

On Instructions from

Rilex International Limited

Appraisal

in respect of

Retention of grooms' accommodation

at

Malmsbury Estate

Remenham Hill

Henley-on-Thames

Berkshire

RG9 3HN

Contact Details

Prepared by: **Bruton Knowles Ltd**
Olympus House
Olympus Park
Quedgeley
Gloucester
GL2 4NF

BK Contacts: **Julia Allen MRICS FAAV**
RICS Registered Valuer
Senior Rural Surveyor

T: 01452 880000

E: julia.allen@brutonknowles.co.uk

Prepared for: **Rilex International Limited**
c/o Malmsbury Estate
Remenham Hill
Henley-on-Thames
Berkshire
RG8 3HN

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Appendix 1 – Family Horses & Ponies Health Issues

Appendix 2 – Veterinary Letter P J McMahon MVB MRCVS 2nd March 2026 with attached examples of incidents requiring intervention

Appendix 3 – Rightmove extracts showing properties to rent and to buy within half mile radius of RG9 3HN

1. Reference

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| 1.1 Client | - | Rilex International Limited |
| 1.2 Site Address | - | <p>Malmsbury Estate
Remenham Hill
Henley-on-Thames
Berkshire
RG9 3HN</p> |
| 1.3 Instructions | - | <p>We have been instructed to appraise the essential need for the retention of grooms' accommodation to accommodate one groom on a permanent basis and four grooms on a seasonal basis to support the operation of Park Place Polo.</p> |
| 1.4 Caveat to Instruction | - | <p>A site visit was undertaken on 18th September 2025 accompanied by Aislinn Price, Polo Manager Park Place Polo and Alexandra Webb, Southern Planning Practice.</p> <p>The appraisal has been based on the information and evidence provided to us by both the Polo Manager on behalf of our client in respect of Park Place Polo and other equestrian activity and by Southern Planning Practice in respect of planning matters relating to the site.</p> <p>The Southern Planning Practice Design, Access, Planning and Heritage Statement dated May 2026 'SPP DAP & H Statement' has been referred to.</p> |
| 1.5 Experience | - | <p>Bruton Knowles provides rural planning advice to Local Authorities and private clients in respect of planning applications and appeals for rural worker's dwellings, the erection of agricultural and equestrian buildings, change of use of rural buildings and land and the removal of agricultural (and rural) occupancy conditions.</p> |

2. Description

2.1 Location

- 2.1.1 The Park Place/Malmsbury Estate is located at Remenham Hill, approximately a 1.7 mile drive to Henley-on-Thames. The Estate is situated in open countryside and is in the Green Belt.
- 2.1.2 The land and buildings utilised by Park Place Polo is accessed via an existing access road off the A4130.
- 2.1.3 The application site comprises existing grooms' accommodation within the complex referred to as the quadrangle.
- 2.1.4 Further detail on the application site and its location are set out in SPP DAP & H Statement and on Plan WOK-NM-211.3.01.

2.2 Land & Tenure

- 2.2.1 The SPP DAP & H Statement includes a plan showing the extent of the Park Place/Malmsbury Estate and provides detail on ownership. It is understood that the estate is run and managed as a single unit by the Borodin family, although the ownership is held within two companies, the applicant being one and Durio Company Ltd being the other.
- 2.2.2 It is understood that the applicant owns the north eastern part of the estate (formerly Malmsbury Farm) where the polo facility and application site is located. Some of the facilities on the north western side namely, the paddocks, American barn, outdoor arena, horse walker and some timber stable blocks are owned by Durio Company Ltd. It is understood that rental arrangements are in place to facilitate asset use by the different entities.

2.3 Buildings & Structures and Residential Units

Buildings & Structures

- 2.3.1 The buildings and structures listed below relate to the equestrian facilities on the estate as follows:-
 - Manège (60m x 30m)
 - Horse walker
 - The American Barn which incorporates 12 stables for polo ponies, 6 stables for non-polo horses, amenity facilities for workers and family, ancillary facilities including indoor horse wash down area, laundry room with 2 toilets, 3 tack rooms, store and one apartment with bathroom.
 - Timber stable buildings totalling 34 stables
 - 2 ancillary timber stores for feed and equipment.
 - 2 manure clamps
 - 2 haylage/shaving clamps
 - Bin store

- Quadrangle complex which incorporates stabling for up to 44 horses, 3 tack rooms (one with toilet), players' amenity and fitness facilities, grooms' amenity facilities, managers office (with toilet), horse laundry room, feed & equipment stores, horse wash down bays, veterinary room and grooms' accommodation
- 500m pony exercise track
- Summer polo practice field, measuring 275m x 145m
- Pavillion
- All-weather practice arena measuring 100m x 80m
- Haylage/shavings storage barn
- 4 frames and associated hardstanding to provide covered pony lines
- Pony Lines
- Viewing mounds
- Horse box parking area

Details relating to planning status are set out in SPP DAP & H Statement.

Residential Units

- 2.3.2 It is understood that the principal residence on the estate is occupied by the Borodin family.
- 2.3.3 It is understood that the residential units located within the equestrian facilities, comprise an authorised apartment within the American Barn occupied by a groom (planning reference 242612) and the grooms' accommodation which is the subject of this appraisal.

3. Equestrian Operations

- 3.1 It is understood that the Borodin family operate the following equestrian activities from Malmsbury Estate:-

Family Horses & Ponies

- 3.2 It is understood that there are currently 7 horses and ponies kept for the private use of the Borodin family.
- 3.3 It is understood that four are showjumpers of high quality, having achieved success at national competitions in the past, albeit three of these are now retired. All four have specific health conditions which require close monitoring & higher levels of care and the remaining three require dietary management to prevent laminitis, further details are set in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 Two grooms are employed to work and care for the horses and ponies, one of whom resides on site.

Park Place Polo

- 3.5 It is understood that Park Place Polo was established in 2016 and operates on a patron basis, with professional players engaged to form the team. It is a complex operation, with facilities in both the UK and the US, which involves the breeding (in the US) and training of polo ponies for both the team and for sale, and competes internationally at the highest level of the game.

3.6 The SPP DAP & H Statements states that:-

In 2025 Park Place Polo Team achieved an exceptional milestone by winning both the USPA Gold Cup in the United States and the Queen's Cup in the United Kingdom. Securing victories in the two most prestigious tournaments in each country within the same year represents a significant accomplishment in the sport. This achievement clearly demonstrates the Park Place Polo Team's exceptional calibre, consistency and dominance within international high-goal polo, highlighting their ability to perform at the highest level across both hemispheres and in the sport's most prestigious competitions.

3.7 At Appendix 1 of the SPP DAP & H Statement, there is a summary of the tournaments that the Team have competed in and their placements.

3.8 The polo industry as whole is considered to deliver benefits to local economies, by way of, for example, tourism promotion, job creation, increased spending, corporate support, or a multiplier effect on surrounding industries. In the case of Park Place Polo, examples may include the support of the local rural economy such with suppliers of feed and other services such as farrier and veterinary, and the wider local economy with support of the construction industry with investment in polo infrastructure and also in the housing players and grooms on site and in the locality (with expenditure by those individuals in the hospitality and retail sectors). Given the nature of the activity undertaken both in the UK and abroad, economic benefits attributed to Park Place Polo will extend beyond the local economy.

3.9 For the 2026 year the Team comprises Mr Borodin and three professional players. In the season (mid/late February to mid/late August) polo pony numbers at the Malmsbury Estate will total 103, with 45 belonging to the professional players and 18 for either sale or exercise. Polo pony numbers start to drop from mid/late August, with majority of the polo ponies moved off site, but those requiring treatment and rehabilitation remain together with those for training, numbers fluctuate from 8-25.

3.10 Groom numbers stand at 2 all year round, (one housed on site and one housed off site), at 6 mid/late August to end of September and 21 mid/late February to mid/late August (five grooms are housed on site and the remainder offsite).

3.11 The retention of the grooms' accommodation is required to support the continued viable operation of Park Place Polo from the Malmsbury Estate.

4. Proposed Development

4.1 The retention of grooms' accommodation, to accommodate one groom on a permanent basis and four grooms on a seasonal basis (from mid/late February to the mid/late of August), within the complex referred to as the quadrangle is proposed, to support the existing polo activity operated from the Malmsbury Estate.

4.2 The SPP DAP&H Statement states that the grooms' accommodation extends to approximately 102.2 m2 gross internal area. The layout is set out on plan WOK-NM-211.6.03 Rev A and comprises a shared kitchen/living area, two bedrooms with en-suite shower rooms, a third bedroom, a shower room, a store and accessway.

5. Planning Considerations

- 5.1 The SPP DAP&H Statement sets out relevant planning policy and a planning assessment.
- 5.2 Wokingham Borough Council Development Plan consists of the Core Strategy (2010) and the Managing Development Plan (2014). Within the spatial vision of the Core Strategy, it is stated that:-

'Outside of defined settlements/development limits (including the countryside)

3.32 Outside of settlements, in order to reflect the poor access to facilities and services, development is most likely to be related to agriculture, open recreation or burial grounds. Developments that support the vitality of the rural economy will be considered where they are also sustainable. There may also be provision of rural housing by exceptions to meet local need.'

- 5.3 There are policies within the Core Strategy which support rural enterprises and the rural economy including policies CP 11 and CP 12, extracts below. It is however noted that PPS 7 & PPG 2 as referred to by these policies/supporting paragraphs have been superseded, see comments regarding the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at 5.6 and 5.7 below.

i) '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.....'

4.58 Proposals for agricultural workers dwellings will need to demonstrate that they comply with this policy and PPS7.....'

ii) 'CP12 - Green Belt Planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development within the Metropolitan Green Belt as defined in PPG2.....'

- 5.4 There is an emerging local plan, Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update: Proposed Submission Plan 2023-2040. There are proposed policies which support rural enterprises and the rural economy, including those within the Green Belt:-

i) 'Policy ER3: Supporting the rural economy

1. Development proposals that contribute towards supporting a prosperous rural economy will be encouraged.

2. Development proposals for economic development in the countryside will only be supported where: a) There is a genuine need to support an existing or new rural business or enterprise;'

ii) Policy SS6: Development in the Green Belt

- 1. The Green Belt, as shown on the policies map, will continue to be protected against inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy.*
- 2. Development proposals will only be permitted for the limited types of appropriate development set out below, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.*
- 3. The construction of new buildings are considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*
 - a) Buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
 - b) The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- 5 All development proposals should be carefully managed to minimise visual impacts and preserve the openness of the Green Belt and, where relevant, also meet the following criteria:*
 - a) For agriculture and forestry dwellings:*
 - i. There is a demonstrable essential and permanent need for the new dwelling based on the functional requirements of the enterprise it is intended to serve that cannot be met elsewhere; and*
 - ii. The dwelling is commensurate in scale and size to the needs of the enterprise it is intended to serve.....'*

ii) Policy H5: Rural workers' dwellings

- 1. Development proposals in the countryside for a rural worker dwelling which serves an existing agricultural, forestry or similar land based rural business requiring a countryside location, will be supported..... (subject to certain criteria being met including where there is an essential need for one or more permanent full-time workers).*

Paragraph 9.56 The NPPF seeks to avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless specific identified circumstances apply. One of these circumstances is the need for a rural worker to live permanently at, or near their place of work. For the purpose of Policy H5, rural workers are those employed in an agricultural, forestry or similar land-based rural enterprise (for instance, where farm animals or agricultural processes require on-site attention 24-hours a day and where otherwise there would be a risk to human or animal health or from crime, or to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or products). This may include equestrian use, where Policy DH7: Equestrian Development should also be considered, where relevant. While some rural workers dwellings may come forward via permitted development rights which allow the conversion of barns into dwellings, Policy H4 provides the criteria for assessing the suitability of proposed new dwellings when planning permission is required. Proposals for development located within the Metropolitan Green Belt should also refer to Policy SS14.

iii) Policy DH7: Equestrian development

1. Equestrian development proposals will be supported in principle, as a means of boosting the rural economy,.....'

Paragraph 12.28 Equestrian activities are popular in Wokingham Borough and include licensed riding establishments, livery yards, stables and associated facilities for public, private and domestic use. People considering development proposals should carefully consider natural surveillance, site security, vehicle access and animal welfare.

Paragraph 12.29 '..... For the safety and security of the animals, stabling should be sited in close proximity to the main dwellinghouse and/or grooms' accommodation.'

5.5 Whilst SPP DAP&H Statement indicates that the emerging local plan may only be afforded limited weight and full weight is to be given to existing development plan, it is noted that that the provision of accommodation for workers associated with rural land based enterprises (including equestrian) may be supported, as referred to within the NPPF.

5.6 The NPPF provides guidance in respect of isolated homes in the countryside, the rural economy and Green Belt and states:-

i) At paragraph 84 that:

'Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside '*
- c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting. '*

ii) At paragraph 88 that:

'Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses '*

ii) At paragraph 154 that:

'A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry*
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it*

- 5.7 Further guidance on the NPPF in respect of homes for rural workers is contained in paragraph 010 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Rural Housing) which was published in July 2019. It makes reference to paragraph 79 a) as opposed to paragraph 84 a) (as referred to in the current NPPF). It states:

“Considerations that it may be relevant to take into account when applying paragraph 79a of the NPPF could include:

- *evidence of the necessity for a rural worker to live at, or in close proximity to, their place of work to ensure the effective operation of an agricultural, forestry or similar land-based rural enterprise (for instance, where farm animals or agricultural processes require on-site attention 24-hours a day and where otherwise there would be a risk to human or animal health or from crime, or to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or products);*
- *the degree to which there is confidence that the enterprise will remain viable for the foreseeable future;*
- *whether the provision of an additional dwelling on site is essential for the continued viability of a farming business through the farm succession process;*
- *whether the need could be met through improvements to existing accommodation on the site, providing such improvements are appropriate taking into account their scale, appearance and the local context; and*
- *in the case of new enterprises, whether it is appropriate to consider granting permission for a temporary dwelling for a trial period...”*

- 5.8 In terms of seasonal accommodation for rural workers, it is noted that planning permission is not required for temporary seasonal accommodation for farm workers. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (GPDO) permits the use of agricultural land as a caravan site for the accommodation during a particular season of a person or persons employed in farm operations on land in the same occupation on the basis that the use is discontinued at the end of the ‘season’ and the caravan/s are removed from site. It is however noted that planning permission has also been sought by some rural enterprises for the accommodation of seasonal workers in permanent buildings (perhaps more akin to ‘bunkhouses’), usually where there is the requirement for accommodation by more than one worker on a repeat seasonal basis, to aid enterprise viability and sustainability and potentially to also mitigate against any perceived ‘harm’ to the landscape from the siting of more than one caravan.

- 5.9 There is comment within the SPP DAP & H Statement on the use of conditions in respect of the seasonal occupation of a permanent building.

6. Appraisal

- 6.1 The proposed development has been considered with reference to relevant policy and guidance referred to in 5.0 above. As the groom's accommodation is required partly for a full time permanent worker particular regard has been had to clause a) of Paragraph 84 of the NPPF. Whilst Paragraph 84 should be read as a whole, we have, for ease of reference, split it into subsections the relevant clause, as set out below, with comments on other policy, guidance and use of the groom's accommodation by seasonal workers in addition to the permanent worker, as applicable.
- 6.2 *"There is an essential need....."*
- 6.2.1 The typical working day of a groom doesn't sit within 'normal working hours of 9am-5pm', instead starting at around 5 am and finishing with a final check at 10.30pm, assuming no polo ponies are suffering from illness or injury. Duties include stable work, (mucking out and bedding up), feeding, grooming and tack care, preparation of polo ponies for training and matches and polo pony exercise, training and cool down regimes.
- 6.2.2 It is understood that polo ponies are typically exercised twice daily in sets (where a lead horse is ridden and 3 – 4 horses are led). The grooms take them out onto the exercise track for approximately 45 minutes at a time, twice a day. The amount of walking and trotting will depend on the polo pony level of fitness and playing schedule (i.e. walking may be significantly longer if it is the day after a game to allow its muscles to stretch out and recover). The polo ponies are ridden individually and schooled or 'stick and balled' several times a week, with the frequency of this exercising and training managed around their game schedule.
- 6.2.3 It is noted that players, particularly those at the highest level of the sport, will have different expectations and requirements for their string of polo ponies, in terms of day to day management such as feeding regimes and specific exercise regimes and riding requirements. Consequently, it is considered necessary to accommodate at least one groom per player. This is important from a welfare perspective, as grooms familiar with individual polo ponies will be better placed to identify potential health issues as they will be more 'in tune' with individual behaviour and demeanour and any deviations from that may alert them to a health issue, which may be investigated and treated at an early stage.
- 6.2.4 From an employment and operational perspective, it is noted that there will be times when issues arise that affect the ability of staff to carry out their duties such as in the event of sickness or injury, so there needs to be provision for cover. This is particularly important where duties involve horse welfare and potentially critical care, so it may be considered necessary in some operations to have more than one worker on site to mitigate issues in these circumstances. In addition, from a staff welfare and health and safety perspective, it may be considered necessary to have more than one worker on site when dealing with 'round the clock' critical care incidents, to ensure that workers get enough rest to safely carry their other duties. There will also be certain times that more than one worker will be necessary to deal with an incident, from a practical perspective and to ensure staff health and safety, such as in the event a horse is cast.

- 6.2.5 In this case, it is proposed that five grooms reside on site in the season and one groom resides on site all year round, (based on horse numbers and number of players and team owner strings). It is noted that one of the grooms responsible for the family horses also currently resides on site all year round, so there are two grooms on site 'out of season' in the event of incidents arising with the family horses or the polo ponies.
- 6.2.6 A duty of care exists towards all animals (certain welfare standards are required under The Animals Act 2006, and are referred to in the DEFRA Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and their Hybrids (Code). However, the Act and Code do not state that a residential presence is required in every circumstance where livestock is present. The nature of the stock in question and their number will impact on whether incidents will occur that may require a prompt response and these factors will also directly influence the frequency that such events may occur.
- 6.2.7 In general terms, unforeseen incidents can occur at any time of day or night and cover a wide range of situations, from dealing with emergencies such as a horse cast in its box or a horse with colic, to damage to the stables and associated buildings from the horses, severe weather conditions or fire. Responsible staff also need to be available to recognise and deal swiftly with any emergencies that may occur, either through their own actions or by calling the assistance of third parties, such as the vet, to mitigate losses.
- 6.2.8 Details of horse numbers have been set out in section 3. Given the high numbers of polo ponies on site during the season and given the physical demands / contact intensive nature of the sport, injuries and illness are inevitable. The frequency of those incidents is relatively high, with less severe incidents arising roughly on a weekly basis in the peak season. It is noted that whilst polo pony numbers reduce later in the year and over winter, a proportion are those receiving treatment and rehabilitation, so require an ongoing enhanced level of care.
- 6.2.9 There is a letter of support for the retention of groom accommodation on site, from Mr McMahon MVB MRCVS, veterinarian to Park Place Polo in the UK, at Appendix 2. He explains some of the illnesses and injuries polo ponies may be susceptible to and hence the reasons why prompt intervention is necessary. There is also a list of examples of incidents that required prompt intervention, with details on treatment and the outcome. Both these documents are considered to give weight to the requirement for the residential presence of more than one worker at any one time.
- 6.2.10 Whilst not a primary consideration when assessing essential need, security is a genuine concern, having regard to the considerable value of polo ponies and equipment at the polo facility, particularly in the peak season. No specific information has been provided but it is noted that the value of the horses will reflect the status of a high goal, professional team. It is noted that there are security measures in place, however the presence of grooms on site will also improve security.
- 6.2.11 Regard has been had to the scale and nature of the Park Place Polo operation on the Malmsbury Estate. It is considered that a residential presence on site is a necessity to enable the essential need requirements to be met and in terms of numbers of workers residing on site, there is justification for one full time worker all year round and five full time workers for the duration of the season (based on current operating levels and also with the support of the groom responsible for the family horses who resides in the American Barn).

- 6.3 “...for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business...”
- 6.3.1 Details of the number of grooms engaged and for what periods are set out in section 3.
- 6.3.2 It is noted that labour requirements and essential need requirements differ in interpretation (a full time labour requirement does not prove an essential need in isolation, but where an essential need for a worker is proven it is usual for that worker to be employed full time).
- 6.3.3 ‘Standard Man Day’ (‘SMD’) data is available for most agricultural and equestrian enterprises, to enable consideration to be given to the labour requirements of an enterprise. It is noted that there is no reference to polo ponies or rehabilitation (given varying levels of care subject to illness or injury) within the ABC Equine Business Guide. Data is provided for differing types of competition horses. It is also noted that economies of scale are applied in the event of more than one horse (for example more than ten equates to a fifty percent reduction of SMD).
- 6.3.4 Having regard to ‘SMD’ data, actual polo groom numbers are consistent with applying the average SMD associated with competition horses to polo ponies numbers and discounting for economies of scale.
- 6.3.5 It is noted that polo groom numbers for the season stand at 21 and at 2 over the winter, which is in excess of the proposal for accommodation of 1 groom permanently and 4 grooms for the season. Comments have been made on essential need requirements under section 6.2, which supports the proposal for 1 groom to be accommodated on site permanently and 4 grooms to be accommodated on site for the season.
- 6.4 “...to live permanently...”
- 6.4.1 Within the NPPF it is implicit that if a dwelling is consented in the countryside, it must be envisaged that the need will be permanent and hence the activity/enterprise it supports should be sustainable.
- 6.4.2 As stated in 3.5, Park Place Polo was established in 2016 and it is understood that investment in its facilities has continued at a significant level, as well as in its continued development as a Team, as evidenced by its considerable achievements and successes at the highest level of the sport.
- 6.4.3 Whilst recent global events have impacted on all sectors of economic activity, with market uncertainty and rising costs, it is understood that Park Place Polo continues to move forward with its operation.
- 6.4.4 Having regard to established nature of Park Place Polo, historic and continued investment in both facilities and activity, it is considered there is a level of permanence to support the provision of accommodation for a full time permanent groom.
- 6.4.5 Seasonal workers accommodation does not fall to be assessed under Paragraph 88 a), as per comments made in 5.8. However, it is considered relevant to note that the conclusion reached in 6.4.4 in relation to permanence gives weight to the support of provision of permanent accommodation for seasonal workers on a perpetually recurring basis. In terms of comments made in 5.8, in respect of how permanent accommodation for seasonal workers may aid enterprise viability and sustainability, it is relevant to note that:-

i) Appropriate care of the polo ponies is essential to the continuing and viable operation of Park Place Polo.

ii) Recent legislative changes in the housing sector in the UK, with the implementation of the Renters Rights Act, has impacted negatively on the availability and costs of accommodation to house grooms on a seasonal basis in the locality.

iii) The provision of suitable accommodation on site, which enables grooms to discharge their duties effectively and efficiently, benefits not only the operation of Park Place Polo, but individual grooms and players concerned, (and may also assist in terms of attracting players and grooms). The provision of permanent accommodation for seasonal grooms in addition to the 4 proposed, would provide operational benefits as well as improving the viability of the Park Place Polo operation.

6.5 “.... at or near their place of work in the countryside.”

6.5.1 There is existing residential accommodation on the Malmsbury Estate as set out in 2.3.2 and 2.3.3.

6.5.2 As indicated in 2.3.2, the principal residence is occupied, hence not available, and is arguably not located sufficiently close enough to the stabling to meet the essential needs identified.

6.5.3 As indicated in 2.3.3, the residential unit in the American barn is occupied by a groom permanently who is primarily responsible for the family horses and ponies. Reference has been made to this groom within section 6.2. The existing grooms' accommodation within the Quadrangle complex is the subject of this appraisal.

6.5.4 We have undertaken a search of Rightmove (see Appendix 3). There are no properties to rent within a half mile radius of the Malmesbury Estate postcode and one to buy. The property to buy is not considered to be of a scale appropriate for grooms' accommodation and is not considered to be located sufficiently close enough to the stabling to meet the essential needs identified.

6.5.5 Other than the existing grooms' accommodation within the Quadrangle complex, it is considered that there are no other available and suitable residential units to help meet the essential need requirements identified.

6.6 As previously referred to, it is understood that the grooms' accommodation extends to approximately 102.2m² gross internal area. No specific size restrictions for rural workers dwellings are specified within Wokingham Borough Council's planning policies, although there is reference in the emerging policy SS6 to a size that '*is commensurate in scale and size to the needs of the enterprise*', which is similarly referred to within emerging policy H5. Where size restrictions have been imposed by other Local Planning Authorities, these tend to sit within the range of 120m² to 160m² (either based on gross internal area or gross external area), often to include an office space to service the enterprise. The existing grooms' accommodation is smaller than this and is considered more than commensurate in scale and size to the needs of the activity.

- 6.7 The application has been considered in respect of other relevant planning policy and associated matters within the SPP DAS & H Statement.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Having regard to the information and evidence provided to us in respect of operation of Park Place Polo on the Malmsbury Estate, it is considered that there is justification for the retention of grooms' accommodation to accommodate one groom on a permanent basis and four grooms on a seasonal basis.

Bruton Knowles Ltd

Olympus House
Olympus Park
Quedgeley
Gloucester
GL2 4NF

Date: 12th May 2026

Appendix 1

Family Horses & Ponies Health Conditions

The following has been provided by the Polo Manager:-

1. Cleo 96

Retired Showjumping Mare (25 years old)

Cleo suffered from the displaced spleen colic in October 2025. She suffers from quite extreme instability in her back legs (structures of the pasterns/ fetlocks and suspensory apparatus) from years of jumping and intense loading and concussion on the lower limbs from take-off/ landing. She also suffers from arthritis, so both conditions are degenerative and with age her soundness/ levels of comfort will continue to deteriorate despite best efforts to keep her comfortable.

2. Horse Gym's Caetano

Retired Showjumping Stallion (24 years old)

He has had numerous dental surgeries and tooth extractions as he suffers from a condition known as "Equine Odontoclastic Tooth Resorption & Hypercementosis" (EOTRH). This is a painful, progressive, non-reversible dental disease which typically affects older horses causing tooth root resorption and excessive cementum production, leading to severe gum inflammation, abscesses, tooth fractures and tooth removal.

3. Waxing Thumbs Up (23 years old)

Retired Showjumping Gelding (Pony)

He suffers from Equine Cushings Disease (otherwise known as Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction). PPID is a progressive condition whereby the normal mechanisms which control hormone production by the pituitary gland are damaged, causing an excessive production of hormones, which enter the circulation and affect the whole body. Clinical signs include increased coat length, problems shedding hair and thus overheating/ increased sweating/ dehydration, laminitis, lethargy, weight loss and excessive drinking and urinating. As a result of Cushings, he has developed very severe laminitis so his diet and shoeing need extremely careful monitoring and management to keep him healthy and comfortable.

4. Blueriver Rockstar (17 years old)

Showjumping Gelding (Pony)

He is very sensitive and very prone to digestive issues and stomach ulcers – his diet/ schedule needs managing very carefully to prevent colic or stomach ulcer flareups.

5. Snelshire Schampagne (10 years old)

Miniature Shetland Pony Mare

Not ridden. Due to her size her diet/ weight needs to be carefully managed to ensure she does not develop laminitis.

6. **Pitufo (12 years old)**

Argentine Bred Gelding (Pony)

Due to his size his diet/ weight needs to be carefully managed to ensure he does not develop laminitis.

7. **Panda (11 years old)**

Argentine Bred Mare (Pony)

Due to her size her diet/ weight needs to be carefully managed to ensure she does not develop laminitis.

Appendix 2

Veterinary Letter with Examples of Incidents requiring Intervention

P.J. McMahon MVB MRCVS

Veterinary Surgeon

Kings Park Equine Clinic • Shillinglee Road • Plaistow • W. Sussex • RH14 0PQ

Tel: 01403 871 331 Email: info@pjmcmahon.co.uk www.pjmcmahon.co.uk

Wokingham Borough Council
Planning Department
Civic Offices,
Shute End,
Wokingham
RG40 1BN

2nd March 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re. Requirement for on-site Grooms Accommodation at Park Place, Remenham Hil,
Henley-on-Thames RG9 3HN**

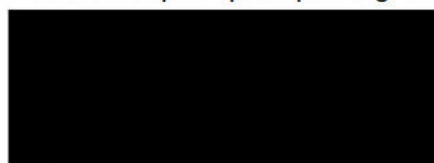
I am writing in support of a planning application for the retention of the existing Grooms Accommodation (one permanent unit and four seasonal units) on the Malmsbury Estate where the Park Place Polo Team is based. I am the attending veterinary surgeon, responsible for the veterinary care of the applicant's polo horses and the professional players contracted to play for Park Place Polo Team.

The horses under my care at the Park Place Polo facility are hard-working athletic animals whose daily training and competition schedules make them more prone to injury due to the physical demands of high goal polo and the competitive nature of the sport. Their welfare relies heavily on the ability of knowledgeable and experienced grooms to identify early signs of distress, discomfort or illness and respond immediately.

Polo is a highly physical and contact-intensive sport, and injuries of varying degrees of severity can be sustained during a game and sometimes even during practice training matches. I have treated numerous cases arising from direct trauma, including head wounds from mallets and impact injuries from polo balls or contact with other horses.

Certain conditions demand extremely intensive treatment and rehabilitation. For example, eye ulcers (which can be caused by a trauma on the field or off the field), often require administration of topical medication every hour, and timely, consistent treatment has enabled full recovery in several cases (which with less intensive treatment could have resulted in loss of the eye and therefore retirement from polo). Soft-tissue injuries and bone injuries (fractures/breaks) are commonly seen in all disciplines of competitive equestrian sports and can rapidly deteriorate without sufficiently thorough treatment and rehabilitation.

I have managed cases where pain and inflammation caused from a severe bone or soft tissue injury have caused a horse such discomfort and stress that they have progressed to life-threatening condition known as 'colic', a veterinary term for abdominal pain. It typically originates from the gastrointestinal tract, and in horses it can stem from issues such as gas accumulation, impaction, intestinal spasms, or more serious conditions like displacement or strangulation of the gut. Because the equine digestive system is long, complex, and particularly prone to obstruction and torsion, even mild signs can progress rapidly into life-threatening complications. Swift intervention is essential to relieve gastric pressure, control pain, assess the severity, and identify critical cases that require prompt surgical referral.



03/26

P.J. McMahon MVB MRCVS

Veterinary Surgeon

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Delays can lead to reduced blood supply to the intestines, tissue death, worsening shock, and a significantly poorer prognosis. For this reason, any suspected colic should always be treated as a medical emergency, and veterinary attention should be sought immediately to give the best possible chance of a positive outcome.

Fractures are the most commonly seen bone injury with competitive high goal polo and in certain cases (depending on the location and severity of the fracture), have required cross-tying the horse in the stable, which in turn requires a great degree of human care and monitoring.

Respiratory infections and disease are also quite commonly seen in horses, some of which can be extremely aggressive with a bacterial or viral source and can swiftly lead to the onset of pneumonia (which can be fatal), so continuous monitoring and thorough treatment are essential. A list of incident examples as provided by the Polo Manager dated from 2024 detailing the incidents and veterinary treatment requirements is enclosed, however this is not exhaustive.

The ability of onsite personnel to act within minutes is often critical. If an incident arises, the response must be immediate; otherwise, the situation could ultimately result in death. After the initial response, ongoing treatment and care are usually required, with a 24-hour presence needed for the first few days following an operation, followed by subsequent checks every few minutes or hours, particularly if a drip or additional medication must be administered regularly. The recovery period can range from several days to several weeks, depending on the incident.

Several horses I have treated would not have survived until morning had their early signs of colic not been recognised by grooms living onsite. Horses can also become "cast" in their stables, an event that can cause severe injury if not addressed immediately. These incidents are often identified only because onsite staff are close enough to hear the initial commotion. The immediate response and subsequent aftercare typically require at least two grooms, due to the manpower needed to move a horse out of a dangerous position.

Given these clinical, welfare, and security requirements, I strongly support the application for permanent and seasonal units of grooms accommodation at the Park Place Polo facility. In my professional opinion, year-round and seasonal on-site staffing is not only justified but essential to ensure the safety, health, and high-standard management of these horses.



Dr P.J. McMahon MVB MRCVS

02/mar/26.

Example Cases			
Horse Incidents requiring on-site grooms to respond promptly at outset and for after care			
Horse	Date of Incident	Description	Park PlaceNotes on Recovery
Irenita Antonia	01-Jul-24	Colic	Presented with signs of colic on 01/07/2024 - the mare was managed at the barn but showed signs of severe discomfort quite quickly. Admitted to clinic, suspected to have been a spasmodic colic episode or mild colon displacement. Mare returned to Park Place on 03/07/2024 and continued to receive careful monitoring and made a full recovery.
Dona Sofia Rubia	04-Sep-24	Knee Fracture	Fell and sustained fracture to left fore knee - had surgery to clean up the bone fragments/ bits of cartilage that came away from the joint. On return from the clinic the mare had to be cross tied for a period of time in the box so she could not lie down. Cross tying involves tying ropes to either side the stable walls preventing the horse from lying down. Any horse that is cross tied needs extremely frequent monitoring to ensure they don't get caught up in the rope/ ensure they are safe. The mare was cross tied until November 2024, remained on box rest with controlled walking exercise through until July 2025. Despite a very thorough rehabilitation process she did not recover sufficiently well to return to athletic function. She was retired and sent back to Argentina as a broodmare.
Park Place Valentino	11-Sep-24	Colic	Castrated on 10/09/2024 and returned to Park Place once the clinic were happy to discharge him. On arrival to Park Place on 11/09/2024, later that evening started showing signs of colic - expected from the discomfort of castration Vet attended, fluids administered, very thorough attendance to work the horse through the colic for 48 hours. Colic resolved without need for re-admittance to clinic.
Irenita Wonder Woman	12-Sep-24	Pedal Bone Fracture	Stress fracture of the pedal bone, mare was kept on box rest September 2024 - March 2025. Initially required a lot of bandage changes and careful monitoring at regular intervals from grooms living on site at the barn. The mare had walk only exercise March 2025 - August 2025. September 2025 turned out into a small paddock for controlled rest over the winter months. She's made good improvements with a view to trying to bring her into work in March 2026 - future prognosis as a polo pony is guarded.
Triunfo Kurda	20-Aug-24	C3/ C4 Neck Fracture	Horse fractured her neck (C3 & C4) when turned out in the field 20/08/24. Very intensive recovery/ rehabilitation process - grooms on site to monitor her was a necessity until November 2024. August 2024 - February 2025 she was on box rest with very restrictive movement/ controlled walking exercises. March 2025 - October 2025 she had increased but controlled amounts of exercising. October 2025 - February 2026 turned out to the field to rest (small paddock - controlled space/ restricted movement). Her prognosis looks good to return to athletic function for 2026 polo season (resuming training March 2026).

Example Cases			
Horse Incidents requiring on-site grooms to respond promptly at outset and for after care			
Horse	Date of Incident	Description	Park PlaceNotes on Recovery
Triunfo Kurda	13-Feb-25	Colic	Neck fracture recovery meant she was stabled with very limited/ controlled movement for a long time. Often horses with serious injuries such as hers are more prone to developing impaction colics (which she did on 13/02/2025). Very intensive/ hourly checking, monitoring, walking, controlling diet for 48 hours. Grooms living on site was very important to manage her through the colic and avoid the need for surgery.
Peregrino Bandida	27-Feb-25	Eye Trauma Injury	Trauma injury in the field - inflamed eye with ulceration. Treatment required several different forms of ophthalmic ointments/ drops. Treatment required multiple applications throughout the day and evening - approximately every 2 hours. Intense treatment lasted until April and tapered off to a more time manageable dose. Without on site grooms to give the medication when needed she may have lost the eye, she continued to play the whole season.
Irenita Marisa	15-Jun-25	Pleuropneumonia	Sudden onset Pleuropneumonia after Queen's Cup Final. The horse was under 24/7 supervision and care overnight to try and stabilise her. Once stabilised on 16/06/25 she was taken to the clinic. The mare spent a week at the clinic and sadly deteriorated and did not survive. If she did not have that 24/7 supervision and care the first day she definitely wouldn't have survived.
L'Oreal	01-Sep-25	Tendon Injury	Sustained very bad tendon injury on right fore leg. Mare required very intensive rehabilitation process at multiple points throughout the day, required a lot of attention. Mare rehabilitated to the point she was able to travel back to Argentina mid December 2025 for breeding. Without such an intensive rehabilitation process its unlikely she would have made a sufficient recovery to be allowed to travel.
Cleo 96	01-Oct-25	Displaced Spleen Colic	25 year old retired showjumping mare who requires careful management to keep her healthy and comfortable. Sudden onset of colic - spleen displaced and shifted so the large intestine hooked above the spleen and triggered a colic. The horse resolved the colic at the clinic without the need for surgery. She needed very careful monitoring 24/7 for a few weeks once she returned to the barn for risk of it happening again.
Open Reddish	01-Apr-26	Colon Rupture Colic	Mare presented with signs of colic and was found to have an impaction that morning - vet attended, started treatment. By the afternoon she had not shown significant improvement, vet admitted her to the clinic for more intensive care. Mare passed away that evening (colon ruptured).
Park Place Supernova	06-Apr-26	Colic	Mare presented with mild signs of colic/ gastrointestinal discomfort. Vet attended, mare treated, grooms remained vigilant monitoring her closely and colic resolved by the next day.

Appendix 3

Rightmove Extracts as at 12th May 2026

rightmove

BuyRentHouse PricesFind AgentCommercial

RG9 3HN

Within 1/2 mile

Min Price to Max Price

Min Beds to Max Beds

Properties For Sale in RG9 3HN, within 0.5 miles

Save SearchCreate Alert

1 results

Sort: Highest PriceMap view

Prioritise properties with...Add keyword

1/25

Remenham Terrace, Remenham Hill, Remenham, Henley-on-Thames, Berkshire, RG9

Terraced 4 3

0.26 miles

A beautiful Grade II listed Regency property Knight Frank are delighted to offer this elegant Grade II listed Regency property that has been completely renovated, remodelled and modernise...

Added on 02/02/2026 by Knight Frank, Henley

£945,000

Guide Price

POTENTIAL TO EXTEND (STPP)

Knight Frank

01491 523714

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Save

rightmove

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RG9 3HN

Within 1/2 mile

Min Price to Max Price

Min Beds to Max Beds

Properties To Rent in RG9 3HN, within 0.5 miles

Save SearchCreate Alert

There are currently no properties that meet your search criteria

Here are some helpful next moves.

We recommend:

RG9

Surrounding RG9 3HN

49 properties match your criteria

View 49 properties