

Retention of Grooms Accommodation

Malmsbury Estate
Remenham Hill
Henley-on-Thames
RG9 3HN

DESIGN, ACCESS, PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT

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APPENDICES

- 1** PPPT Tournament History
- 2** Appeal decision APP/X0360/W/19/3224323 (March 2020)

I.0 INTRODUCTION

- I.0** Southern Planning Practice Ltd is instructed by Rilex International Ltd to submit a planning application for the retention of grooms accommodation at Malmsbury Estate, Remenham Hill, Henley-on-Thames. The holding lies within the 240-hectare Grade II* Registered Park and Garden (RPG) at Park Place and Temple Combe, as well as the Green Belt. It is located outside the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area.
- I.1** The Malmsbury Estate comprises an established polo facility supporting the high-goal “Park Place” team, comprising a large stable building, polo pitch, polo arena and exercise track, all approved under planning permission I62288. The estate forms part of a wider landholding that includes Park Place, a Grade II listed building and associated parkland, woodland, and equestrian facilities, including the American Barn, show-jumping arena and three rows of stables.
- I.2** Park Place Polo Team began competing in official tournament polo in 2016. The summary at **Appendix I** outlines all tournaments the team has participated in to date, along with their placements.
- I.3** 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.
- I.4** The polo facilities required to facilitate this success, when the team are in the UK, include a quadrangle stable block, polo pitch, arena and exercise track (shown in Fig. I).



Fig. 1 – Latest aerial view (dated 2025) showing the location of the polo facilities, stables and paddocks

- 1.6 Approximately 120 horses are kept on site during from mid/late February – mid/late August during polo season, with most relocated to West Sussex during winter. A smaller number remain for winter training alongside the family's own horses. The Park Place Stables complex accommodates both family and polo horses and contains 34 timber stables and 44 stables within the quadrangle stable block.
- 1.7 The estate has a complex planning history. The most relevant case is appeal decision APP/X0360/W/19/3224323 (see **Appendix 2**) concerning the demolition of an outbuilding and replacement with grooms' accommodation and a gym, which was dismissed in March 2020. At that time a number of unauthorised structures had been identified within the RPG; all have since been confirmed lawful through a series of certificates of lawfulness (see section 4 below).
- 1.8 The grooms accommodation occupies part of the quadrangle stable block building approved in 2016 under permission 162288 for the creation of a private polo facility. The building's design and scale were previously accepted as appropriate for the site. During the polo season groom numbers on

site increase and once the season finishes in August, this reduces down. There is therefore a requirement for both seasonal grooms and permanent grooms as outlined in the accompanying appraisal by Bruton Knowles, which this statement should be read alongside.

1.9 As the grooms accommodation is contained within the existing quadrangle stable block, its retention does not give rise to harmful visual, heritage or Green Belt impacts, nor does it affect the setting of listed buildings or neighbouring properties.

1.10 The application is supported by the following plans:

- Site Location Plan - WOK-NM-211.3.01
- Block Plan - WOK-NM-211.3.02A
- Elevations - WOK-NM-211.3.04
- Floor Plans - WOK-NM-211.3.06A

1.11 This statement describes the site, heritage context and planning history, assesses the proposal in light of the 2020 appeal decision and relevant policy, and considers the planning and heritage balance before setting out the overall conclusions.

2.0 SITE & SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The Park Place / Malmsbury Estate is a substantial country estate at Remenham Hill, south of the A4130 and east of Henley-on-Thames. Although held under two titles, it is managed as a single estate. Rilex International Ltd owns the north-eastern area, formerly Malmsbury Farm, where the polo facility and retained stables are located. The remaining land is held by Durio Company Ltd.

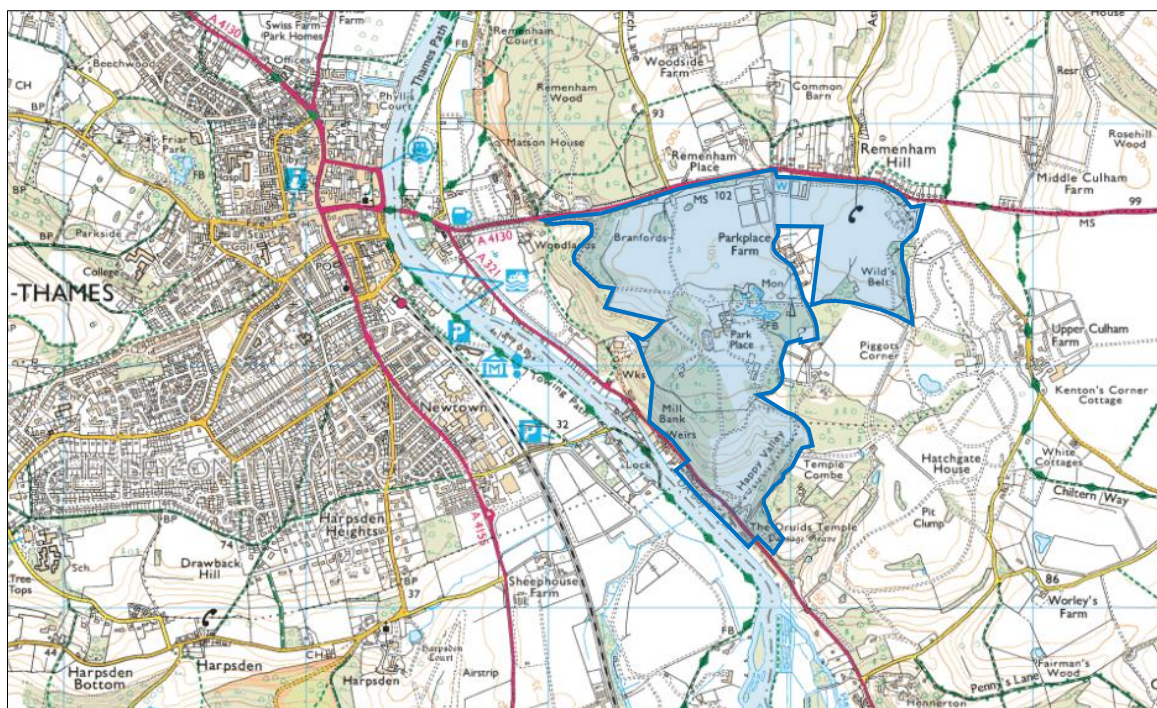


Fig. 2 – Map showing the approximate location / extent of the Park Place / Malmsbury Estate (edge blue)

- 2.2 The estate sits on a plateau on the eastern side of the Thames Valley, rising gradually from the A4130 towards Park Place before falling steeply southwards into the area known as Happy Valley. Approaching from the A4130, the landscape has an open, parkland character with scattered trees, while woodland along the southern and eastern boundaries provides screening. A 45-metre telecommunications mast is visible on the ridgeline.
- 2.3 The estate is entirely within the Park Place and Temple Combe RPG and the Green Belt. Several listed buildings lie within the wider estate, including Park Place (Grade II), a late-17th-century obelisk (Grade II), and a barn at Park Place Farm (Grade II). Additional listed properties are located to the north of the A4130.

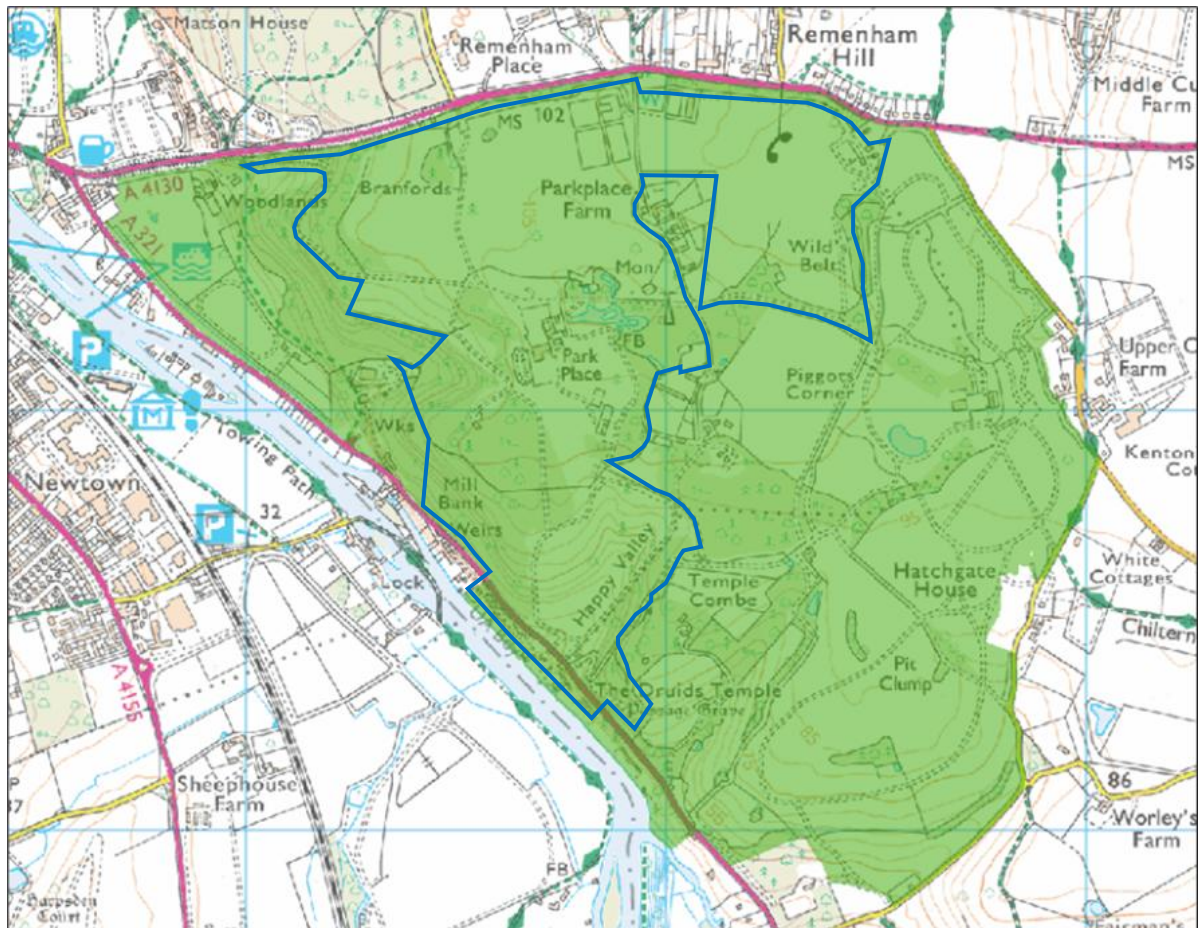


Fig. 3 – Map of the RPG (the Park Place / Malsbury Estate is edged in blue)

2.4 The Equestrian and polo facilities occupy the northern and north-eastern parts of the estate and include the following:

- 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

2.5 The Groom's accommodation is located within a northern projecting wing of this complex (Fig. 4) and has been in place since 2018. To the east and south lie the practice polo field, exercise track, and arena.



Fig. 4 – Location of the grooms' accommodation

- 2.6 The northern boundary along the A4130 is defined by established vegetation, providing effective screening and limiting views into the estate from nearby listed properties.

3.0 HERITAGE CONTEXT

- 3.1 The application site forms part of the Park Place and Temple Combe Registered Park and Garden (Grade II*) (Historic England Register entry). The Registered Park and Garden is a designated heritage asset, and its significance derives from its historic evolution as a country estate landscape and the survival of key designed elements, including the relationship between Park Place and its surrounding parkland, woodland and the landscaped valley of “Happy Valley”.
- 3.2 The wider estate also contains a number of listed buildings and structures, including Park Place (Grade II) and a late-17th-century obelisk (Grade II), with further listed buildings located to the north of the A4130. The significance of these assets is experienced in part through their setting within the historic landscape, including views across open parkland and the sense of seclusion and tranquillity associated with the designed estate grounds.
- 3.3 Park Place originated as Stroud’s Farm and was purchased by Lord Archibald Hamilton in 1719. It later came under the ownership of the Prince of Wales (c.1737) and subsequently Henry Seymour in 1752, who introduced significant landscape features including Happy Valley, a rustic bridge and the Druids’ Temple. Following Seymour’s death in 1795, James Harris, the Earl of Malmsbury, acquired the estate and commissioned Henry Holland to remodel the house between 1796 and 1799. These phases of development are fundamental to the significance of the Registered Park and Garden and the way the estate’s historic character is perceived today.
- 3.4 The Park Place and Temple Combe Registered Park and Garden is recorded by Historic England (Register entry). It is associated with the main house and its designed landscape and includes areas of open parkland, woodland and designed features. Subsequent agricultural use and the introduction of a golf course in the mid-1980s altered parts of the historic landscape and resulted in the loss of some original character in places; however, the estate’s overall historic framework and key areas of significance remain appreciable.
- 3.5 The most sensitive and significant part of the Registered Park and Garden is generally understood to include “Happy Valley”, extending south from Park Place to the Thames, which contains a number of designated features (including listed structures). By contrast, the application site lies within the northern part of the estate, in an area already characterised by established equestrian buildings and associated infrastructure.

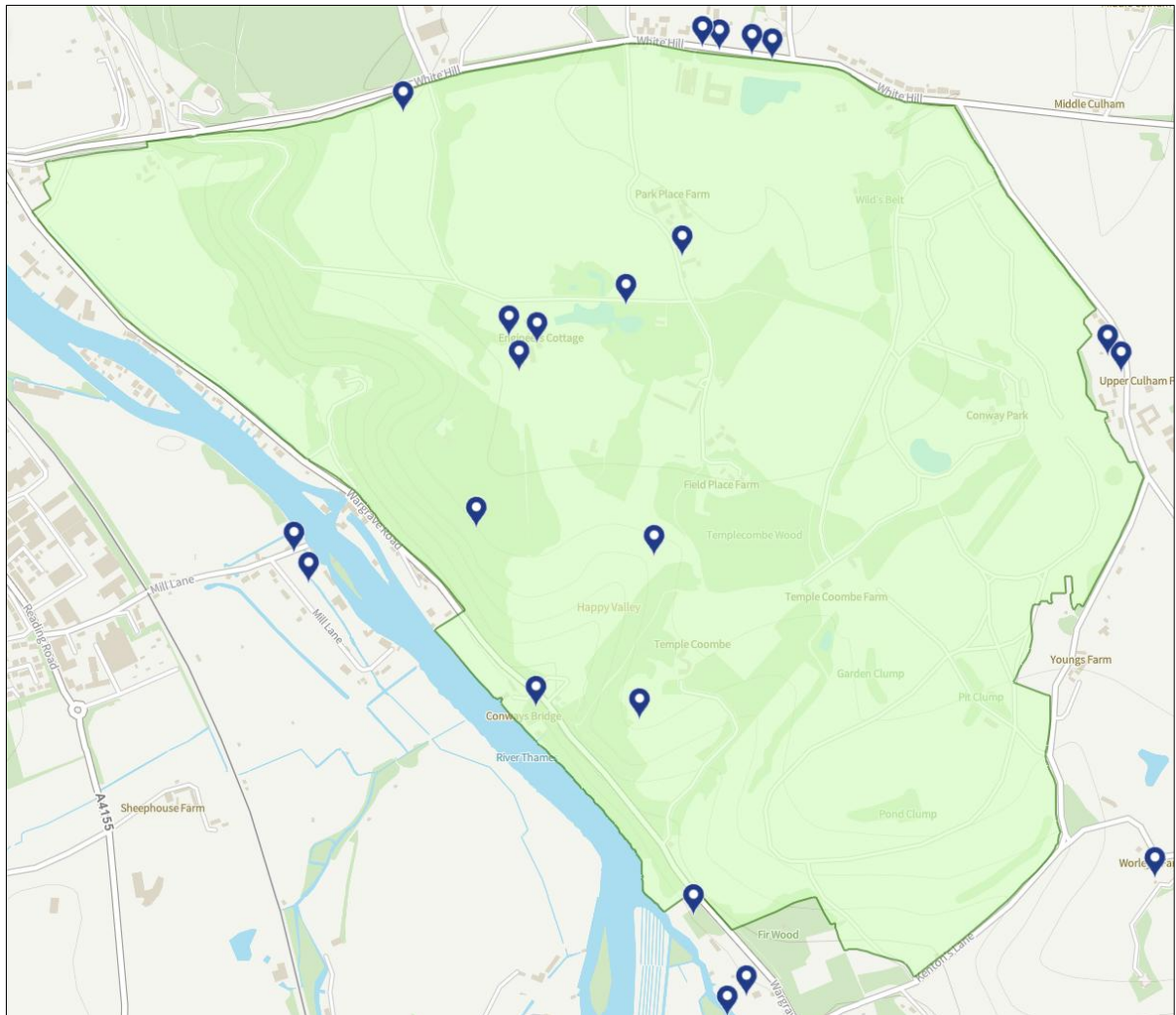


Fig. 5 – Map showing location of listed buildings within / around the RPG (Park Place / Malmsbury Estate is shown edged blue)

- 3.6 In heritage terms, the key considerations are the contribution the site makes to the significance of the Registered Park and Garden through its landscape character and the way it is experienced. The application site is not publicly accessible and there are no public rights of way within the estate. Views towards the application site are limited and filtered by existing vegetation along the A4130 corridor and by the established pattern of equestrian development in this part of the estate.
- 3.7 The estate has experienced a number of changes in use during the 20th and 21st centuries, including agriculture, a golf course and, more recently, equestrian and polo-related activity. These more recent changes have informed the character of the northern area of the estate. The proposal relates to the retention of grooms accommodation within an existing, previously approved equestrian building and does not introduce new built form or a new domestic presence into areas of open historic parkland.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 The estate has a lengthy and complex planning history. Park Place was in use as a residential school until 1988 and then the premises lay vacant. Following the grant of planning and listed building consent in 2007, permission was granted for it to be restored to a single country dwelling.

Application ref:	Description:	Decision / Date:
062150	Proposed change of use of residential school to residential dwelling with ancillary accommodation.	Approved; 13 April 2007

- 4.2 Around the same time, as part of a wider masterplan to improve and enhance neglected parts of the estate, permission was sought to consolidate a number of existing residential dwellings within the estate, including the erection of 5 new dwellings (in exchange for the demolition of 8 dwellings).

081224	Outline application for the demolition of 8 dwellings and erection of 5 new dwellings. Change of use of 3 dwellings to form 2 boathouses and guest accommodation. Conversion of 2 dwellings to form 1 dwelling. Alterations to the barns and the bungalow to form a single residential unit plus alterations and extensions to existing buildings	Approved; 09 December 2008
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- 4.3 This was followed by the submission of a reserved matters application for one of the 5 new dwellings (known as Aspect West – New Dairy Farm), which was renewed in 2013.

101748	Reserved Matters application on outline consent O/2008/1353 for the erection of one dwelling (Aspect West – New Dairy Farm) Reserved Matters to be considered for the siting, design (including floorspace, height massing, internal layout & external appearance), access and landscaping.	Approved; 4 August 2010
130981	Application to extend implementation date for planning consent RM/2010/1243 for a further 3 years (Reserved Matters application on outline consent O/2008/1353 for the erection of one dwelling (Aspect West- New Dairy Farm) Reserved Matters to be considered for the siting, design (including floorspace, height massing, internal layout & external appearance), access and landscaping.)	Approved; 24 July 2013

- 4.4 A series of planning permissions were granted for stables and equestrian facilities that would become the Park Place Stables complex:

140620	Proposed change of use of land for construction of a temporary riding arena for a period of 12 months	Approved: 08 April 2014
141560	Proposed erection of a new barn to include equestrian use.	Approved: 21 November 2014
172271	Full application for the construction of an oval horse walker	Approved: 23 November 2017

- 4.5 In December 2016, planning permission was granted for the creation of a polo facility for private use, comprising of a polo field, exercise track, stable block, all weather practice area, summer pavilion and widening of existing access onto A4130 on land to the south and east of the appeal site. A large part of the site was previously used as a golf course.

162288	Full application for the proposed creation of a polo facility for private use, comprising of a polo field, exercise track, stable block, all weather practice area, summer pavilion and widening of existing access onto A4130.	Approved: 08 December 2016
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- 4.6 The polo facility was built out during 2017 / 2018. In 2018, planning permission was refused for the demolition of an existing outbuilding and replacement with grooms accommodation with a players gym, and also a new American barn and permanent outdoor arena. Both decisions were the subject of a joint appeal, which was determined in March 2020.

182327	Full planning application for the proposed erection of grooms accommodation with a players gym following the demolition of existing outbuilding.	Refused: 16 Nov 2018 Appeal dismissed; 11 March 2020
182524	Full planning permission for the erection of a stable (consisting of 24 boxes, tack room, feed room and storage) with outdoor area.	Refused: 19 December 2014 Appeal dismissed; 11 March 2020

4.7 A series of lawful development certificate applications were submitted in 2024 / 2025, after a number of a number of items and structures were identified by the LPA as either being unauthorised or at variance to the permissions granted during the appeal. Lawful development certificates have been granted in each case (in one instance a split decision was issued).

250527	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for a metal framed barn clad with green profile sheeting, used to store hay and feed.	Approved; 29 April 2025
250526	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for an agricultural building.	Approved; 12 May 2025
242605	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for an open fronted shed.	Approved; 31 March 2025
250370	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for building operations comprising 5 no. linked portacabins (Portacabin A) and a shed on the land	Split decision - Portacabins A and shed Granted; 18 Feb 2025
242612	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for a change of use to form groom's residential accommodation.	Approved; 20 Dec 2024
242629	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the erection of a building, raised paved terrace and hard paving.	Approved 18 Dec 2024
242628	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the erection of 4no. marquee frames and associated hardstanding	Approved 11 Dec 2024
242606	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for additional gravel tracks, asphalt driveway, pavilion parking area and rubberised matting link way.	Approved 09 Dec 2024
242597	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the erection of 10no. wooden stable buildings (comprising a total of 24no. individual stables), concrete enclosure and timber shed.	Approved 09 Dec 2024
242603	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the installation of a sewage treatment plant and power unit.	Approved 05 Dec 2024
242602	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the erection of a pump house building	Approved 05 Dec 2024

242607	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the erection of 2 no. pony lines	Approved 29 Nov 2024
242596	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the construction of 2 no. viewing mounds.	Approved 29 Nov 2024

4.8 Planning permission has recently been granted for the retention of an additional row of stables.

251400	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. triple unit, 3 no. double units and 1 no. single unit stables (retrospective)	Approved 1 August 2025
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Other relevant planning history

4.9 There have been several applications for seasonal worker accommodation within Wokingham Borough which have been approved under similar circumstances. This includes:

- Land at Grade Meadow where planning permission was granted for seasonal accommodation for a groom in 2009, as part of a polo facility (see application reference F/2008/2742).
- Planning permission for seasonal accommodation was also permitted at Broadacre Place polo facility (under reference F/2009/1060) in 2009.

4.10 Another example of seasonal workers accommodation, albeit in connection with an agricultural enterprisem was granted at Manor Farm, Lower Sandhurst Road, Finchampstead. This allowed for the use of an agricultural barn for two caravans to house seasonal workers and was approved in 2012 (under planning permission F/2012/0039).

5.0 THE 2020 APPEAL SCHEME

- 5.1 The 2020 appeal related to two schemes (A & B). Appeal A concerned the refusal of planning application 182327 for the *demolition of an existing outbuilding and replacement with grooms accommodation with a players gym* on 03/09/2018. The appeal was dismissed on 11.03.2020 (see **Appendix 2**). The appeal scheme proposed a new larger replacement building on the site of a storage building to provide 10 grooms bedrooms and a gymnasium.
- 5.2 During the course of the appeal, the argument for the proposed groom's accommodation was based on the principle of an essential need requirement for a private enterprise, not on the basis of financial stability of the polo facility.
- 5.3 The Planning Inspector identified the main issue for consideration as being "*the effect upon the significance of the RPG and various listed buildings and whether any harm would be outweighed by any public benefits*" and the new building was considered to "*erode the historic open character of the parkland and the increase in activity would further diminish the tranquillity of this designed landscape*" and in combination with the proposed removal of several trees would "*harm the significance of the RPG and conflict with the provisions of MDD policy TB24*".
- 5.4 In terms of the 'Public benefits', the Inspector acknowledged at para 43 of the appeal decision that the proposed groom's accommodation "*would allow more staff to reside on site and supervise and care for the increasing number of horses that would be stabled. **Ensuring the safety and welfare of animals is capable of being a public benefit.** However, notwithstanding the appellants' equestrian / essential need argument, **the groom's accommodation would be a considerable distance from the stables and I am unconvinced that 10 additional staff residing on site would be necessary***" (authors emphasis). The accommodation was calculated by the LPA as being approx. 600m from the existing stables. During the course of the appeal the Inspector was made aware of some existing grooms accommodation, which is now subject of this application, but which did not form part of the appeal scheme and noted "*the LPA has informed me that **there is an existing administration and accommodation block much closer to the stables***" and then concluded the proposed grooms accommodation "*would not deliver any meaningful public benefit arising from animal safety or welfare or essential functional need*".
- 5.5 Under the 'Other Matters' section of the appeal decision, the Inspector criticised the location of the proposed new building in respect of the impact on the Green Belt. At paragraphs 50 and 51, the Inspector states:

“The construction of a new building/provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport within the GB is one of the specified exceptions to inappropriate development within the GB, as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the GB and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This could include a building for grooms accommodation with a polo players gym.”

*“However, I struggle to understand how a new building (appeal A) with space for 10 grooms bedrooms, to be occupied by staff working on a seasonal basis and ‘remote’ from the stables, would be appropriate facilities for the permitted polo use” and at para 52 commented “I share the concerns of the LPA over the appropriateness of a building to accommodate so many grooms, especially when some already appear to be living alongside the existing stables. I note the findings in the appeal decisions relied upon by the appellants. However, none are directly comparable to the situation before me with significantly smaller grooms facilities allowed elsewhere on land within the GB and seemingly, in locations **closer to stables**”.*

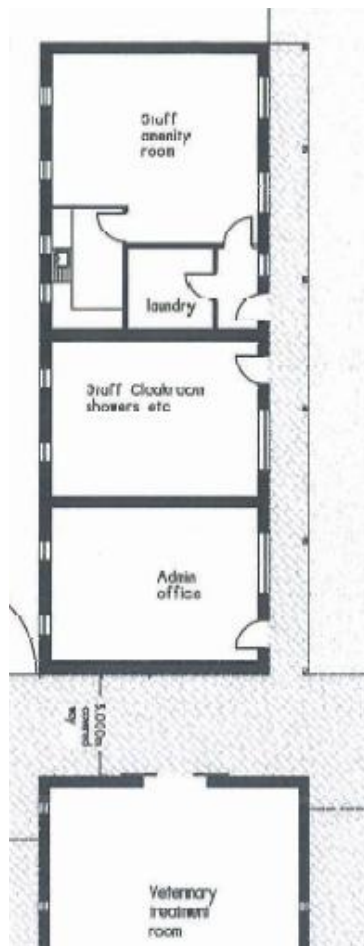
5.6 The inspector concluded at paragraph 57 that the proposed building for the grooms accommodation and gym (appeal A) *“would, by virtue of its size and siting, be at odds with the open qualities and wooded parkland character of this part of the ‘Arable Chalk Plateau’ landscape character type I 7. Whilst there would be limited views of this building, it would appear as a discordant addition to the landscape and at odds with the LPA’s published landscape strategy, which carries moderate weight. It would detract from the quality of the local environment and conflict with CS policy CPI 1 (countryside) and MDD policy 21 (landscape character)”* and at para 61 that *“If the harm to the character and appearance of the area were to be placed into the GB balance along with the other ‘harms’ that I have identified (GB and designated heritage assets), the other considerations advanced in support of the proposals, including the public benefits and the equine/sporting needs, would not clearly outweigh the totality of the harm so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposals. The proposed developments (both appeals) conflict with the provision of the Framework for safeguarding the GB, as well as CS policy CPI 2 and MDD policy TB01”.*

5.7 In summary, the appeal was dismissed because the Inspector found that the proposed replacement grooms’ accommodation and gym would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden at Park Place and also constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, with neither harm outweighed by public benefits. It was felt the proposed building would have introduced a more domestic and intensive use into an area of historic open parkland, eroding both its openness and tranquillity. This impact was compounded by the loss and alteration of boundary trees. Importantly, the improvements to horse welfare, staff supervision, estate management and the contribution to the local economy were noted as benefits of the scheme.

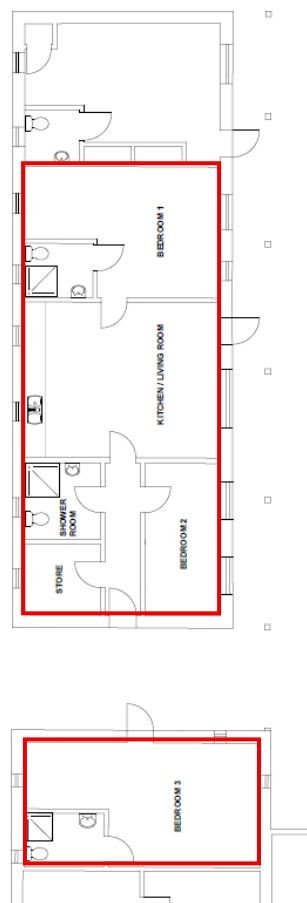
- 5.8 In terms of this proposal, this is very different to the case put forward under application 182327 and appeal APP/X0360/W/19/3224323, but still provides the benefits identified as part of that appeal. The applicant is seeking to retain the existing grooms facilities within an existing approved structure, which forms part of the existing quadrangle stable block and do not necessitate the requirement for new built form across the RPG.
- 5.9 Since the appeal decision 2020, the number of horses on-site has also increased and the ancillary equestrian facilities across the polo facility have either been granted planning permission or become regularised and confirmed as lawful/immune from enforcement action.

6.0 PROPOSAL

- 6.1 The proposal is for the retention of grooms accommodation consisting of a permanent unit of accommodation and four seasonal units accommodation. Minor alterations to remove an internal wall are required to ensure the accommodation meets HMO licencing requirements in terms of bedroom sizes and maximum that can be retained.
- 6.2 The accommodation is located in part of the quadrangle stable block originally permitted as a laundry area, staff cloakroom, admin office and veterinary treatment room under planning permission 162288.
- 6.3 When the building was constructed in early 2018, minor changes were made to the approved internal and external configuration of the building to facilitate the provision of staff accommodation. The accommodation is proposed to be laid out as shown in the extract below:

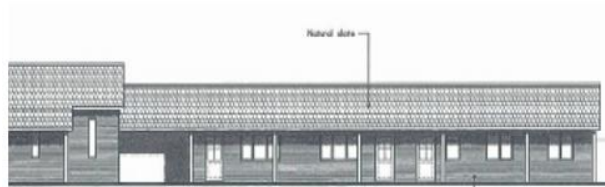


Floor plan as approved under 162288

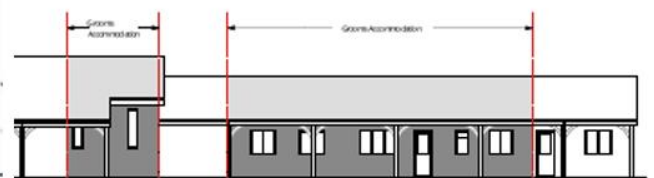


Proposed floor plans

- 6.4 Internally, the overall GIA of the accommodation measures 102.2 sqm. This includes two double bedrooms and a single bedroom, shared kitchen, living area and wc/shower room. Bedrooms 1 and 2 are accessed from a. The double bedrooms have an ensuite bathroom and there is also a shared. The accommodation is contained within a permanent structure of a scale comparable to, though slightly smaller than, a typical essential worker dwelling. It is also designed to accommodate seasonal occupancy, thereby providing a dual functional use.
- 6.5 An ancillary admin office is now located to the north of the bedroom 1 of the grooms accommodation, and a veterinary room, albeit smaller in size than originally proposed, remains to the south of bedroom 3. These facilities are accessed separately to the grooms accommodation.
- 6.6 Externally, there have been some minor adjustments to the location of the proposed doors and windows. On the eastern (front) elevation there are now two as opposed to three doors, one to serve the grooms accommodation and one to serve the admin office. There is one additional window in place of one of the doors (see below).

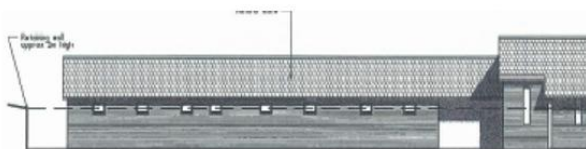


East (front) elevation as approved under 162288



East (front) elevation 'as built'

- 6.7 On the western (rear) elevation five of the eight previously proposed small higher-level windows have been elongated in size:



West (rear) elevation as approved under 162288



West (rear) elevation 'as built'

- 6.8 No changes to the length, width, height and overall massing or volume of this section of the quadrangle stable block have occurred.
- 6.9 Access to the building remains as approved under permission 162288 from the main entrance on the A4130.

- 6.10 The proposed grooms' accommodation is positioned south of the access track well-screened boundary planting to the north, which runs parallel with the A4130 along Remenham Hill providing a buffer along the northern extents of the property.

7.0 POLICY

- 7.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that when determining planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should base their assessment on policies contained within the adopted Development Plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted development plan for the area in which the application site is located comprises the Core Strategy (2010) Managing Development Delivery (2014) and the Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (2023), but it is the Local Plan that is pertinent.
- 7.2 Other material considerations in this instance are considered to include the policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the advice contained in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the advice in the National Design Guide.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 7.3 The following table summarises the key elements of the Framework relevant to this submission:

Section 1 – Achieving Sustainable Development	
The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development	Para 7
Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives). These are economic, social and environmental objectives	Para 8
Section 4 – Decision making	
Planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.	Para 39
Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes	
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;	Para 84
Section 6 - Building a strong, competitive economy	

Planning policies and decision should enable: a) The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, including through conversion of existing buildings; b) The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses; c) Sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that respect the character of the countryside; and d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.	Para 88
Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places	
The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work	Para 131
Planning decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.	Para 135
Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land	
When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.	Para 153
Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies: b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, 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;	Para 154
Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	
The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including trees and woodland;	Para 187

d) minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.	
Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	
In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.	Para 207
Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.	Para 208
In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;	Para 210
When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.	Para 212
Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of: a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.	Para 213
Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.	Para 215

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Guidance

- 7.4 Guidance on the NPPF is provided in the Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 67-010-20190722). The updated text relevant to paragraph 84 (then paragraph 79a as published in July 2019) states:

“Considerations that it may be relevant to take into account when applying paragraph 79a (now paragraph 84) 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....”*

Development Plan

- 7.5 The development plan comprises:

- **Core Strategy (CS)** – Adopted Jan 2010
- **Managing Development Delivery (MDD)** – Adopted Feb 2014

- 7.6 The most relevant development plan policies from the CS are:

- CP1 – Sustainable development
- CP3 – General Principles for Development
- CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements
- CP6 – Managing Travel Demand
- CP7 – Biodiversity
- CP9 – Scale and location of development proposals

- CPI1 – Proposals outside Development Limits
- CPI2 – Green Belt

7.7 The most relevant development plan policies from the MDD are:

- CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC02 – Development limits
- CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
- CC04 – Sustainable Design and construction
- CC06 – Noise
- CC07 – Parking
- CC09 – Development and Flood Risk
- CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
- TB07 – Internal Space Standards
- TB23 – Biodiversity and development
- TB01: Development within the Green Belt
- TB02: Development adjoining the Green Belt
- TB23: Biodiversity and Development
- TB24: Designated Heritage Assets

7.8 Policy TB24 does not include the ‘public benefits’ balance contained within section 16 of the Framework. This therefore reduces the weight to be given to any conflict with the policy.

7.9 Policy CPI2 and TB01 were based on the now cancelled PPG2 and an earlier version of the Framework. In the context of these appeals, this reduces (to a limited extent) the weight to be given to any conflict with these policies.

Emerging Policy

7.10 In terms of emerging policy, work is underway on the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023–2040 – which will put in place a new planning strategy for the period to 2040. Once adopted, it will replace the current Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery local plans. The Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040: Proposed Submission Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent Planning Inspector on Friday 28 February 2025. However, no date has been set for examination (at the time of writing, the Council were responding to the

inspectors Initial Questions and on 12 May had asked for more time to respond). As such, only little weight can be given to the emerging plan at this stage. The adopted Development plan therefore continues to carry full weight. The following emerging policies are considered relevant:

- Policy ER3: Supporting the rural economy
- Policy SS6: Development in the Green Belt
- Policy H5: Rural workers' dwellings
- Policy DH7: Equestrian development

8.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) require applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are other material considerations, the development plan should be the starting point and other material considerations must be taken into account in reaching a decision. In other words, the system is designed such that it can be applied flexibly where policy conflict arises if those material considerations are sufficient to override policy.
- 8.2 The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through into the local Development Plan. As highlighted, some of the policies in the Development Plan are out of date with the latest version of the NPPF and therefore attract less weight.
- 8.3 The Framework is an important material consideration to which significant weight should be attached and provides a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In this context it mentions that good planning is a positive and proactive process and makes clear that decision makers should not be rigid in their approach to considering applications.
- 8.4 Whilst the 2020 appeal was dismissed in relation to the provision of grooms' accommodation (Appeal A), the reason for it being dismissed was due to the perceived harm of the proposed replacement building on the openness of the Green Belt and the significance of the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden. The public benefits put forward were insufficient to outweigh this harm or constitute very special circumstances. This proposal would utilise an existing building for grooms' accommodation, the design and location of which has previously been approved by the council and so the issues concerning the perceived harm openness of the Green Belt and to the significance of the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden have now been addressed.
- 8.5 This application would provide material planning benefits including improvements to horse welfare, staff supervision, estate management and continued contribution to the local economy. The accommodation would be ancillary to the private recreational use of the Park Place Polo facility as a whole. Augmenting the existing equestrian facilities is therefore considered to be an appropriate approach to take, given the outcome of the previous appeal decision.

Principle of development

- 8.6 The proposal falls to be assessed against the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (adopted January 2010), in particular Policies CPI1 (Development in the Countryside) and CPI2 (Green Belt), together with relevant policies of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, including TB01 (Development within the Green Belt), TB02 (Development adjoining the Green Belt) and TB24 (Designated Heritage Assets). These policies collectively seek to safeguard countryside character, the openness of the Green Belt, high standards of design and the significance of heritage assets, while allowing development that is appropriately justified, sensitively designed and capable of being effectively controlled.
- 8.7 The proposal must also be considered in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which supports the sustainable use of existing buildings in rural areas and allows exceptions to general restraint where development is necessary to support rural enterprises and does not give rise to unacceptable harm.
- 8.8 The current proposal must be considered in the local and national planning policy context and in regard to the role it plays in association with the successful functioning of the existing lawful use of the site as a polo facility.
- 8.9 Policy CPI1 supports rural enterprises and countryside-based activities and the retention of the grooms' accommodation is supported by this policy as it utilises an existing building that forms part of the wider polo enterprise. Paragraph 4.58 of the policy commentary notes that proposals for agricultural workers' dwellings must demonstrate compliance with this policy and PPS7. However, as PPS7 was revoked in 2012, the relevant national guidance is now found in paragraph 84 of Section 5 (*Delivering a sufficient supply of homes*) of the NPPF. This assessment section will explain how the proposal meets criteria a) of this paragraph as it has been demonstrated that there is an essential need for rural workers to live at Park Place. Paragraph 88 of Section 6 of the NPPF supports business investment and growth. The retention of the permanent unit of accommodation and four seasonal units of grooms' accommodation will support the ongoing operation and growth of the polo facility, which aligns with the objectives of this paragraph.
- 8.10 It is important to note that in previous applications for grooms in connection with other polo facilities across the district, the importance of demonstrating the value of the ponies and investment in such types of equestrian businesses was highlighted as distinguishing polo operations from general equestrian use, even though tests under Annex A to PPS7 applied.

- 8.11 The proposal seeks to retain the permanent unit of accommodation and four seasonal units of grooms accommodation within an existing, previously approved building at Park Place and does not involve the erection of a new building, mobile home or standalone dwelling in the countryside. The physical presence of the building in its current location is therefore established and accepted in principle. No new built form is proposed in the countryside or Green Belt; this is a key policy consideration.
- 8.12 Whilst the accommodation is located within a permanent structure, the overall GIA is slightly below that of a typical essential need dwelling. It would not, therefore, be unreasonable for a unit of this size to be made available solely to a permanent worker. Nevertheless, the majority of the accommodation is proposed to be restricted to seasonal occupation (i.e. mid/late February to mid/late August, corresponding with the UK polo season) and is directly linked to the operational requirements of the polo facility, when horse numbers on site increase.
- 8.13 While seasonal occupation within a permanent structure may be less common, it is a well-established and accepted planning mechanism, akin to use of permanent buildings for tourism or holiday accommodation. In such cases, planning authorities routinely control the lawful use and period of occupation through conditions, rather than seeking temporary physical structures. In this respect, it is considered the seasonal aspect of the proposal can be sufficiently controlled through the imposition of a suitably worded planning condition to limit the occupation to equestrian workers only and to the months of mid/late Feb to mid/late August in the calendar period and to prevent the use of this area of the building as a separate dwelling.
- 8.14 This approach would ensure that no permanent residential use is created in policy terms, notwithstanding the permanence of the building, and that the objectives of CPI 1, CPI 2 and Green Belt policies are therefore met.

Need

- 8.15 The permanent unit of accommodation and four seasonal units' accommodation sought to be retained are directly linked to the functional requirements of managing the large number of polo ponies that are stabled on the site, as set out in the supporting appraisal by Bruton Knowles. It explains the daily routine of grooms, the typical working day and why it is essential in the interests of horse welfare for the grooms to be on-site. The horses require close supervision, rapid response to injury or illness, and consistent welfare management during the active season.

- 8.16 Locating accommodation within an existing building close to the existing stables and facilities allows these needs to be met in the most operationally effective manner and reduces unnecessary travel to and from the site. The proposal therefore accords with the Core Strategy's wider sustainability objectives.

Design and landscape impacts

- 8.17 Policy CPI2 requires development to demonstrate a high standard of design, to respond positively to its context, and to make efficient use of land and buildings. The proposal meets these requirements by utilising an existing building in a manner that is wholly consistent with its rural setting and associated equestrian use. The accommodation would be provided entirely within an existing building, the presence, scale and form of which is already accepted in principle by the Council.
- 8.18 Policy CPI1 supports development that is appropriate to the countryside and does not unacceptably harm its character or appearance. Likewise, Policies TB01 and TB02 place strong emphasis on maintaining Green Belt openness and preventing encroachment. The re-use of an existing building for accommodation purposes fully accords with these objectives, as it results in no increase in built form and therefore no loss of openness or encroachment into undeveloped land.
- 8.19 The accommodation is physically attached to, and forms part of, the quadrangle stable block where many stables are located and it is also in close proximity to the freestanding rows of stable blocks. It is therefore read in the context of those existing equestrian buildings, without causing sprawl into the countryside and limits any impact on landscape character. Utilising this wing allows for efficient functionality of the polo facility and continued surveillance. This is important for the future of the facility and the continued success of the polo team.
- 8.20 Paragraph 6.7 of the LPA Additional Statement submitted as part of the 2020 appeal APP/X0360/W/19/3224323 stated the application site *"is a more practical location than that proposed"*. The proposal therefore represents a preferable alternative (as indicated by the outcome of appeal APP/X0360/W/19/3224323) to the introduction of a mobile homes or new structures and therefore aligns with the underlying purposes of Green Belt policy by making efficient use of an existing resource without undermining openness.
- 8.21 The development would not alter the character of the building or its relationship to the surrounding landscape. The proposal therefore avoids the introduction of any suburbanising features and maintains the agricultural and equestrian character of the site.

- 8.22 Utilising the existing wing of the quadrangle stable block as opposed to constructing new accommodation represents a more efficient and sustainable use of the existing building in accordance with the design principles set out in CPI2 and paras, 125 and 154 of the NPPF. The proposal makes use of an underutilised area of the building and limits harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Heritage Impacts

- 8.23 Policy TB24 seeks to ensure that development preserves the significance and setting of designated heritage assets. The proposal has no adverse impact on any designated heritage asset or its setting. As the development utilises an existing building, with no material change to its external appearance or spatial relationship with its surroundings, the significance of any nearby heritage assets is preserved.
- 8.24 Overall, there would be no harm to the significance, character or setting of heritage assets, and the proposal fully complies with the requirements of Policy TB24 and the heritage objectives of the NPPF. **In particular, the proposal preserves the significance of the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden and the setting of nearby listed buildings and therefore results in no heritage harm in NPPF terms.**

Impact on amenity

- 8.25 The accommodation is a sufficient distance from nearby neighbouring residential properties and therefore there are no adverse impacts on amenity.

Highway issues

- 8.26 The accommodation is served by a main access point from Remenham Hill. Occupiers park in the main car park to the north of the existing quadrangle stable block. The accommodation allows for reduced vehicle movements to the site and minimising highways impacts arising from the proposal.

Ecology

- 8.27 The building within which the accommodation is located is existing and no new built form is proposed. The scheme is therefore unlikely to impact on biodiversity. The building itself is relatively recent and is well maintained and would therefore have a low/negligible potential to support roosting bats. There are not changes proposed to the exterior of the building or to its roof.
- 8.28 As the application is retrospective, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) does not apply to the development.
- 8.29 The applicant would be prepared to implement new planting to encourage new habitats to attract wildlife and promote opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancements as encouraged by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local plan policy TB23.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This statement demonstrates how the polo facility at Park Place maintains the need for permanent unit of accommodation and four seasonal units accommodation and the continued on-site presence of those grooms at certain times during the calendar year. Planning permission for the grooms accommodation is justified given the commitment of the applicant to grow and invest in the polo facility and the number of horses present on site throughout the year as verified by the accompanying appraisal by Bruton Knowles. The proposal represents an appropriate form of development for the context in accordance with policies CPI1 and CPI2 of the Core Strategy, Policies TB01, TB02 and TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery Plan, and the NPPF.
- 9.2 The retention of the grooms accommodation will preserve an existing polo facility and allow it to continue to operate on a sustainable basis. The proposal will continue to bring economic and social benefits to the locality while having minimal impact on the environment due to its sustainable location, design and low-key nature.
- 9.3 The scheme makes efficient use of an existing building, avoids additional encroachment into the countryside, the RPG and Green Belt, achieves a high standard of design by preserving existing landscape character, the setting of nearby heritage assets and provides accommodation that is necessary for the proper operation of a rural enterprise.
- 9.4 The seasonal nature of four of the five units of grooms accommodation to be retained can be clearly and effectively controlled through planning conditions, in a manner comparable to tourist accommodation. There is no unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties and no adverse effect on the safety and function of the local highway network.
- 9.5 Accordingly, the proposal accords comply with local and national planning policy and it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.

APPENDIX ONE

PARK PLACE POLO TEAM

TOURNAMENT HISTORY

2016

Handicap	Dates	Tournament	Country	Location	Placing
8 Goal	03/06/2016 - 26/06/2016	The Archie David Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	League Stages
12 Goal	23/06/2016 - 10/07/2016	The Phoenician Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Subsidiary Finalist
12 Goal	12/07/2016 - 24/07/2016	Emsworth Gold Cup	UK	Emsworth Polo Club	Semi Finalist
12 Goal	30/07/2016 - 14/08/2016	The Duke of Wellington Trophy	UK	Guards Polo Club	Semi Finalist
10 Goal	17/08/2016 - 03/09/2016	The President's Trophy	UK	Guards Polo Club	Winner - Final
12 Goal	25/08/2016 - 11/09/2016	The Autumn Nations Trophy	UK	Guards Polo Club	League Stages

2017

Handicap	Dates	Tournament	Country	Location	Placing
12 Goal	11/01/2017 - 28/01/2017	The Limited Edition 12 Goal Series	USA	Grand Champions Polo Club	League Stages
15 Goal	05/05/2017 - 21/05/2017	The Queen Mother Centenary Trophy	UK	Guards Polo Club	Winner - Subsidiary Final
18 Goal	22/05/2017 - 11/06/2017	The Duke of Sutherland Trophy	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Finalist
15 Goal	06/06/2017 - 25/06/2017	The Royal Windsor Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Winner - Final
18 Goal	13/06/2017 - 02/07/2017	The Apsley Cup	UK	Cirencester Park Polo Club	Winner - Final
18 Goal	04/07/2017 - 22/07/2017	The Indian Empire Shield	UK	Guards Polo Club	Semi Finalist
18 Goal	24/07/2017 - 06/08/2017	The Cowdray Challenge Trophy	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Winner - Final
16 Goal	05/08/2017 - 27/08/2017	The Duke of Cornwall Trophy	UK	Guards Polo Club	Winner - Final
12 Goal	30/08/2017 - 17/09/2017	The Autumn Nations Trophy	UK	Guards Polo Club	Finalist
24 Goal	Nov-17	Campana del Desierto	Argentina	Argentine Polo Association	Winner - Final

2018

Handicap	Dates	Tournament	Country	Location	Placing
15 Goal	04/05/2018 - 20/05/2018	The Queen Mother Centenary Trophy	UK	Guards Polo Club	Semi Finalist
18 Goal	21/05/2018 - 10/06/2018	The Duke of Sutherland Trophy	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Semi Finalist
22 Goal	22/05/2018 - 17/06/2018	The Queen's Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Finalist
15 Goal	05/06/2018 - 24/06/2018	The Royal Windsor Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Finalist
22 Goal	26/06/2018 - 22/07/2018	The Gold Cup for the British Open Championships	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Quarter Finalist
18 Goal	03/07/2018 - 21/07/2018	The Indian Empire Shield	UK	Guards Polo Club	Semi Finalist
18 Goal	23/07/2018 - 05/08/2018	The Cowdray Challenge Trophy	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Semi Finalist
16 Goal	04/08/2018 - 26/08/2018	The Duke of Cornwall Trophy	UK	Guards Polo Club	Winner - Final
22 Goal	Nov-18	Ellerstina Gold Cup	Argentina	Ellerstina Polo Club	Finalist

2019

Handicap	Dates	Tournament	Country	Location	Placing
22 Goal	13/02/2019 - 24/02/2019	C.V. Whitney Cup	USA	International Polo Club Palm Beach	Quarter Final
22 Goal	24/02/2019 - 24/03/2019	USPA Gold Cup	USA	International Polo Club Palm Beach	Sub Semi Final
22 Goal	27/03/2019 - 21/04/2019	USPA US Open Polo Championship	USA	International Polo Club Palm Beach	League Stages
22 Goal	08/05/2019 - 18/05/2019	The Prince of Wales Trophy	UK	Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club	League Stages
22 Goal	21/05/2019 - 16/06/2019	The Queen's Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Finalist
22 Goal	25/06/2019 - 21/07/2019	The Gold Cup for the British Open Championships	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Semi Finalist
Junior U14	08/07/2019 - 08/08/2019	British Junior Polo Championships	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Winner - Final
16 Goal	03/08/2019 - 25/08/2019	The Duke of Cornwall Trophy	UK	Guards Polo Club	Winner - Final

2020

Handicap	Dates	Tournament	Country	Location	Placing
22 Goal	01/02/2020 - 23/02/2020	C.V. Whitney Cup	USA	International Polo Club Palm Beach	League Stages
22 Goal	22/02/2020 - 22/03/2020	USPA Gold Cup	USA	International Polo Club Palm Beach	Cancelled
22 Goal	21/03/2020 - 19/04/2020	USPA US Open Polo Championship	USA	International Polo Club Palm Beach	Cancelled
22 Goal	12/06/2020 - 24/06/2020	The Prince of Wales Trophy	UK	Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club	Winner
22 Goal	01/07/2020 - 26/07/2020	Park Place: The Gold Cup for the British Open Championships	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Semi Finalist
22 Goal	28/07/2020 - 23/08/2020	Park Place: The Queen's Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Finalist
16 Goal	01/09/2020 - 20/09/2020	The Duke of Cornwall Trophy	UK	Guards Polo Club	Finalist
22 Goal	01/07/2020 - 26/07/2020	Park Place Vaara: The Gold Cup for the British Open Championships	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Semi Finalist
22 Goal	28/07/2020 - 23/08/2020	Park Place Vaara: The Queen's Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	League Stages
Ladies 18 Goal	23/06/2020 - 28/06/2020	Ladies 18 Goal: Black Bears	UK	Black Bears Polo Club	Winner
Ladies 18 Goal	08/07/2020 - 19/07/2020	Ladies 18 Goal: Cowdray Park	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Finalist
Ladies 18 Goal	18/08/2020 - 31/08/2020	Ladies 18 Goal: Guards	UK	Guards Polo Club	Finalist

2021

Handicap	Dates	Tournament	Country	Location	Placing
22 Goal	17/02/2021 - 07/03/2021	C.V. Whitney Cup	USA	International Polo Club Palm Beach	Won
22 Goal	10/03/2021 - 28/03/2021	USPA Gold Cup	USA	International Polo Club Palm Beach	Semi Finalist
22 Goal	31/03/2021 - 18/04/2021	USPA US Open Polo Championship	USA	International Polo Club Palm Beach	Finalist
22 Goal	19/05/2021 - 29/05/2021	The Prince of Wales Trophy	UK	Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club	League Stages
22 Goal	01/06/2021 - 27/06/2021	The Queen's Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Quarter Finalist
22 Goal	29/06/2021 - 25/07/2021	The Gold Cup for the British Open Championships	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Quarter Finalist
22 Goal	01/08/2021 - 22/08/2021	The Prince of Wales Championship Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Won
Ladies 18 Goal	15/06/2021 - 27/06/2021	Ladies 18 Goal: Black Bears	UK	Black Bears Polo Club	Finalist
Ladies 18 Goal	06/07/2021 - 17/07/2021	Ladies 18 Goal: Cowdray Park	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Semi Finalist
Ladies 22 Goal	20/07/2021 - 28/07/2021	Ladies 22 Goal: Cortium	UK	Cortium Sports Polo Club	Finalist
Ladies 18 Goal	17/08/2021 - 28/08/2021	Ladies 18 Goal: Guards	UK	Guards Polo Club	Semi Finalist

2022					
Handicap	Dates	Tournament	Country	Location	Placing
22 Goal	06/02/2022 - 27/02/2022	C.V.Whitney Cup	USA	International Polo Club Palm Beach	Won
22 Goal	01/03/2022 - 27/03/2022	USPA Gold Cup	USA	International Polo Club Palm Beach	Finalist
22 Goal	29/03/2022 - 24/04/2022	USPA US Open Polo Championship	USA	International Polo Club Palm Beach	Semi Finalist
22 Goal	04/05/2022 - 14/05/2022	Park Place: The Prince of Wales Trophy	UK	Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club	League Stages
22 Goal	04/05/2022 - 14/05/2022	Park Place Vaara: The Prince of Wales Trophy	UK	Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club	League Stages
22 Goal	17/06/2022 - 12/06/2022	Park Place: The Queen's Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Semi Finalist
22 Goal	17/06/2022 - 12/06/2022	Park Place Vaara: The Queen's Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Finalist
22 Goal	21/06/2022 - 17/07/2022	Park Place: The Gold Cup for the British Open Championships	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Winner
22 Goal	21/06/2022 - 17/07/2022	Park Place Vaara: The Gold Cup for the British Open Championships	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Quarter Finalist
22 Goal	27/07/2022 - 14/08/2022	The Prince of Wales Championship Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Winner
2023					
Handicap	Dates	Tournament	Country	Location	Placing
22 Goal	12/02/2023 - 26/02/2023	C.V.Whitney Cup	USA	National Polo Center	Semi Finalist
22 Goal	02/03/2023 - 26/03/2023	USPA Gold Cup	USA	National Polo Center	Semi Finalist
22 Goal	28/03/2023 - 24/04/2023	USPA US Open Polo Championship	USA	National Polo Center	Winner
22 Goal	06/05/2023 - 20/05/2023	Park Place: The Prince of Wales Trophy	UK	Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club	Winner
22 Goal	06/05/2023 - 20/05/2023	Park Place Vaara: The Prince of Wales Trophy	UK	Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club	League Stages
22 Goal	23/05/2023 - 18/06/2023	Park Place: The Queen's Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Quarter Finalist
22 Goal	23/05/2023 - 18/06/2023	Park Place Vaara: The Queen's Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	League Stages
22 Goal	27/06/2023 - 23/07/2023	Park Place: The Gold Cup for the British Open Championships	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Semi Finalist
22 Goal	27/06/2023 - 23/07/2023	Park Place Vaara: The Gold Cup for the British Open Championships	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	League Stages
22 Goal	25/07/2023 - 29/07/2023	Park Place: Torneo Internacional de Polo (Bronze Cup)	SPAIN	Ayala Polo Club	N/A
22 Goal	31/07/2023 - 12/08/2023	Park Place: Torneo Internacional de Polo (Silver Cup)	SPAIN	Ayala Polo Club	Winner
22 Goal	14/08/2023 - 26/08/2023	Park Place: Torneo Internacional de Polo (Gold Cup)	SPAIN	Ayala Polo Club	League Stages
2024					
Handicap	Dates	Tournament	Country	Location	Placing
22 Goal	09/02/2024 - 25/02/2024	C.V.Whitney Cup	USA	National Polo Center	Semi Final
22 Goal	23/03/2024 - 24/03/2024	USPA Gold Cup	USA	National Polo Center	Semi Final
22 Goal	22/03/2024 - 21/04/2024	USPA US Open Polo Championship	USA	National Polo Center	League Stages
26 Goal	22/02/2024 - 10/03/2024	The Founders Cup	USA	Grand Champions Polo Club	Winner
26 Goal	06/03/2024 - 23/03/2024	Palm Beach Open	USA	Grand Champions Polo Club	League Stages
26 Goal	20/03/2024 - 13/04/2024	Triple Crown of Polo	USA	Grand Champions Polo Club	Winner
22 Goal	04/05/2024 - 18/05/2024	The Prince of Wales Trophy	UK	Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club	League Stages
22 Goal	21/05/2024 - 16/06/2024	The Queen's Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	League Stages
22 Goal	12/06/2024 - 22/06/2024	The Warwickshire Cup	UK	Cirencester Park Polo Club	League Stages
22 Goal	25/06/2024 - 21/07/2024	The Gold Cup for the British Open Championships	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	League Stages
20 Goal	28/07/2024 - 11/08/2024	The Prince of Wales Championship Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Finalist
18 Goal	07/05/2024 - 19/05/2024	Park Place Vaara: The Oxfordshire Cup	UK	Black Bears Polo Club	League Stages
15 Goal	20/05/2024 - 01/06/2024	Park Place Vaara: The Arthur Lucas Cup	UK	Beaufort Polo Club	Subsidiary Finalist
15 Goal	03/06/2024 - 15/06/2024	Park Place Vaara: Bryan Bethell Cup	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	League Stages
2025					
Handicap	Dates	Tournament	Country	Location	Placing
22 Goal	07/02/2025 - 23/02/2025	C.V.Whitney Cup	USA	National Polo Center	Subsidiary Finalist
22 Goal	24/02/2025 - 23/03/2025	USPA Gold Cup	USA	National Polo Center	Winner
22 Goal	24/03/2025 - 20/04/2025	USPA US Open Polo Championship	USA	National Polo Center	Semi Finalist
22 Goal	03/05/2025 - 17/05/2025	The Prince of Wales Trophy	UK	Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club	League Stages
22 Goal	20/05/2025 - 15/06/2025	The Queen's Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	Winner
22 Goal	24/06/2025 - 20/07/2025	The Gold Cup for the British Open Championships	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	League Stages
15 Goal	19/05/2025 - 31/05/2025	Park Place Vaara: The Arthur Lucas Cup	UK	Beaufort Polo Club	Subsidiary Finalist
15 Goal	02/06/2025 - 14/06/2025	Park Place Vaara: Bryan Bethell Cup	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	Semi Finalist
12 Goal	02/06/2025 - 14/06/2025	Park Place Vaara: The John Prestwich Challenge Trophy	UK	Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club	Subsidiary Finalist
12 Goal	30/06/2025 - 12/07/2025	Park Place Vaara: The Queen Mother Trophy	UK	Cirencester Park Polo Club	League Stages
2026					
Handicap	Dates	Tournament	Country	Location	Placing
22 Goal	27/01/2026 - 07/02/2026	Plyrs Cup	USA	Plyrs Club	Finalist
22 Goal	11/02/2026 - 01/03/2026	C.V.Whitney Cup	USA	National Polo Center	Winner - Sub Final
22 Goal	04/03/2026 - 29/03/2026	USPA Gold Cup	USA	National Polo Center	Quarter Finalist
22 Goal	01/04/2026 - 26/04/2026	USPA US Open Polo Championship	USA	National Polo Center	League Stages
22 Goal	02/05/2026 - 16/05/2026	The Prince of Wales Trophy	UK	Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club	TBC
22 Goal	19/05/2026 - 14/06/2026	The Queen's Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	TBC
22 Goal	23/06/2026 - 19/07/2026	The Gold Cup for the British Open Championships	UK	Cowdray Park Polo Club	TBC
20 Goal	26/07/2026 - 09/08/2026	The Prince of Wales Championship Cup	UK	Guards Polo Club	TBC

APPENDIX TWO



Appeal Decisions

Hearing Held on 11 February 2020

Site visits made on 18 February 2020

by Neil Pope BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 March 2020

Appeal A Ref: APP/X0360/W/19/3224323

Malmesbury Estate, Remenham Hill, Henley-on-Thames, Berks, RG9 3HN.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Rilex International against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council (the LPA).
 - The application Ref. 182327, dated 3/9/18, was refused by notice dated 16/11/18.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of an existing outbuilding and replacement with grooms accommodation with a players gym.
-

Appeal B Ref: APP/X0360/W/19/3224329

Park Place Stables, Remenham Hill, Henley-on-Thames, Berks, RG9 3HN.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Durio Ltd against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. 182524, dated 15/8/18, was refused by notice dated 19/12/18.
 - The development proposed is a new American barn and permanent outdoor arena.
-

Decisions

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal sites lie within the Metropolitan Green Belt (GB) and form part of the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden (RPG) at Park Place, and Temple Combe. They also lie within the settings of various Grade II listed buildings¹. There is a lengthy and rather complex planning history² to this part of the RPG.
3. Although the appeal sites are in separate ownership they are managed jointly by Rilex International Ltd³ and are used by the residents of Park Place house (the Borodin family) for equine purposes. This includes training facilities and stabling to support a high goal polo team.

¹ Including the late 17th century obelisk within the RPG and Remenham House (listed as Remenham Cottage) on the opposite side of the A4130. The provisions of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 are engaged. The LPA has not identified harm to the significance of any listed building.

² This includes a 2008 permission that was subject to a legal agreement and an Integrated Estate Management Plan (IEMP) to restore part of the parkland (ref. O/2008/1353), as well as a 2016 permission for the creation of a polo facility for private use, comprising a polo field, exercise track, stable block, all weather practice area, summer pavilion and widening of an access onto the A4130 on part of a former golf course (ref. 162288). Areas of parkland has subsequently been restored and other polo-related developments have been undertaken. Some do not have planning permission (e.g. temporary stables, viewing mounds, storage sheds/areas) or have not been built in accordance with the approvals (pavilion) or remain after permission has expired (a show jumping arena).

³ On behalf of the appellants, I was informed that Rilex International is the same as Rilex International Ltd.

4. Appeal site A includes a hardsurfaced area that is used for the parking of articulated (horse transport) lorries, as well as pony tethering lines. The 'red line' plans for this part of the site show a smaller hardsurfaced area than has been provided and do not include the pony lines facility⁴. I have determined appeal A on the basis of the details shown on the submitted plans.
5. At the Hearing, I identified five main issues for discussion. One of these⁵ was the effect upon the significance of the RPG. Following my site visits, I asked the appellant to explain why it considered that the proposed American barn (appeal B) would not harm the significance of Remenham House or the obelisk within the RPG. I have included this matter as part of the main issue.
6. The main parties agreed that if, having closed the Hearing, I was to find less than substantial harm to the significance of the RPG and that harm would not be outweighed by public benefits, it would not be necessary to consider the other issues that I had identified at the Hearing.
7. Applications for costs have been made by both appellants against the LPA and by the LPA against both appellants. These applications are the subject of separate Decisions.
8. I closed in Hearing in writing on 26 February 2020.

Main Issue (both appeals)

9. The main issue is the effect upon the significance of the RPG and various listed buildings and whether any harm would be outweighed by any public benefits.

Reasons

10. The appeal sites lie within the countryside towards the top of Remenham Hill and to the east of Henley-on-Thames. They are located to the south of the A4130 and close to the northern boundary of the 240 ha RPG. Both sites form part of an extensive range of polo facilities that operate from within the RPG.
11. Appeal site A includes a blockwork wall and asbestos roof storage building⁶ that is set immediately alongside a belt of trees and to the south of Hurley Lodge. To the west, there is a riding arena (approximately 100m x 80m) with the hard surfaced lorry parking area alongside. To the south east of the storage building there is a taller, newer, metal clad storage building. The LPA has informed me that this neighbouring storage building does not have permission.
12. Appeal site B includes an existing American barn⁷ (approx. 50m x 15m), an outdoor show jumping arena (approx. 60m x 30m), horse walker, paddock and fencing. The LPA has informed me that this barn is being used to stable more horses than have been authorised and permission for the temporary arena has expired. This site also includes 24 loose boxes⁸, 15 of which are on the site of the proposed American barn. Beyond appeal site B and to the north west are

⁴ I also understand that the pony lines are unauthorised.

⁵ The other issues related to the GB and the effect upon the character and appearance of the area.

⁶ On behalf of the appellant, it has been calculated that this building has a 'footprint of 221m²'. There is dispute between the main parties as to whether or not this building should have been demolished. Whilst the LPA may be correct, for simplicity, I have included it as part of the 'baseline' for appeal A.

⁷ On behalf of the appellant, I have been informed that this is different to the approved plans and not in the approved position.

⁸ The main parties agree that these do not have planning permission.

Horseshoe Cottages. A large quadrangle stable block, including an administration building and car park lie to the east of this appeal site.

13. Remenham House is situated to the north east of appeal site B. The Grade II listed obelisk lies much further to the south west and off Dairy Lane⁹. This no through road serves a small number of dwellings. It also provides a means of access to the French Renaissance style, Park Place country house¹⁰.

Planning Policy

14. The development plan includes the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy (CS) 2010 and the Wokingham Borough Council Managing Development Delivery Document (MDD) 2014. Given the main issue that I have identified above, the most relevant development plan policy to the determination of these appeals is MDD policy TB24 (designated heritage assets).
15. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is an important material consideration that carries substantial weight in these appeals. MDD policy TB24 does not include the 'public benefits' balance contained within section 16 of the Framework. This would reduce the weight to be given to any conflict with MDD policy TB24.

The Main Issue - The RPG, the obelisk and Remenham House

The RPG

16. Registered parks and gardens are key components of the historic environment. These irreplaceable, distinctive and much cherished parts of our inheritance are a fragile resource that can be easily damaged beyond repair. Grade II* parks and gardens are particularly important sites and of more than special interest. The Berkshire Gardens Trust (BGT) has informed me that Park Place is one of the very few Grade II* Registered Parks and Gardens in Berkshire.
17. The significance of the RPG at Park Place is derived mainly from the 18th and 19th century gardens and pleasure grounds that surround the listed country house, as well as the extensive landscaped park that was laid out during the later 18th century by General Conway and the tree planting by Robert Marnock in the late 19th century. The open parkland and trees, including belts of trees, boundary trees and woodland, as well as its largely tranquil character, are integral to an appreciation and understanding of this designed landscape and the intentions of the designers and those who employed them. These features make an important contribution to the historic interest of this RPG.
18. Over time, there have been numerous changes to this RPG. These include the erection of a number of buildings and the construction of two golf courses. (The golf course in the north eastern part of the park has since been replaced by polo/equine facilities.) Some of these changes, such as the removal of golf course bunkers and other inappropriate works, have assisted in restoring parts of the parkland. However, in all likelihood, most of the buildings that have been constructed in the north eastern part of the RPG since the latter part of the 20th century would have had some adverse effects upon its open parkland character. Whilst some golf course activity would have disturbed the

⁹ I understand that this is not a public highway but those living along this lane, their visitors and some residents of Remenham Hill regularly walk along it for purposes such as dog-walking.

¹⁰ This Grade II listed building is not visible from the appeal sites.

tranquillity of the parkland the same is likely to be true of some of the polo activities, especially during the summer when practice matches take place.

19. Both appeal sites are close to the northern edge of the RPG. The belt of trees growing alongside appeal site A contributes to the sense of boundary planting to this designated heritage asset and the space around the blockwork and asbestos roof building is part of the open parkland. Although the stables, equine facilities and the boundary fencing on appeal site B could be considered to convey a sense of partition from the parkland, the spaces around the buildings (including the areas where the 24 loose boxes have been erected) assist in retaining a semblance of the open attributes of this part of the RPG. Both appeal sites contribute to the significance (historic interest) of the RPG.

The Obelisk

20. The significance of the obelisk in the grounds of Park Place (erected in 1837) is derived primarily from its architectural interest as part of the spire of St. Bride's in Fleet Street that was designed by Sir Christopher Wren, as well as its historic interest as a commemoration to Queen Victoria's accession and as a prominent surviving feature within a designed landscape.
21. The obelisk appears in various views across the parkland, including those south along Dairy Lane. There are wide views from the obelisk, including those to the north across the open parkland and towards appeal site B. Whilst appeal site B does not form part of the formal area of the pleasure grounds or garden, it is an integral part of the wider parkland setting and makes a very small contribution to an appreciation of the heritage interest of this listed building.

Remenham House

22. The significance of early 19th century Remenham House is derived primarily from its architectural qualities. These include its painted stucco walls, wide bracketed eaves, hipped slate roof, chimneys, sash windows and entrance porch. Its historic interest includes much of the fabric of the building and its positioning along a former turnpike road. The countryside to the south, including appeal site B, maintains the rural setting of this listed building.
23. As I noted during my visit, the principal (roadside) elevation of Remenham House can be seen from the footway along the A4130. The upper section can also be seen across appeal site B from Dairy Lane. These views assist in affording an appreciation and understanding of the heritage interest of this listed building. Appeal site B makes a small, but positive, contribution to the significance of this listed building.

Impact of Appeal A Scheme

24. The proposed replacement building on part of appeal site A would be single storey in height. However, measuring approximately 17m x 21m it would be a sizeable new building and have a larger 'footprint' than the existing single storey storage shed. Notwithstanding the proposed half-hip roof, the mass of new building would also be greater. Whilst the existing storage shed is not a thing of beauty, it has an overtly agricultural form and appearance and sits rather discretely against the immediate backdrop of the belt of trees.
25. In contrast, the proposal with its numerous windows (some of which would be full height), personnel doors and considerable activity that would be associated

- with 10 grooms bedrooms and a gymnasium, as well as the likelihood of cars being parked nearby, would be a conspicuous addition to this part of the RPG.
26. This new building would erode the historic open character of the parkland and the increase in activity would further diminish the tranquillity of this designed landscape. The proposed removal of several trees¹¹ from the tree belt and the crown lifting of some others¹² to provide for roof clearance would weaken the sense of boundary planting and the important contribution that trees make to the heritage interest of the RPG. The proposal would harm the significance of the RPG and conflict with the provisions of MDD policy TB24.
27. In the context of the Framework, the proposed development would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset. I also share the concerns of the LPA and the BGT that the proposal, together with the existing riding arena to the west, the polo pitch to the south west and the pavilion, would have a cumulative adverse impact upon an appreciation and understanding of the significance of this part of the RPG.
28. If there is a sliding scale of harm within the category of 'less than substantial' the development would be towards the middle to lower end. However, less than substantial harm does not amount to a less than substantial planning objection in the planning balance. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight. I afford great weight to the harm to the significance of a RPG that is of more than special interest.
29. The proposed replacement building would be sited and designed so as not to intrude into any important views to or from listed buildings within or around the RPG. This proposal would not harm the significance of any listed building and would preserve their settings.

Impact of Appeal B Scheme

30. The proposed outdoor show jumping arena would be the same size and largely occupy the site of the existing arena but would be repositioned about 10m to the north. As noted above, temporary permission for the existing arena has expired. It is a matter of dispute between the main parties as to whether this should be treated as unlawful development or whether the situation could be addressed by way of the LPA serving a breach of condition notice. Whilst this is a matter for the parties to resolve, as this existing facility should have been removed by the end of March 2015, it would be inappropriate for me to include it as part of a 'baseline'. However, the LPA has been aware of its existence for many months and to date, has not commenced any enforcement proceedings.
31. The proposed arena would be used by the Borodin family for show jumping. It would be adjacent to the A4130 and the existing American barn and horse walker. It would be unlikely to result in any significant increase in activity within this part of the RPG. The proposed surface covering (possibly wood chip and fibre chip or rubber chip) and jumps that could reasonably be expected would have little in common with the green, landscaped parkland to the south. Moreover, the new fencing and proposed tree planting *"upon the southern*

¹¹ The 6 Leyland Cypress trees that is intended to remove are not specimen trees but are an integral part of this belt of trees that has conservation/cultural value as part of this RPG.

¹² 1 Norway Maple and 2 holly trees.

*boundary*¹³ would reinforce the sense of partition from the rest of the RPG. This element of the proposal would result in a very minor adverse impact upon the significance of the RPG.

32. The proposed American barn would measure about 60m x 12.6m x 5.5m (ridge height). This would be finished using larch cladding on the walls and a slate tiled roof to match the appearance of the existing barn alongside. However, this sizeable new building, which would provide 24 loose boxes, a tack room, feed room and secure storage would be at odds with the open parkland character of the RPG. Whilst it would have the potential to reduce vehicle movements with polo ponies not having to be transported off site for training purposes, there would be some additional noise and activity arising from the use of the proposed building. On balance, given the proximity to the main road and the existing equine facilities alongside, there would be no loss of tranquillity. Nevertheless, the conflict with the open parkland character would amount to less than substantial harm to the significance of the RPG. This would be somewhere towards the lower end of a sliding scale of harm. The proposal would conflict with the provisions of MDD policy TB24.
33. The proposed development would be seen in views of Remenham House when looking north east from along Dairy Lane. Seeing a development does not by itself amount to a harmful impact and the proposed show jumping arena would not distract from an appreciation or understanding of the significance of this neighbouring listed building.
34. However, the siting, height and mass of the proposed American barn would interrupt, if not obscure, a view of the upper part of the principal elevation of Remenham House. Whilst other (roadside) views of the principal elevation would remain, when viewed from Dairy Lane the proposed new building would diminish the ability to appreciate some of the special architectural qualities of this listed building from within the RPG. This would amount to less than substantial harm to the significance of this listed building, with harm at the lower end of any sliding scale. The proposed building could also interrupt some views of the RPG from the upper floor windows in this listed house and diminish an appreciation of its rural surrounds. This would also conflict with the provisions of MDD policy TB24.
35. The proposed development would entail a minor change to the setting of the listed obelisk without interrupting or intruding into any important views of this designated heritage asset. Whilst the proposed American barn could be seen from this designated heritage asset, it would be a considerable distance from the obelisk and would form a very minor element in the extensive views from this remnant of the church spire. The proposal would not harm the ability to appreciate or understand the significance of this listed building and would preserve its setting.

Other Listed Buildings

36. There is nothing before me to demonstrate that the appeal sites contribute to the significance of any other listed building or that the proposed developments would harm their heritage interest. The proposals would preserve the settings of all other listed buildings that have been identified to me.

¹³ As set out in the Design and Access Statement.

Public benefits

37. In undertaking the 'heritage balance' I must take into account any public benefits of the proposals. The appellants have argued that these comprise: furthering the development of a high goal polo team, its ability to compete at sporting events and the spectacle of the sport of polo; enhancing the Borodin family's enjoyment of equestrian activities, including competing at show jumping events; maintaining equestrian use and allowing this part of the RPG to be managed as a single unit; the removal of an unsightly storage building; better supervision and care of horses that are kept on the site and; a reduction in vehicular traffic. I shall also consider any likely economic benefits.
38. Whilst not planning policy, the Government's Planning Practice Guidance, amongst other things, states that public benefits should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.
39. Within the terms of the planning permission for polo activities within the RPG, the public are precluded from attending practice matches etc., Nevertheless, some members of the public are interested in playing/watching/following polo, including attending polo matches elsewhere. Additional serious competition within this sport, through the involvement of more/competitive teams, could enhance public enjoyment. There has been very considerable investment in developing polo facilities at Park Place and I note that the polo team which is based at Park Place is achieving much sporting success. The proposed polo facilities could deliver some public benefit. I afford this some limited weight.
40. Horse/show jumping is another sport enjoyed by some members of the public. Whilst the proposed outdoor arena would be of much benefit to the Borodin family and would enhance their enjoyment of the sport, it is very far from certain that this would lead to any public benefit. I afford this no weight.
41. It may be preferable, for land management purposes, for the appeal sites to be managed as one entity. Some equestrian use of the land may also be preferable to some other land uses in limiting the impact upon the significance of the RPG. However, there is no suggestion that if these appeals were to fail that the sites would no longer be managed together or that a different, harmful land use would take place. I afford this no weight in the planning balance.
42. The removal of the existing storage building (appeal A) would help restore the open character of this part of the parkland and, in so doing, be of public benefit. However, I have found above that this is a rather discrete building and the proposed replacement would harm the significance of the RPG. This proposal would not amount to a public benefit.
43. The proposed grooms accommodation (appeal A) would allow more staff to reside on site and supervise and care for the increasing number of horses that would be stabled. Ensuring the safety and welfare of animals is capable of being a public benefit. However, notwithstanding the appellants' equestrian / essential need argument, the grooms accommodation would be a considerable distance¹⁴ from the stables and I am unconvinced that 10 additional staff residing on site would be necessary. In this regard, the LPA has informed me

¹⁴ The LPA has calculated that it would be about 600m from the stables.

that there is an existing administration and accommodation block much closer to the stables. The grooms accommodation would not deliver any meaningful public benefit arising from animal safety or welfare or essential functional need.

44. The proposed developments could result in reduced traffic flows from ponies not having to be taken off site for training and staff no longer having to commute to the sites. However, with more people living on site and more horses being kept, there could be additional traffic movements arising from an increase visitors, deliveries, vets, farriers and any contractors/maintenance workers. Any overall reduction in traffic numbers/flows are likely to be very small and any benefit to users of the public highway very limited.
45. The proposed development would, for a temporary period, help support the construction industry. There could also be benefits in terms of additional staff employed on the sites and some increased spending in local shops and services. This would comprise a public benefit which carries limited weight.

The Planning / Heritage Balance and Conclusion on the Main Issue

46. When the less than substantial harm to the significance of the RPG that I have found in appeal A is weighed with the public benefits the balance tips against granting planning permission. When the less than substantial harm to the significance of the RPG that I have found in appeal B and the less than substantial harm to the significance of Remenham House is weighed with the public benefits the balance tips more heavily against granting permission.
47. I conclude on the main issue that the proposals (appeals A and B) would harm the significance of the RPG and the significance of Remenham House (appeal B only) and this harm would not be outweighed by the public benefits.

Other Matters

48. Given my findings above regarding the main issue, my decisions do not turn on the outcome of the other issues that I identified at the Hearing. Whilst my decisions could therefore be 'silent' on these matters, the main parties have made detailed representations regarding the impact upon the GB and the character and appearance of the area. For completeness, I set out below a summary of my findings in respect of these other matters.
49. CS policy CP12 and MDD policy TB01, which relate to the GB, were based on the now cancelled PPG2 and an earlier version of the Framework. In the context of these appeals, this would reduce (to a limited extent) the weight to be given to any conflict with these policies.
50. The construction of a new building/provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport within the GB is one of the specified exceptions to inappropriate development within the GB, as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the GB and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This could include a building for grooms accommodation with a polo players gym.
51. However, I struggle to understand how a new building (appeal A) with space for 10 grooms bedrooms, to be occupied by staff working on a seasonal basis and 'remote' from the stables, would be appropriate facilities for the permitted polo use. In this regard, I have not been aided by the decision¹⁵ to pursue

¹⁵ The appellants have been professionally advised throughout the planning and appeal processes.

- appeals whilst much uncertainty exists concerning the lawfulness of various developments which have been undertaken in and around the appeal sites.
52. Even if the appeal A building was a suitable facility for the permitted polo use, I share the concerns of the LPA over the appropriateness of a building to accommodate so many grooms, especially when some already appear to be living alongside the existing stables. I note the findings in the appeal decisions relied upon by the appellants. However, none are directly comparable to the situation before me with significantly smaller grooms facilities allowed elsewhere on land within the GB and seemingly, in locations closer to stables.
 53. Notwithstanding the above, if the proposed building was an appropriate facility, its siting, size and mass together with the likely activity in and around this new building, including vehicle parking, would not preserve the openness of the GB. Furthermore, this new building would be materially larger than the one it is intended to replace, it would not amount to infilling¹⁶ or the redevelopment of previously developed land and would have a greater impact on the openness of the GB than the existing development on the site. I agree with the LPA that the building proposed under appeal A would be inappropriate development within the GB.
 54. The proposed riding/show jumping arena (appeal B) would comprise an engineering operation and/or the change of use of land for outdoor sport or recreation. On balance, and in the context of GB policy, it would preserve the openness of the GB and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This would not be inappropriate development within the GB.
 55. The proposed American barn (appeal B) would considerably increase the number of horses that could be stabled in connection with the polo activities operating from within the RPG. I note the LPA's argument that such an increase would be at odds with the terms of the 2016 permission for a polo facility. Whilst it could ultimately fall to the courts to interpret the bounds of that permission, it does not appear to restrict the number of horses that could be stabled or kept on the land.
 56. I agree with the appellant that the proposed American barn would, in the context of GB policy, comprise an appropriate facility for outdoor sport. However, its siting, size and height would not preserve the openness of the GB. It would comprise inappropriate development within the GB.
 57. The proposed building for the grooms accommodation and gym (appeal A) would, by virtue of its size and siting, be at odds with the open qualities and wooded parkland character of this part of the 'Arable Chalk Plateau' landscape character type¹⁷. Whilst there would be limited views of this building, it would appear as a discordant addition to the landscape and at odds with the LPA's published landscape strategy, which carries moderate weight. It would detract from the quality of the local environment and conflict with CS policy CP11 (countryside) and MDD policy 21 (landscape character).
 58. The proposed outdoor arena (appeal B) would not entail the erection of any buildings or structures and would retain the space to the east of the paddock. Although the perimeter fence and jumps would be unsympathetic paraphernalia

¹⁶ Although not defined within the Framework, it would not be unreasonable to consider this to be the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or a small gap between buildings.

¹⁷ As defined in the Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment.

within the countryside, this element of the proposal would not have any significant adverse effect upon the character or appearance of the landscape.

59. In contrast, the proposed American barn would be more prominent in the landscape and would diminish the sense of openness between the western flank wall of the existing barn and the paddock beyond. It would detract from the character and appearance of the local landscape and conflict with CS policy CP11 and MDD policy 21.
60. The above noted harm to the character and appearance of the landscape weighs against an approval but would not, by itself, be sufficient to justify withholding permission. Moreover, there is nothing to demonstrate that the proposals would harm the special qualities of the candidate extension to the Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or its scenic attributes.
61. If the harm to the character and appearance of the area were to be placed into the GB balance along with the other 'harms' that I have identified (GB and designated heritage assets), the other considerations advanced in support of the proposals, including the public benefits and the equine/sporting needs, would not clearly outweigh the totality of the harm so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposals. The proposed developments (both appeals) conflict with the provision of the Framework for safeguarding the GB, as well as CS policy CP12 and MDD policy TB01.
62. I note the concerns of some neighbouring residents regarding the impact of the proposed development upon road safety and the free flow of traffic along the A4130. However, both the LPA and the Highway Authority (HA) were satisfied that the proposals would not compromise road safety interests or increase the risk of congestion. Whilst mindful of the evidence of residents who are very familiar with local highway conditions, including the traffic flows along Remenham Hill during the Henley Royal Regatta, there is no cogent evidence to justify taking a different stance to the LPA and HA on highway matters.
63. The proposed arena and stables (appeal B) would result in an increase in activity to the south east of Horseshoe Cottages. This would have the potential to result in some adverse impact (noise disturbance and possible increase in odours) to the residents of these neighbouring cottages. However, I note that the LPA, having consulted its Environmental Health Officers, did not refuse permission on the basis of any adverse impact upon those living alongside. Any adverse impacts upon neighbouring residents would be unlikely to be so great as to justify withholding permission. However, this does not overcome or outweigh the harmful impact that I have found in respect of the main issue.

Overall Conclusion

64. Given all of the above, I conclude that neither appeal should succeed.

Neil Pope

Inspector

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANTS

Mr I Ellis BA, MRTPI	Associate Director, Southern Planning Practice Ltd
Mr J Burton of Counsel	
Mr A Burn BA, MCIfA	Principal Heritage Consultant, Cotswold Archaeology
Mr J Cooper BSc, DipLD, FLI, AILA	Director of Landscape Architecture, SLR Consulting
Mrs J Scrivener FBIAC	Bourne Rural Planning Consultants Limited

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

Mrs J Davey BSc (Hons), MRTPI	Senior Specialist Planner, WBC
Mrs S Blackmore of Counsel	
Mr S Ryder BA (Hons), CMLI	Director, Ryder Landscape Consultants Ltd

INTERESTED PARTIES

Mrs H Handley BA (Hons), MSc, MRTPI	Associate Planner, Pegasus Group, on behalf of Remenham Parish Council
Mrs B Kirkham DipTP, BLD, CMLI	Chair and Planning Advisor, Berkshire Gardens Trust
Cllr J Halsall	Remenham Parish Council
Cllr J Merkel	Remenham Parish Council
Mr M Phillips QC	Local resident
Mr N Williams	Local resident
Mr Burletson	Local resident

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AT THE HEARING

Document 1	Note from Mr Phillips and two letters from local residents
Document 2	Mrs Davey's equine experience
Document 3	Annotated aerial photographs from Mrs Davey
Document 4	Extract from CS Proposals Map from Cllr Merkel
Document 5	Extract from the 2019 Landscape Character Assessment

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED DURING THE ADJOURNMENT

Document 6	LPA's response to the appellants' reply to its costs applications
Document 7	LPA's response to the appellants' costs applications
Document 8	Letter dated from Mr Burn in response to the Inspector's request for comments in respect of two listed buildings
Document 9	Agreed Supplementary Note to Landscape Statements
Document 10	Appellants' response to LPA's schedule and annotated photographs of authorised and unauthorised

	developments
Document 11	List of final draft suggested planning conditions
Document 12	Letter on behalf of Remenham Parish Council in respect of Dairy Lane
Document 13	Appellants' comments in respect of Dairy Lane
Document 14	Appellants' response to the LPA's reply to its costs applications