to be turned on could be set between 15.00 and 19.00 hours. The switch would only work between these hours.

Conclusion

The menage itself has been in use for 3 years without any issues being raised, it is a suitable use for the land in this location and one of the neighbouring properties has something very similar outside the front of their property so it is believed that this should be granted approval.

The lighting has been designed and installed to illuminate the area being used with limited spillage outside of this area. In addition, the proposed lighting controls will prevent the lights from being on outside of any hours that is likely to cause disturbance to neighbouring residents. The proposal for the lighting controls to be manual as well as time restricted means they will not be on every night in the winter months unnecessarily. This control method also means they will only be on for the minimum length of time needed when the menage is in use, ie 1 ½ hours of riding instead of 3 hours if set from 15.00 till 19.00 if fully time controlled.

It is believed that the lights under these controls are acceptable and will not impact on the landscape or residential amenity and should be granted planning consent.