

**PLANNING & DESIGN STATEMENT IN
RESPECT OF THE ERECTION OF
STABLES & A HAY BARN**

AT

**FAIRVIEW, FOREST ROAD,
WOKINGHAM RG40 5SA**

MLP REF: FR/090/488

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This statement sets out relevant planning policies and the application of those policies. In so doing, the following conclusions are reached:
 - The proposal meets with the requirement of the development plan and is policy compliant. That is to say it is required for the pursuance of sport and recreation in a rural area. The larger building is for machinery and feed/bedding storage to serve this need. The existing stables have reached the end of their useful life and are not fit for purpose.
 - Moreover, the multiplier effects of horse related activity is one which is widely acknowledged and is part and parcel of rural enterprise which is supported through development plan policy and Framework24.
 - In terms of visual effect, the development is one which does not lead to expansion or encroachment away from the original buildings and the manége. The buildings are those which would be expected in the rural scene and there is no conflict with development plan policy.
 - The proposal can readily be serviced through the existing access arrangements and this will serve both deliveries of feed as well as horse boxes. There are existing paddocks on site and the equine use is long established at this location.
 - The reintroduction of the land use and development results from recent proceedings instigated by the local authority and the partial retirement of the applicant who seeks alternative pastimes. This is wholly reflective of the main development plan policy and objectives set out in the 'vision' in the Core Strategy.
 - Whilst material, the recent enforcement proceedings and consequential remediation are not central to consideration of this proposal.

1.2. On the basis of the foregoing, the proposed use and development is appropriate and sustainable. It should be granted a planning.

2.0 Relevant planning history & land use

2.1. The following planning history is relevant:

- The stables are long standing as is the manege and were relocated to another part of the site many years ago. In fact there were originally 9 stables on the land and part of these were accidentally damaged, beyond repair, by an HGV. This is shown in the following sections.
- F/1996/64531 planning permission was granted on appeal for, inter alia, the garage at the front (south) of the land and fronting Forest Road.
- The 2019 permission for the HGV access - 191342.
- Under 212800 permission was granted for a garage to Old Orchard; and under 212724 permission was granted for various development including a garage to Paddock View.
- The 2024 enforcement appeal decision requires the removal of the office/gymnasium building and garage. At the same time the land use (Machine Move) has been extinguished and buildings 2 and 3 have been removed. The commercial use granted in 2013 under CLE/2013/0614 continues. The requirements of the EN's have been complied with and, though tortuous, the Ipa has confirmed this position.

3.0 Planning policy

3.1. The application site lies within the countryside/rural area designation and policies of the adopted Core Strategy and MDD DPD are relevant. They are:

CP1 - Sustainable development

CP3 - The general principles of development

CP11 - Development beyond the development limits

CC01 - The presumption in favour of sustainable development

CC03 - Green infrastructure, trees and landscape

TB21 - Landscape character

TB23 - Biodiversity net gain

3.2. National policy as set out in the 2024 Framework sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 11) and the weight to be afforded to landscapes as per their local or national designation (181 onwards). It is silent on equine development although there is positive support for rural enterprise (88).

3.3. The following sections set out the applicant's response to these planning policies.

4.0 Applying planning policy

4.1. In considering the relevant planning policies and the application of these policies, we refer to the following:

1. Is the development acceptable in principle?
2. What is the visual effect of the development?
3. Will the proposals mitigate the effects of development and provide BNG?
4. Is the proposal sustainable development?
5. Are there any other material planning considerations?

The principle of development

4.2. The key development plan policy is CP11(1) which states:

CP11 - Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside)
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 except where:

- 1) It 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; and
- 2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
- 3) It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement; or
- 4) In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building;
- 5) In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must:
 - i) Bring about environmental improvements; or
 - ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.

4.3. Whilst the development plan is silent and absent in regards to horse related development there is policy support for the promotion of outdoor sport and recreation which, by any reasonable approach, must include horse related use and buildings.

4.4. It is also widely acknowledged that a horse related land use will have some multiplier effects on rural enterprise in the form of feed/bedding, veterinary large animal requirements and blacksmiths for shoe replacement.

4.5. On this basis the starting point is that the development proposal is policy compliant with CP11(1). Moreover, in replacing previously demolished stables, sub-section (3) is material and is met. The proposed barn is required for feed, bedding and machinery storage which was variously met, in part, within the former garage which the Ipa required to be demolished. This need remains as part of the rural land use.

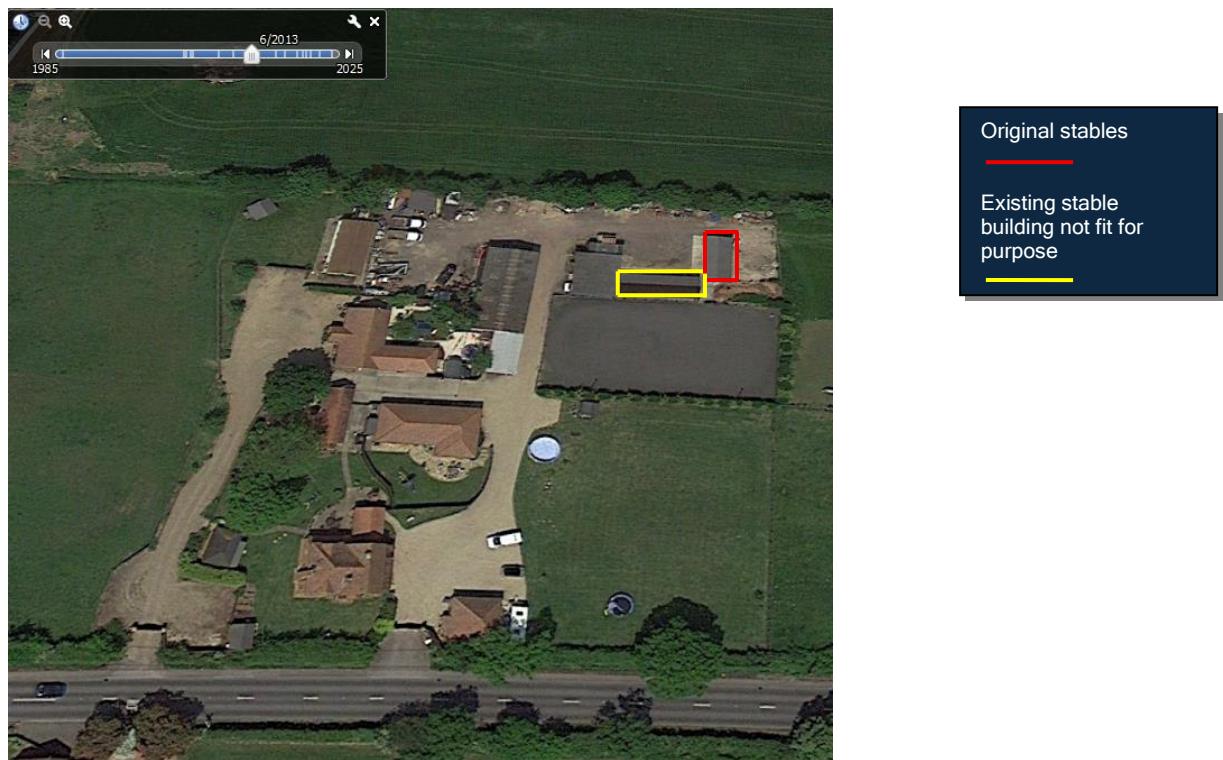
4.6. The number of stables does not change and the surrounding paddocks can accommodate this number of horses as previously.

Visual effect on the landscape

4.7. CP11(2), CC03 and TB21 refer to the clustering of built development, landscape character and trees/hedgerows. The broad requirement of CP11(2) is that development should not be dispersed away from the “original buildings” although this is not defined. CP3(a) refers to broad matters of design and that development should reflect and appropriate scale, mass, bulk and materials palate; as well - CP3(c) - as not harming the landscape character.

4.8. The requirements of TB21 are that development should demonstrate how it has addressed the Council’s landscape character assessment and retain as well as contribute to that character.

4.9. The aerial image below shows the position of the stables and those which were accidentally damaged beyond repair. The proposal removes the existing stables and replaces them in a proximate location.



4.10. The proposed buildings comprise replacement stables for those previously demolished which by their nature are of a standard design and materials. The barn is that which would usually be expected in the rural scene and the Landscape Character Assessment variously states that it comprises:

Strong rural character of the rolling agricultural landscape with its subtle wooded ridges, large woodlands and sparse settlement which create a strong sense of place

- 4.11. It is on this basis and in compliance with CP3, CP11, TB21 and CC03 that a proportionate approach to landscape and visual assessment is submitted.
- 4.12. Given that this is a “rolling agricultural landscape” it is perfectly reasonable to expect built development which reflects this land use. The effect of the proposed stables is clearly a neutral one and the proposal is, in compliance with CP11(2) close to the original buildings. Thus it does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion into the wider landscape.
- 4.13. The proposed barn whilst of greater height as is reasonably required by dint of its function, is one which is part of the rural landscape. Thus whilst the Council’s Landscape Character Assessment identifies the ‘demand for large-scale agricultural buildings leading to visual intrusion of these elements’ as a ‘Key Issue’ for the Ashridge Farmed Clay Lowland: the development proposal could not reasonably be described as such. In fact it is designed to reflect the proportionate need for the rural recreational land use and as is shown below, the localised visual effect will be limited by the verdant nature along Forest Road.



From medium-long range views the application site and buildings are obscured from views along Forest Road, by the mature hedgerows. As such, the effect on the landscape is neutral



2

Closer range views from the east on Forest Road show glimpses of roofs which are higher than the ridge of the proposed barn. The effect on landscape character is a neutral one



3

From approaches to the west the medium and range views are also obscured by the verdant landscape and the effect of the development is de minimis. This same position is reflected in shorter range views as shown by photograph 4



4



5

From shorter range views the dominant feature is built development in the complex of the 4 dwellings and curtilage buildings. It is within this group that the proposed development would be seen



6



7

From views immediately opposite the proposed development (photographs 6 and 7), the roof of the proposed barn may be seen above the gated entrance to the HGV access and the garage/dwellings. From this viewpoint the context of surrounding development and the “original buildings” (CP11) will be appreciated

- 4.14. The additional matter of landscape enhancement is one which dovetails with BNG requirements and policy TB23 refers. As can be seen from the small sites metric this will involve additional planting which will satisfy these planning policy requirements.
- 4.15. In summary, the proposed development meets the various requirements of development plan policies CP3, CP11, TB21, TB23 and CC03. It is planning policy compliant.

BNG requirements

- 4.16. It is a consequence of the commercial activity associated with the lawful use under CLE/2013/0614 and the 2019 HGV access that there is unrestricted associated commercial vehicle movements from this site.
- 4.17. By any judgement these have an effect on rural tranquillity and visual effect and this was a matter to which the Council’s Landscape Officer made reference at the 2025 Inquiry. He also referred at length to the poor quality of the northern hedgerow as a result of many years of commercial activity and that the means to secure an enhanced position. This could be through planning conditions.

- 4.18. Following the Inquiry, the applicant sought a balanced solution whereby the BNG requirements would have led to a considerably enhanced position in the landscape. The local authority lead Officer at this time determined not to take this opportunity and it has been lost.
- 4.19. This aside, the current proposal requires some mitigation through BNG and this will involve some improvement to landscape. Regrettably and as a consequence of the position adopted by the Ipa, this enhancement will be somewhat less than had been offered in the previous submission.

Is the proposal sustainable?

- 4.20. As detailed in CC01 and CC02 as well as the post-dated Framework24, sustainable development is the balance of environmental, economic and social considerations.
- 4.21. In this case the economic activity from equitation uses is long standing and will continue in accordance with the lawful position as accepted by the Ipa at the Inquiry.
- 4.22. The stables and manége are a rural land use and ones which benefit from policy support through CP11(1). Their replacement, in part, is also policy compliant and the related barn is one which meets the exception criteria of CP11. This is essential for the horse related land use and the storage of machinery which took place within the building (EN D) which was required to be removed.
- 4.23. It is clear that the BNG landscape gains and the proportionate assessment on landscape character will have a positive environmental effect. Moreover, horse related buildings with an agricultural barn are ones which are characteristic of this landscape as is identified in the Assessment on which the Ipa relies.
- 4.24. The keeping of horses requires a supply of bedding and feed and this cannot be supplied from the land which is dedicated to various other uses including paddocks. There are additional multiplier effects from the need for economic gains from veterinary companies and blacksmiths in terms of shoeing. Most suppliers of tack are rurally located although price is a driving factor.

- 4.25. The social gains are ones related to recreation and sport in the countryside and are positively encouraged through CP11(1), Framework24 and as set out in the 'spatial vision' of the development plan. They are indisputable.
- 4.26. The sustainable approach to development requires judgement based on the specific proposal. This is a case where a balance between replacement and new buildings to enable an ongoing land use are set against the environmental effects.
- 4.27. We say that this effect is wholly positive and the planning balance should fall in favour of the development proposal. On this basis the development is sustainable and the presumption in favour should be applied.

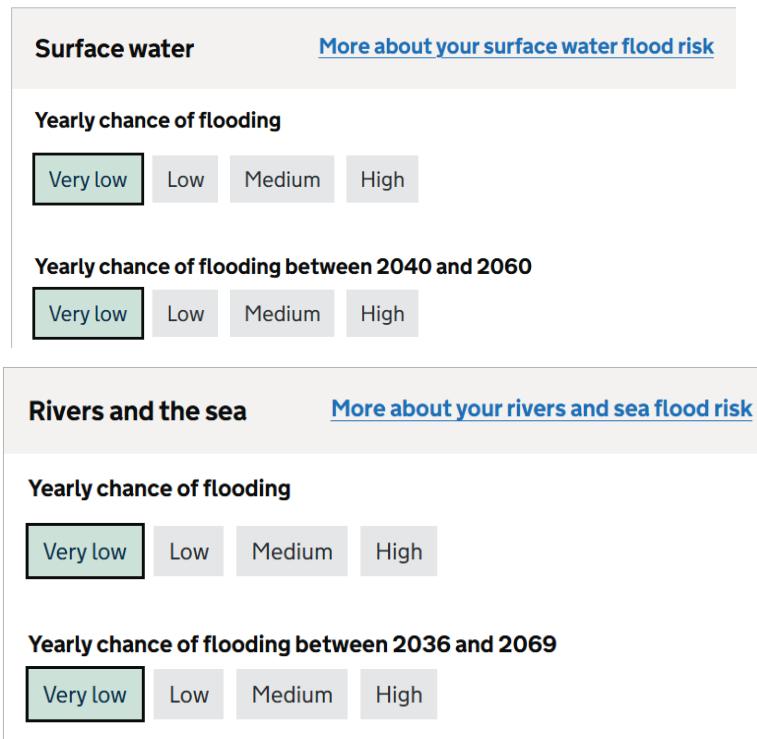
Other material planning considerations

- 4.28. The other material planning considerations relate to access and parking, flood designations/surface water and residential amenity/waste disposal.
- 4.29. Access to the site can be gained from several places and the 2019 HGV roadway is the most logical of these to service the development. this will adequately accommodate HGV's which may deliver feed and bedding as well as larger horse boxes when they are required. There is no conflict with normal development management considerations.
- 4.30. By searching the EA we site it can be seen that there is no risk from rivers or surface water flooding and the extracts are produced below for ease of reference. As such there is no conflict with relevant development plan or national planning policies.

Your selected location: Fairview, Forest Road, Wokingham, RG40 5SA

This information tells you the flood risk of the land around a building, not the building itself.

- ▶ [How we assess an area's flood risk](#)
- ▶ [Flood risk and climate change](#)



- 4.31. The single other material consideration relates to residential amenity. This is frequently cited as a result of waste disposal and infestation from flies. The existing houses are within the ownership of the applicant and their family, although this of itself does not negate the need for appropriate waste disposal.
- 4.32. The submitted plans show provision for the process where manure and used bedding can be stored and will be collected as and when the need arises. This is suitably distant from residential properties and reflects that which is customary.

5.0 Summary - the planning balance and sustainability

5.1. By way of summary, the following matters are set out:

- As is set out in this Statement, the development proposal and lawful land use categorically meets with the requirement of the Local Plan (CS and MDD) and Framework24. It is as a starting principle, policy complaint.
- In short, the proposals are in pursuance of sport and recreation in a rural area. This includes the replacement of existing stables and a larger building which is required for the storage of machinery and feed/bedding. It is that which would be expected in a rural area.
- The proposal is shown to be economically beneficial with the multiplier effects of horse related activity, which is widely acknowledged. As such and whilst for private use it is part and parcel of rural enterprise which is supported through development plan policy and Framework24.
- In terms of environmental effect of the development proposal, it is shown that the Landscape Character Assessment is based is based is one which does not lead to expansion or encroachment away from the original buildings and the manége. The buildings are those which would be expected in the rural scene and there is no conflict with development plan policy.
- The proposal can readily be serviced through the existing HGV access arrangements. This will serve both deliveries of feed as well as horse boxes to and from the site. There are existing paddocks on site and the equine use is long established at this location.
- The reintroduction of the land use and development results from recent proceedings instigated by the local authority and the partial retirement of the applicant who seeks alternative pass times. This is wholly reflective of the main development plan policy and objectives set out in the 'vision' in the Core Strategy.

5.2. On the basis of the foregoing and having regard to development plan policy CC01 and the revised Framework, it is established that the proposal represents sustainable development. As such, planning permission should be granted.