



Planning

Planning Statement

Client:

Sillett Equestrian

Newlands

Mole Road, Sindlesham, Wokingham

Erection of decking (retrospective)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the erection of decking (retrospective) at Newlands, Mole Road, Sindlesham.
- 1.2 This planning statement will cover the background to the application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It will consider the proposal in light of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. The conclusion reached is that key material considerations and the wider objectives of National and Local planning policy support the grant of permission.
- 1.3 In addition to this planning statement, the application is accompanied by the appropriate planning application forms and ownership certificate, duly signed and completed, and the following documents prepared by Aves Architectural:
- 1:2500 Site Location Plan
 - 1:500 Block Plan
 - 1:200 Site Plan
- 1.4 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site comprises a single access track taken from Mole Road with a mobile home and associated parking area to the south. The wider site comprises a riding arena and associated stables in established equestrian use. The site does not comprise any additional client facilities aside from the use of the toilet and kitchen facilities within the existing mobile home.
- 2.2 The site is located within the countryside in Wokingham and falls within the 'Bearwood Wooded Sands and Gravel Hills'.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 Application Ref: 253039 – Full application for the use of land for the stationing of a mobile home for use as equestrian staff accommodation (retrospective). Approved 3rd March 2026.
- 3.2 Application Ref: 250785 – Full application for the change of use of land and 3no. buildings to equestrian, erection of 1no. stable building and creation of a riding arena with associated engineering works (retrospective). Approved 17th October 2025.
- 3.3 Application Ref: 201458 – Full application for the proposed erection of an equestrian facility for training and livery purposes including fifty horseboxes, foaling yard, indoor and outdoor riding arenas, lunge ring and horse walker, reception, office, members clubhouse with bar, parking for 25 cars, three parking areas for HGV horse lorries, and three units of residential accommodation comprising manager's three-bedroomed house, staff two-bedroomed flat and staff five

bedroomed flat, with access via Gravelpithill Lane and Ellis's Hill. Refused 7th October 2020.

- 3.4 Application Ref: F/2008/1241 – Proposed erection of one dwelling with garages and staff accommodation. Refused 7th August 2008.

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1 The National Design Guide (2019) identifies that “well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them. They meet the needs of a diverse range of users, taking into account factors such as the ageing population and cultural differences. They are adequate in size, fit for purpose and are adaptable to the changing needs of their occupants over time” (para 120-121).
- 4.2 Regarding the requirements of NPPG Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 14-029-20140306 in respect of Design and Access Statements, the proposal is described as follows:
- 4.3 **Use and Amount:** The proposed use is for the erection of decking (retrospective) ancillary to the lawful mobile home, the decking is erected on site as a temporary feature. The decking responds to the particular functional characteristics of the approved mobile home, and affords the occupants amenity space for their own use as well as a welfare and meeting area and client reception and waiting area associated with the equestrian operations on site.
- 4.4 The decking is also used for conducting business meetings, competition schedule planning and tour plans. As many of the applicant's clients have more than two horses at Newlands, when

they visit they may be on site for 3-4 hours at any given time. The decking therefore provides a space for them to rest.

- 4.5 The decking serves a practical role in connection with the approved temporary mobile home, providing additional space for occupiers undertaking equestrian duties throughout the day. The decking is also used on an ancillary basis for informal staff discussions and occasional meetings with horse owners on site as no staff meeting facilities existing elsewhere on the site.
- 4.6 The decking does not facilitate an intensification or expansion of the approved equestrian use and does not alter the character of the authorised activities taking place on site. The proposal remains incidental and subordinate to the approved mobile home and associated equestrian enterprise whilst also providing clients with a space to wait and rest.
- 4.7 **Layout and Scale:** The decking is of the same height as the floor level of the mobile home which it is ancillary to.
- 4.8 **Landscaping:** The site benefits from existing mature planting offering screening with limited public visibility which assists in reducing the prominence of the structure within the wider landscape.
- 4.9 **Appearance:** The decking is constructed from timber materials, reflective of its lightweight and reversible nature. The structure is viewed in the context of the existing mobile home and associated equestrian development already present on the site and is visually contained within the immediate envelope surrounding the mobile home.
- 4.10 **Access & Parking:** The decking does not have any impacts upon the existing access and parking across the site.

5. Policy Assessment

- 5.1 **National Guidance:** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a relevant material consideration to the application.
- 5.2 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states that “Local planning authorities should approach decision on proposed development in a positive and creative way” and “at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”. Paragraph 124 of the NPPF comments that planning should “promote an effective use of land” in “meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions”.
- 5.3 Paragraph 61 confirms the Government’s objective to boost the supply of housing, and paragraph 8 identifies the three objectives of sustainable development, as economic, environmental and social.
- 5.4 The National Design Guide builds on the above, and clarifies that “well-designed neighbourhoods need to include an integrated mix of tenures and housing types that reflect local housing need and market demand. They are designed to be inclusive and to meet the changing needs of people of different ages and abilities. New development reinforces existing places by enhancing local transport, facilities and community services, and maximising their potential use” (para 109).

- 5.5 **Principle of Development:** Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the Development Plan comprises the following documents:
- Managing Development Delivery Document ('MDD') (Adopted 2014)
 - Core Strategy ('CS') (Adopted 2010)
- 5.6 MDD Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.7 The site lies outside of the settlement boundary and within the countryside, as such, it should be assessed against CS Policy CP11 – Proposals outside Development Limits. Policy CP11 states that in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted.
- 5.8 Exceptions to this are outlined within the policy. One such exception is where the development contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the Borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside. Application ref: 253039 for the use of the land for the stationing of the mobile as use as equestrian staff accommodation establishes a residential use in connection with an established rural enterprise. The decking seeks to further promote countryside recreation in connection with the rural enterprise.

- 5.9 With regards to the second criterion of CP11, the decking is a temporary structure which would require removal should the equestrian use of the site cease, avoiding any permanent harm to the countryside. The decking is also of a modest footprint and connected to established development on site ensuring that development is consolidated to a single area as to prevent encroachment into the countryside setting.
- 5.10 In discussing the principle of development, it is helpful to reflect upon the historic planning applications at the site, namely application ref: 253039 for the use of the land for the stationing of the mobile as use as equestrian staff accommodation and application ref: 250785 for the change of use of land and 3no. buildings to equestrian, erection of 1no. stable building and creation of a riding arena. An application for the extension of the riding arena is also live, although at the time of writing, has not been determined.
- 5.11 Throughout the aforementioned planning applications, the principle of both a residential and equestrian use across the site has been established. The LPA have expressly accepted that the site comprises a rural enterprise, the mobile home supports this enterprise, and a 24/7 presence is required to assist the equestrian welfare and management.
- 5.12 As part of the temporary consent granted under application ref: 253039 for the stationing of a mobile home for equestrian staff accommodation, the LPA accepted, in principle, that the site's equestrian activities generated a sufficient functional need to justify temporary on site residential accommodation to allow for the maintenance and management of the horses and wider site.
- 5.13 The approved equestrian enterprise was considered to be acceptable as an appropriate countryside rural enterprise under Core Strategy

Policy CP11 and Paragraphs 88 and 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The associated officer report acknowledges the intensive nature of the equestrian activities undertaken on site, including irregular working hours, emergency veterinary situations, foaling, welfare monitoring, competition preparation and supervision requirements associated with the management of high value competition horses.

- 5.14 The decking applied for as part of this application is similarly proposed to be temporary in nature and is proposed to follow the same time restriction as condition 1 of application ref: 253039 which states that:

'The use of the land for the stationing of a mobile home for equestrian staff accommodation hereby permitted shall cease on or before three years from the date of this permission.

On or before that date, the mobile home, any base associate with it, all hardstanding or other surfacing related to the parking and turning area, and all materials, equipment and domestic paraphernalia brought onto the land in connection with the use shall be excavated/removed, and the land shall be restored to its former condition.

Reason: At the present time, the temporary permission meets the functional need for an equestrian worker, a permanent dwelling would harm the character and appearance of the countryside.

Relevant Policies: Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3 & CP11; MDD Local Plan Policy TB21.'

- 5.15 The decking does not represent a separate planning unit and does not result in an intensification of use or expansion of the approved equestrian use. The decking had been designed to be reasonable and proportionate in size and scale to the mobile home to allow for the

occupants to benefit from a modest level of ancillary external amenity space associated with the lawful use of the accommodation. Accordingly, the decking is viewed as an ancillary and proportionate addition to the lawful site operation, and is not an independent form of operational development.

- 5.16 Significant weight should be afforded to the temporary and reversible nature of the development. The decking can be removed without permanent alteration to the character and appearance of the land. In light of this, the proposal aligns with the Council's previous reasoning underpinning the temporary consent for the mobile home itself, whereby the reversibility of the development formed a key material consideration in concluding that any landscape impacts would not result in permanent harm to the countryside.
- 5.17 The proposal should therefore be viewed in the context of an already established and lawful equestrian enterprise with an approved mobile home, where the principle of ancillary residential activity has already been accepted. The development is proportionate in its purpose and directly related to the approved uses on the site and as such is demonstrated to be acceptable in principle.
- 5.18 **Character and Appearance of the Area:** The site is identified as falling within the designated countryside and the Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape. The site also falls within the Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills Landscape Character Area where the prevailing landscape strategy seeks to conserve the existing wooded and rural character of the area.
- 5.19 The decking is positioned adjacent to the lawful mobile home, whereby a residential character has already been established. By virtue of its siting, the decking is physically contained within an area

already established as residential, and accordingly is not considered to be out of character with the immediate area by nature.

- 5.20 In visual terms, the decking remains subordinate to the host mobile home and is constructed of sympathetic materials when considered in the context of the countryside, and the material pallet of the mobile home. The structure can be readily removed without resulting in a lasting alteration to the character of the area. The temporary and reversible characteristic is an important material consideration, particularly given the temporary nature of the host mobile home.
- 5.21 When viewed against the context of the wider site within the applicant's ownership, the site comprises expansive equestrian development, including stables, the riding arena and associated operational areas as approved under application ref: 250785. The Council had previously accepted that the equestrian use and associated development constituted a rural enterprise within this countryside location. Accordingly, the decking is assessed against an established backdrop of lawful equestrian activity and associated structures. The decking therefore does not appear as an isolated or incongruous built form in a landscape that is otherwise undeveloped.
- 5.22 By virtue of its relative height, scale and massing, the decking has a limited visibility from the wider public realm, further enhanced by substantial existing vegetation and a high degree of enclosure. The Council's previous assessment of the mobile home confirmed that the accommodation is "well enclosed by dense vegetation" and that there are "no public viewpoints available of its form". These characteristics are therefore considered to be similarly applicable to the decking. The decking is modest in the context of the wider site and does not give rise to any encroachment into the countryside beyond what was approved as part of the residential and equestrian applications.

- 5.23 Policy CP11 supports development in the rural countryside only where it maintains the high quality of the rural environment. Policy CP1(1) similarly only supports development that maintains or enhances the high quality of the environment. The existing mobile home comprises a wooden construction, and the decking comprises a similar wooden construction of a low level. The use of sensitive materials ensures that the dwelling is sympathetic to the surrounding wooded character, and the low level of the decking ensures that it is not unduly prominent against the landscape.
- 5.24 Policy CP3 supports development of an appropriate mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and which makes a positive contribution to the sense of place.
- 5.25 Policy TB21 of the MDD Local Plan states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, including the landscape quality; landscape strategy; landscape sensitivity and key issues.
- 5.26 The site falls within the Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape which falls within the 'Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills'. The main landscape strategy for this area is to conserve and enhance the wooded parkland character and conserve the unsettled character of the area. The decking is a temporary, modest structure that maintains a low level and is sympathetic to the existing mobile home on site. The site is well screened by dense vegetation, with there being no viewpoints available of its form.
- 5.27 Accordingly, the decking is not considered to undermine the landscape strategy for the wider area nor conflict with the aims of Policies CP3, CP11 or TB21.
- 5.28 **Residential Amenity:** Neighbouring properties are sited a significant distance away from the application site and as such no

adverse neighbouring amenity issues are found to arise in this regards.

- 5.29 **Trees and Landscaping:** The proposal does not alter existing landscaping across the site.
- 5.30 **Transport and Parking:** The proposal does not alter existing access and parking across the site by virtue of its subservience to the existing mobile home.
- 5.31 **Drainage and SuDS:** The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and at the lowest risk of surface water flooding. Owing to the structure of the decking, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any alterations to the existing drainage across the site, with the decking being raised and leaving bare ground below.
- 5.32 **Ecology:** The proposal does not result in the felling of trees and leaves bare ground below, and as such is presented to have a negligible impact upon ecology.
- 5.33 **Community Infrastructure Levy:** The proposal is not CIL liable.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of land.
- 6.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 5 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents. It is considered the proposed development would support the needs of the equestrian enterprise and enhance the residential amenity of the occupants without adverse effect on the character of the area or the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 6.3 It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with relevant Development Plan Policies and is further supported by National Guidance. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

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