



Planning Design and Access Statement

Client: **Mr QuinN**

Address: Land East of Davis Way, Hurst

demolition of existing stables and erection of a replacement stable block comprising five stables and a tack room, together with widening of the existing vehicular access to improve visibility and associated works (part retrospective for access widening)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application at Land East of Davis Way, Hurst, RG10 0TR for the demolition of the existing stables and erection of a replacement stable block comprising five stables and a tack room, together with widening of the existing vehicular access to improve visibility and associated works (part retrospective for access widening).

1.2 The statement describes the site and proposal, records the relevant planning history, and assesses the development against the statutory development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework published in August 2026.

1.3 The application is supported by the architectural drawings prepared by 3DR Architects, including drawing DPA173-13-P1 Site Plan, DPA173-17-P1 Proposed Plans and DPA173-18-P1 Proposed Elevations, together with ecological survey work prepared by Cherryfield Ecology.

1.4 The proposal is a modest countryside recreation development replacing an established stable building. Its siting deliberately reuses the existing stable base/slab, thereby avoiding any movement of built development closer to the boundary trees. The access is also widened at its existing position to provide improved visibility and a safer, more functional entrance.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site is located on land east of Davis Way at Hurst. It is in the countryside outside the defined development limits and comprises an established equestrian site with a detached stable block, associated grassland/grazing and hardstanding. The surrounding area has a rural character, with pasture and other open land interspersed with residential development. Fencing means of enclosure within and at the boundary of the site have been recently erected under permitted development.

2.2 The existing stable block is a timber structure with a tiled roof. The ecological survey records the site as comprising a detached stable block with associated grassland for grazing. The wider ecological context includes trees, hedgerows, grassland and water features which provide opportunities for bat foraging and commuting.

2.3 The proposed stable building occupies the location of the existing stable building and uses the existing floor slab. This is an important design response: the replacement does not advance towards the established trees along the boundary and avoids unnecessary disturbance of additional land.

2.4 The stable building lies within Flood Zone 1, the area of lowest probability of fluvial flooding. The proposal is therefore appropriately located in flood-risk terms and does not introduce a more vulnerable use.

2.5 Vehicular access is taken from Davis Way. The existing access is proposed to be widened in situ. The widening is intended to improve visibility for vehicles entering and leaving the site and to provide a safer and more convenient access for equestrian and servicing movements.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 A previous application for a similar stable development was granted planning permission by Wokingham Borough Council under reference 182433. That permission was not implemented within its statutory time limit and has expired. The earlier grant is nevertheless a material site-specific consideration, demonstrating that the principle of a comparable form of stable development at this location has previously been found acceptable by the Local Planning Authority. The present application falls to be determined on the same Core Strategy as in 2013 and the new August 2026 Framework.

4. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

4.1 The proposal comprises the demolition of the existing stable block and erection of a replacement L-shaped stable building providing five individual stables and a tack room. The submitted floor plan shows individual stable boxes of approximately 3.65m by 3.65m, with the tack room positioned within the same coherent building.

4.2 The building is designed in a traditional equestrian form and appearance, using dark-stained horizontal timber wall cladding, vertically clad stable doors, dark-stained timber posts, roof tiles and black plastic gutters. These are recessive, familiar rural materials suited to a countryside stable building.

4.3 The replacement stable is positioned over the existing stable base/slab. This limits the physical spread of development and ensures that the replacement is no closer to the boundary trees than the existing building. Existing grassland remains around the building and the established landscape structure can be retained.

4.4 The existing vehicular access from Davis Way is widened. This is a limited alteration to an established access rather than the creation of a new access point, and it provides a practical highway benefit by improving visibility and manoeuvring conditions.

4.5 Use and Amount: The use remains equestrian/outdoor recreation. Five stables and a tack room are provided within one compact building, replacing the existing stable accommodation.

4.6 Layout and Scale: The building is grouped on the established stable footprint/base rather than dispersed across the field. Its single-storey form, modest height and agricultural/equestrian proportions are appropriate to the countryside context.

4.7 Landscaping: The proposal is deliberately arranged to retain the existing boundary trees and landscape framework. By using the existing slab, the stable building is not moved closer to the trees. Existing grassland and the wider open character of the site remain predominant.

4.8 Appearance: Dark timber cladding and a tiled roof give the development a simple, recessive rural appearance. The palette avoids suburbanising detailing and is characteristic of stable buildings.

4.9 Access: The established access is retained and widened to improve visibility. This provides a proportionate safety and operational improvement without introducing a new point of access into the countryside.

4.10 The design responds to policy DP3 of the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026), particularly its requirements for development to respond to the history, character and features of its site and setting and to integrate with its surroundings. Reusing the established stable location, retaining the surrounding landscape structure and adopting traditional equestrian materials are all consistent with that approach.

5. POLICY ASSESSMENT

5.1 Principle of Development

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted development plan includes the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014). Wokingham Borough Council is progressing a Local Plan Update, but at the time of submission this carries only limited weight.

5.2 The site lies outside development limits and is therefore treated as countryside for the purposes of the adopted plan. Core Strategy Policy CP11 is consequently central to the principle of development. It allows countryside-based enterprises and activities where they contribute to or promote recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside, subject to controls over encroachment and the relationship with existing or replacement buildings.

5.3 The proposal is directly associated with equestrian recreation, a use which is inherently countryside-based. It replaces an existing stable building on its established base, rather than introducing an unrelated or urban form of development into an undeveloped part of the field. There is therefore no excessive encroachment away from the original building. The replacement also offers environmental and visual improvement through a coherent new stable block in appropriate rural materials.

5.4 Policy CP3 requires, amongst other matters, development of an appropriate scale, layout, built form, materials and character; a functional and safe scheme; and no detrimental impact on important ecological, landscape or water features. The proposal satisfies these objectives through its modest single-storey form, established siting, rural materials, improved access and retention of the principal landscape framework.

5.5 The previous application permission assessed under the same policies further supports the principle of development in this location.

National Policy - Development Outside Settlements

5.5 The National Planning Policy Framework published on 17 August 2026 is a material consideration of critical importance. Policy S5 establishes the national decision-making policy for development outside settlements. Importantly for this application, S5(1)(a) expressly includes outdoor sport and recreation among the forms of development which should be approved outside settlements unless the benefits would be substantially outweighed by adverse

effects when assessed against the Framework's national decision-making policies.

5.6 Equestrian use and the keeping/riding of horses are a form of outdoor recreation with a functional need for access to open land. The stable building is necessary ancillary infrastructure for that recreation. The proposal therefore falls squarely within the type of countryside development anticipated by policy S5(1)(a).

5.7 The benefits include replacement of an established and ageing stable building with fit-for-purpose accommodation; continued support for outdoor recreation and enjoyment of the countryside; reuse of the existing stable base rather than unnecessary land take; a design that retains the site's rural character; ecological enhancements; and a safer, more visible existing access. There are no identified adverse effects of a scale capable of substantially outweighing those benefits.

Character, Landscape and Trees

5.8 MDD Policy TB21 requires proposals to address landscape character and to retain or enhance the condition, character and features which contribute to the landscape. Policy CC03 similarly seeks protection and enhancement of green infrastructure and the retention of existing trees, hedges and other landscape features.

5.9 The development is small in scale and closely associated with the established equestrian use. Its location on the existing stable slab materially limits additional encroachment. The replacement building remains no closer to the boundary trees, and its dark timber finish and tiled roof are visually recessive and appropriate to the rural setting. The open grassland remains the dominant site characteristic.

5.10 The proposal therefore maintains the rural character of the site and avoids material harm to the landscape. The use of the established footprint is a particularly strong response to CP11, CP3, CC03 and TB21 because it concentrates built form where development already exists.

Ecology and Biodiversity

5.11 A Preliminary Roost Assessment identified moderate bat-roost potential in the existing stable building and recommended two presence/likely absence surveys. Those subsequent emergence/activity surveys recorded general bat activity in the surrounding grounds but no emergences from the stable building, and concluded that there is a likely absence of roosting bats and that no impacts are foreseen.

5.12 The ecological work confirms that the surrounding grounds are used by commuting and foraging bats. The recommended approach is therefore to retain trees, hedges and linear features where possible, avoid harmful lighting, and provide enhancement such as integrated bat tubes or suitable bat boxes. These measures can be secured through the detailed implementation of the scheme.

5.13 This approach is consistent with Core Strategy Policy CP3, MDD Policies CC03 and TB23, and the nature-related principles of the August 2026 Framework. The proposal retains the grassland and tree framework which provide connectivity, while the replacement building creates an opportunity for biodiversity enhancement.

Flood Risk and Drainage

5.14 The stable building is located within Flood Zone 1. MDD Policy CC09 requires flood risk from all sources to be considered and development to be directed to areas of lowest risk. The proposal satisfies that spatial objective. It replaces an existing building in substantially the same location and does not introduce a more vulnerable land use.

5.15 The retention of the existing slab also limits new impermeable area. Any detailed surface-water arrangements can be managed so that runoff is not increased elsewhere. On this basis, there is no flood-risk reason to resist the proposal.

Highway Safety and Access

5.16 The proposal retains the existing access point but widens it to improve visibility. This is a proportionate improvement to the functioning and safety of an established rural access and enables vehicles associated with the stable use to enter and leave more conveniently.

5.17 The access improvement supports the functional and safe development requirements of Core Strategy Policy CP3. Given that the use already exists and the proposal is for replacement stable accommodation rather than a materially intensified commercial use, no unacceptable highway impact is anticipated.

Weight of the Development Plan in Light of the August 2026 NPPF

5.18 Annex A of the August 2026 Framework provides that development plan policies which are materially inconsistent with the national decision-making policies should be given very limited weight, unless examined and adopted against the new Framework. Other older policies should not be reduced in weight merely because of their age.

5.19 In this case, policy CP11 supports countryside-based activities which contribute to recreation in and enjoyment of the countryside is broadly aligned with the positive treatment of outdoor sport and recreation in national policy S5(1)(a). CP3, CC03, CC09, TB21 and TB23 also remain capable of being applied consistently with the new national decision-making policies. The proposal accords with those local policies in any event as indicated by the previous grant of consent.

Earlier Permission

5.20 The previous grant of planning permission under reference 182433 for a similar development at the site is a material consideration. Although that permission has expired and does not determine the present application, it establishes a relevant planning history in which the Local Planning Authority previously accepted the principle of comparable stable development at this location. The current proposal is also supported by updated ecological survey work and incorporates a widened existing access for improved visibility.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The proposal is a logical and proportionate replacement of established equestrian infrastructure in the countryside. It provides five stables and a tack room in a single coherent building, uses the base of the existing stables, remains no closer to the boundary trees and retains the open grassland and rural setting.

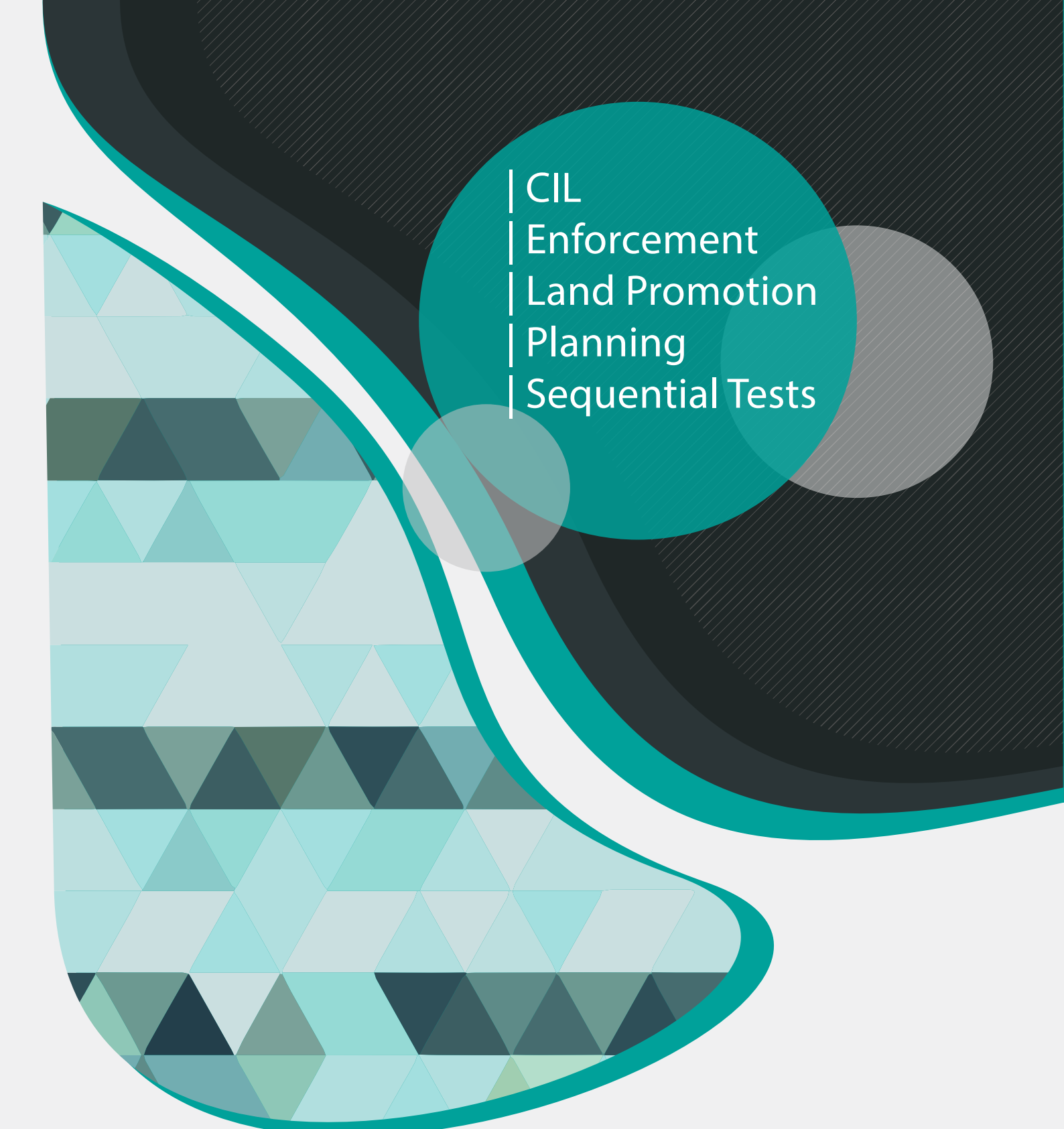
6.2 The widened existing access provides a practical improvement in visibility and highway safety. The building is within Flood Zone 1. Ecological surveys have found a likely absence of roosting bats, while identifying appropriate measures to retain commuting and foraging habitat and provide enhancement.

6.3 The principle of development is strongly supported by policy S5(1)(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026), which expressly identifies outdoor sport and recreation as a form of development that should be approved outside settlements unless its benefits are substantially outweighed by adverse effects. The proposal is also consistent with Core Strategy Policies CP11 and CP3 and relevant MDD policies including CC03, CC09, TB21 and TB23.

6.4 The earlier permission under reference 182433 provides additional site-specific support for the acceptability of similar stable development. Taken as a

whole, the proposal maintains the quality and character of the countryside, supports outdoor recreation, improves the established access and avoids material harm to landscape, trees, ecology, flood risk or amenity. Planning permission should therefore be granted.

This statement has been prepared with assistance from AI tools for research and information gathering. All planning judgement, professional opinion and conclusions drawn are reviewed and verified by the named author prior to finalisation.



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