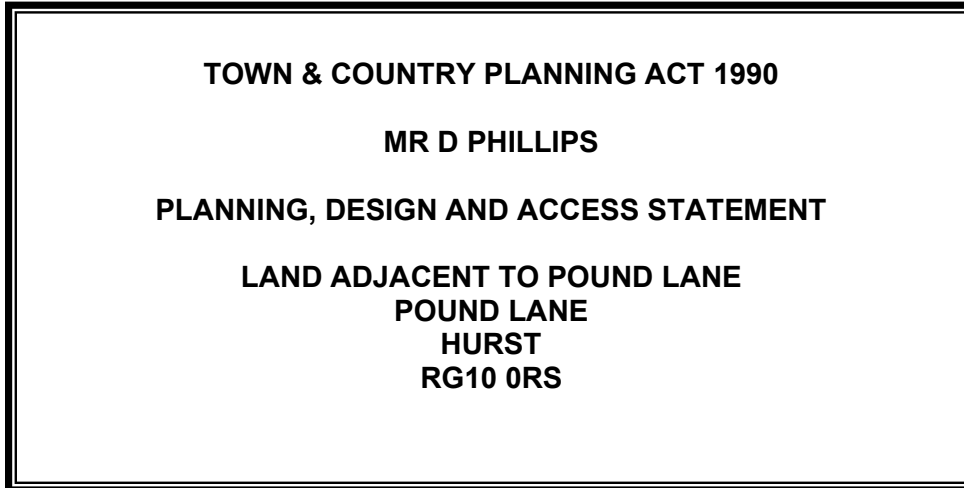




Change of use of land to a mixed use comprising of agriculture (keeping of goats) and storage of building materials together with the erection of 2no. storage buildings

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1. INTRODUCTION

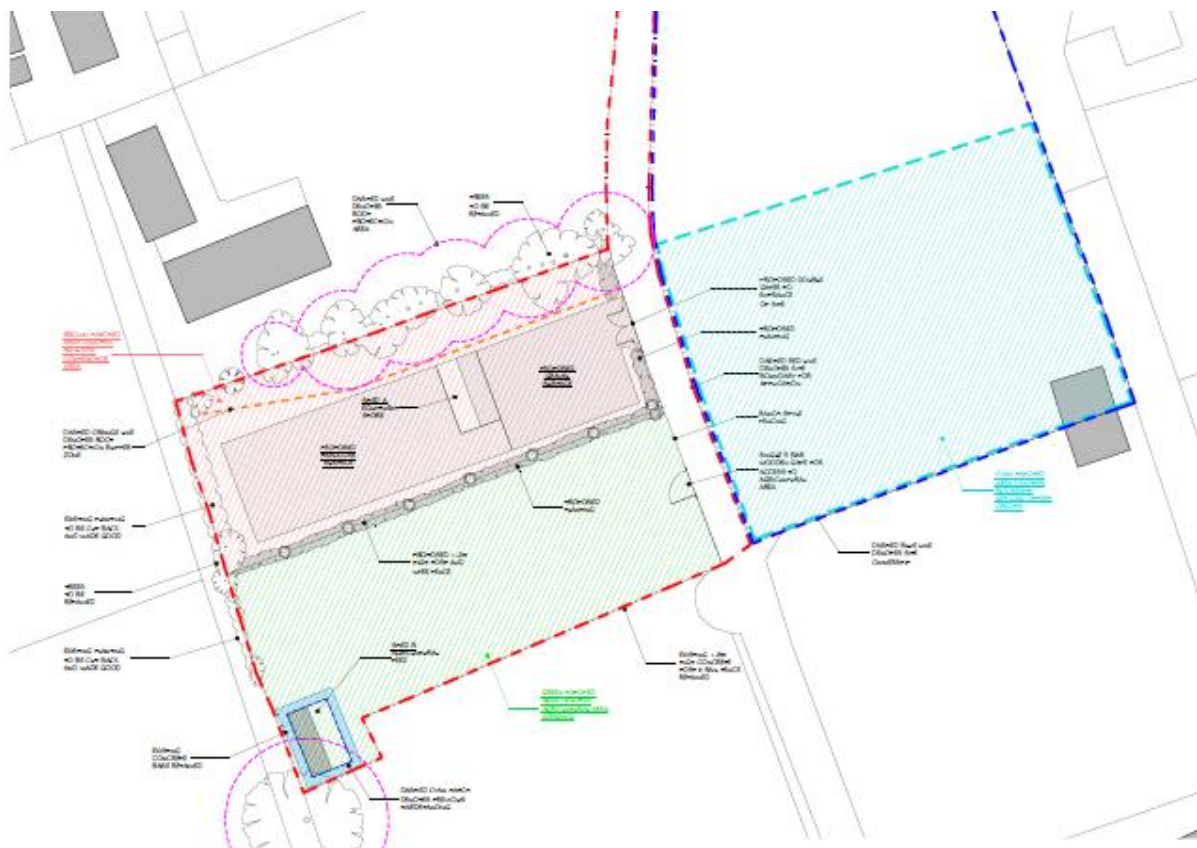
- 1.1 This Town Planning, Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of an application for the *'Change of use to a mixed use comprising of agriculture (keeping of goats) and storage of building materials together with the erection of 2no. buildings'* at Land adjacent to Pound Lane , Pound Lane, Hurst.
- 1.2 The application site is intended to be split into two uses. The area hatched 'brown' on the site layout occupying the northern part of the site will house a small enclosed parcel of land for the personal use of the owner in association with their building contractor business. The remainder of the site comprising of the southern part of the land would be used to keep goats (area hatched 'green' on the site layout). Each use will be served by a small timber structure (i.e. Sheds A and B) and these would be used solely for associated storage purposes. The overall site has an area of 0.2Ha and is located on the western side of a private track that serves two residential properties and the former and now disused dog kennels at Churchman's Farm.
- 1.3 The application is submitted on behalf of Mr D Phillips who resides at the adjoining Pound Lane Cottage. The statement is divided into the following sections:
- Site and Surroundings
 - Planning Policy Context
 - The Planning Application
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Summary and Conclusions
- 1.4 In addition to this statement, the application is accompanied by a Tree Survey and AIA (Duckworths Arboriculture Ltd) and an Ecological Impact Assessment and BNG Assessment (Darwin Ecology Ltd).

2 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The application site comprises of an open parcel of land, most recently in use for keeping animals. To the north of the is Oakley Farm which comprises of residential and commercial uses including offices (F/1999/0149) whilst to the south is a large detached two storey residential property known as 'The Warren'. The site was previously occupied by two structures with the concrete slab for one of these buildings still being in place in the south-west corner of the site.

2.2 The application site and surrounding area is defined as 'countryside' in the Local Plan Proposals Map.

Proposed site layout



2.3 There is no relevant planning history relating to the site.

3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

i) National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (NPPF)

- 3.1 Paragraph 7 of the revised NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 states that in achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective. Paragraph 10 states that *'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).*
- 3.2 Paragraph 39 states that Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and that decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 3.3 Paragraphs 88 and 89 are concerned with the rural economy. Paragraph 88 states that planning decisions should enable the following:
- a) The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings;
 - b) The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
 - c) Sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which 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.

3.4 Paragraph 89 also states that planning decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. Development should in these circumstances be sensitive to its surroundings and avoid an unacceptable impact on local roads. The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

3.5 Chapter 12 is concerned with achieving well designed places. Paragraph 131 states that 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 and helps make development acceptable to communities.

ii) Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) (CS)

3.6 Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) requires that a number of criteria are met. These include maintaining or enhancing the high quality of the environment; providing attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel particularly by the car; and contribute towards reaching zero – carbon development as soon as possible.

3.7 Policy CP3 (General Principles for Development) requires, amongst other matters, that new development is of an appropriate scale, mass, activity, built form, height, materials, character and design quality. Proposals should not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring land uses.

- 3.8 Policy CP9 (Scale and Location of Development Proposals) - states that the scale of development proposals must reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location together with their accessibility.
- 3.9 Policy CP11 (Proposals outside of Development Limits (including Countryside). The policy states that in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except where they meet certain criteria, including:
- It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and
 - It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings;
 - It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvements.
- 3.10 Policy CP15 (Employment Development) confirms, amongst other things, that within development limits the redevelopment, refurbishment or minor extension of buildings in employment use will be acceptable in principle. Any proposed change of use from B1, B2 & B8 should not lead to an overall net loss of floorspace in B use within the Borough. Provision will be made for a range of sizes, types, quality and locations of premises and sites in order to meet incubator / start up, move on, expansion and investment accommodation needs and having regard to the needs of specific sectors of the business community.

iii) Wokingham Borough Managing 'Development Delivery Document (2014) (MDD)

- 3.11 Policy CC01 states that there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with policies in the Development

Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.12 Policy CC02 (Development Limits) confirms that the development limits are defined on the Policies Map.

3.13 Policy TB21 (Landscape Character). States that proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

3.14 Policy TB23 (Biodiversity and Development) states that planning permission for development proposals will only be granted where they comply with Policy CP7 and also demonstrate how they achieve the following:

- Provide opportunities, including through design, layout and landscaping to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing;
- Provide appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated sites as well as habitats and species of principle importance for nature conservation;
- Ensure that all existing and new developments are ecologically permeable through the protection of existing and the provision of new continuous wildlife corridors, which shall be integrated and linked to the wider green infrastructure network.

iv) Supplementary Planning Documents

Wokingham Borough Design Guide

3.15 NR1 – States that non-residential development should be designed to respond to and exploit key features or characteristics of the site and the local context.

3.16 NR2 – Non-residential development should be designed to contribute towards improving the character and quality of the area.

- 3.17 NR5 – Requires that height, bulk and massing should respond to the local context and prevailing heights in the area.
- 3.18 NR8 – The approach to materials should generally be a simple one, focussing on high quality materials and components, with the appropriate level of intricacy and detail being guided by the nature of the viewer experience.
- 3.19 NR12 – Boundary treatments should form an integral part of the design of proposals for non-residential development.
- 3.20 RD1 – New development and associated landscape should retain, incorporate and enhance features that contribute towards the landscape character and biodiversity of the area.
- 3.21 RD5 – New development in rural areas should respond to the typical forms of buildings in the village or locality.
- 3.22 RD6 - The elevations of new buildings must be well composed, well-proportioned and well detailed.
- 3.23 RD7 – New buildings should respond to the materials, details and colours that may be distinctive to a locality.

4 THE PLANNING APPLICATION

4.1 As set out in Chapter 1, the application proposal is for the dual use of the site for two separate uses (agricultural and builders storage). Both of these areas are identified on the site layout plan and hatched in different colours to identify each use (see chapter 2).

4.2 This section is divided into the following sub-headings:

- i) Principle of development and impact on the character of the countryside;
- ii) Impact on trees;
- iii) Biodiversity.

i) Principle of development and impact on the character of the countryside

4.3 As stated above, the application site is divided into two separate areas, each identified on the site layout plan through a different colour code:

4.4 Brown hatched area: Comprises of the northern parcel of land with an access onto Pound Lane. It is proposed to be used as a small compound area to store the owner's builder's contractor equipment and some machinery. A modestly sized timber storage shed (8.5m x 4m) is proposed to house some of the perishable/valuable tools and equipment such as small amounts of power/hand tools, timber, plaster board and adhesives/cement. The outdoor area would house modest quantities of bricks, tiles, heras fencing, scaffold poles/boards, trestles and ladders. In terms of machinery, this is likely to include a digger, cement mixer and trailer. All of this equipment and machinery is in the applicant's ownership. It is currently stored in various locations including a friend's yard in Sonning Common and some modest quantities at the applicant's home address at Pound Lane Cottage. Neither location is particularly convenient.

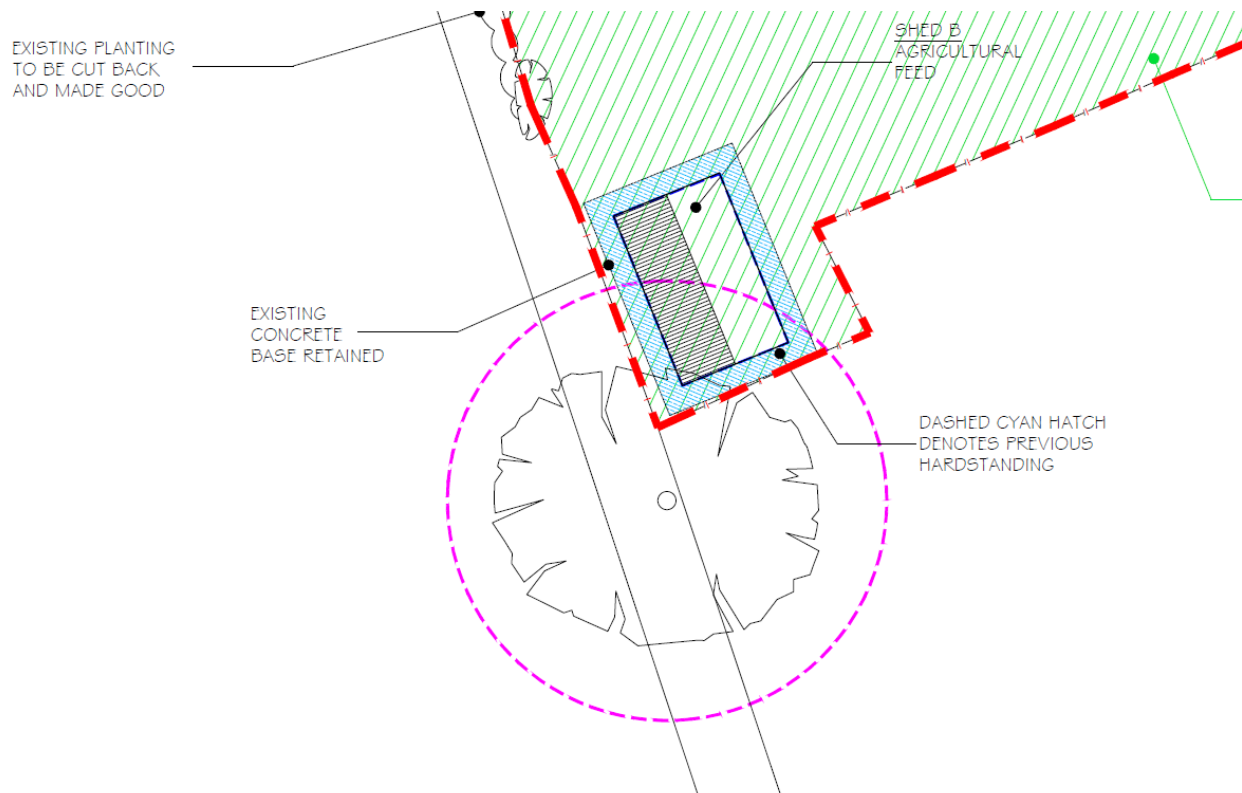
4.5 The proposed use would maintain and enhance an existing landscaped buffer zone on the site's northern boundary. New hedging would also be planted along the site frontage and in between the use and the retained agricultural paddock.

4.6 In terms of compliance with Policy CP11, this proposal meets its intentions in the following way:

- *It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside;* Response: The applicant provides building services to the wider rural community and lives in the adjacent Pound Lane Cottage. The close proximity of the applicant's abode to the site provides the use with improved security and a more convenient location for storage.
- *It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings;* Response: The proposed timber structure is located in a similar position to an earlier structure whose remains are still evident at the site in aerial photographs. The building will partially overlap its former siting and thus can be considered as being reflective of the earlier built form. The conclusion is therefore that there is a modest expansion away from the existing built form but not to the extent whereby it would materially conflict with this part of the policy.
- *It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvements.* Response: The proposed timber building would replace a former structure of a similar size. The new building would reflect the type of construction that is typical of such buildings in these localities with materials that are commonplace. The applicant is proposing to enhance the frontage of the lane with new planting and to retain and enhance the northern landscaped buffer zone. In conjunction with the upgraded building, this will provide for an overall enhancement of the site.

- 4.7 Green hatched area: This area comprises the southernmost parcel of land and will be maintained in an agricultural use as a paddock for the keeping of goats. As part of the use the applicant is requesting that a former shed which was recently demolished and removed from the land be re-erected in the same location to house associated goat rearing machinery together with food and bedding. Its footprint will be smaller than the existing retained concrete slab foundations which are still in place (see cyan shaded area on proposed site layout plan as set out below). By re-using the existing concrete footprint, the proposal will ensure that the surrounding trees and hedges are not impacted. Access into the goat paddock will be maintained through a gap in a proposed new hedge which will separate the two uses.

Shed 'B' location



- 4.8 In terms of compliance with Policy CP11, this proposal meets its intentions in the following way:

- *It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside;* Response: The use and building would be used for the keeping and rearing of goats which is by its very nature a countryside-based enterprise.
- *It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings;* Response: There are numerous buildings in the immediate vicinity including on neighbouring land to the north, south (beyond a paddock) and east. The site has always contained buildings although it is acknowledged that they have recently been demolished. The proposed building would be sited on the same hard standing where the former building was located limiting any expansion or encroachment away from acknowledged original buildings.
- *It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvements.* Response: The proposed building will be of a timber construction and designed to assimilate into the rural location.

4.9 In summary, the proposal is not in conflict with the Development Plan or Government policy, and it should be supported as an appropriate rural enterprise and activity.

ii) Impact on trees

4.10 As set out within the Arboricultural Report, the survey recorded 27 individual trees and 3 tree groups growing around the boundaries of the site. The proposal would not result in the removal of any of these trees and therefore this proposal represents a low risk to existing trees. Proposed Shed 'B' will be constructed on top of an existing concrete base where there was previously a storage building (now removed). A soft landscaped buffer zone has been provided along the northern boundary of the site which will reduce the risk of damage or future pressure for tree

removal. This will be protected during construction (see TPP). The proposal is therefore consistent with the aims of Policy TB21.

iii) Biodiversity

- 4.11 The Biological Impact Assessment confirms that the site is of a low-moderate ecological value and that due to its small size is unlikely to support populations of protected and notable species. As there is potential for protected and notable species to access the site on occasion, mitigation measures have been recommended including installing wildlife beneficial landscaping and the installation of bat and bird boxes.
- 4.12 The Biodiversity Net Gain Report confirms that the net gain for habitat units is achieved through the planting of 20 trees across the site (10 within the new grazing paddock and 10 within the biodiversity offsetting area – see site layout); the planting of mixed scrub within the tree protection zone along the northern boundary of the site; and the enhancement of the grassland within the offsite area through the planting of an appropriate seed mixture and the adoption of a suitable management strategy. The offsetting area lies directly to the east of the application site (see site layout plan). As a result, the proposal is consistent with the aims of Policy TB23 as it provides opportunities for new biodiversity features; maintains a suitable buffer zone; and proposes ecological permeability throughout the site.

iv) Summary and conclusions

- 4.13 In summary, the proposal is to split the site into two uses: Firstly, a smaller area to house equipment and machinery associated with the owner's builders contractors business ('brown' hatched area); Secondly, a larger 'green' hatched area which is proposed to be re-used for agricultural purposes and specifically goat grazing/rearing. Both uses require the erection of two modest sized timber storage buildings which would in fact replace previous structures on the land of a similar scale and massing. The proposals meet advice contained within the NPPF and specifically paragraph 88 which supports the sustainable growth and expansion of

businesses in rural areas (paragraph a.) as well as paragraph (b) which supports the development and diversification of agricultural and land-based businesses.

- 4.14 There is no conflict with CS Policy CP11 as it would ultimately not result in material harm to the separate identity of neighbouring settlements. Both uses will specifically meet the requirements of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this policy. Policies TB21 and TB23 are also met.

5 DESIGN AND ACCESS

(a) Use and Amount

The proposal is to change the existing use of the land from agricultural to a mixed use comprising of agricultural (keeping of goats) and builders storage associated with the applicant's builder's contractor business.

(b) Layout

The layout of the proposal reflects the split between the two uses, perpendicular to the adjoining lane. The proposed agricultural shed will be sited on the concrete slab of a building which recently stood in the same location. A landscape buffer zone is retained on the site's northern boundary.

(c) Scale

The buildings are of a similar footprint, height and scale with both buildings having an eaves height of 3.2m and a ridge height of 4.5m. The total footprint sought from both buildings amounts to 82.5sq.m.

(d) Appearance

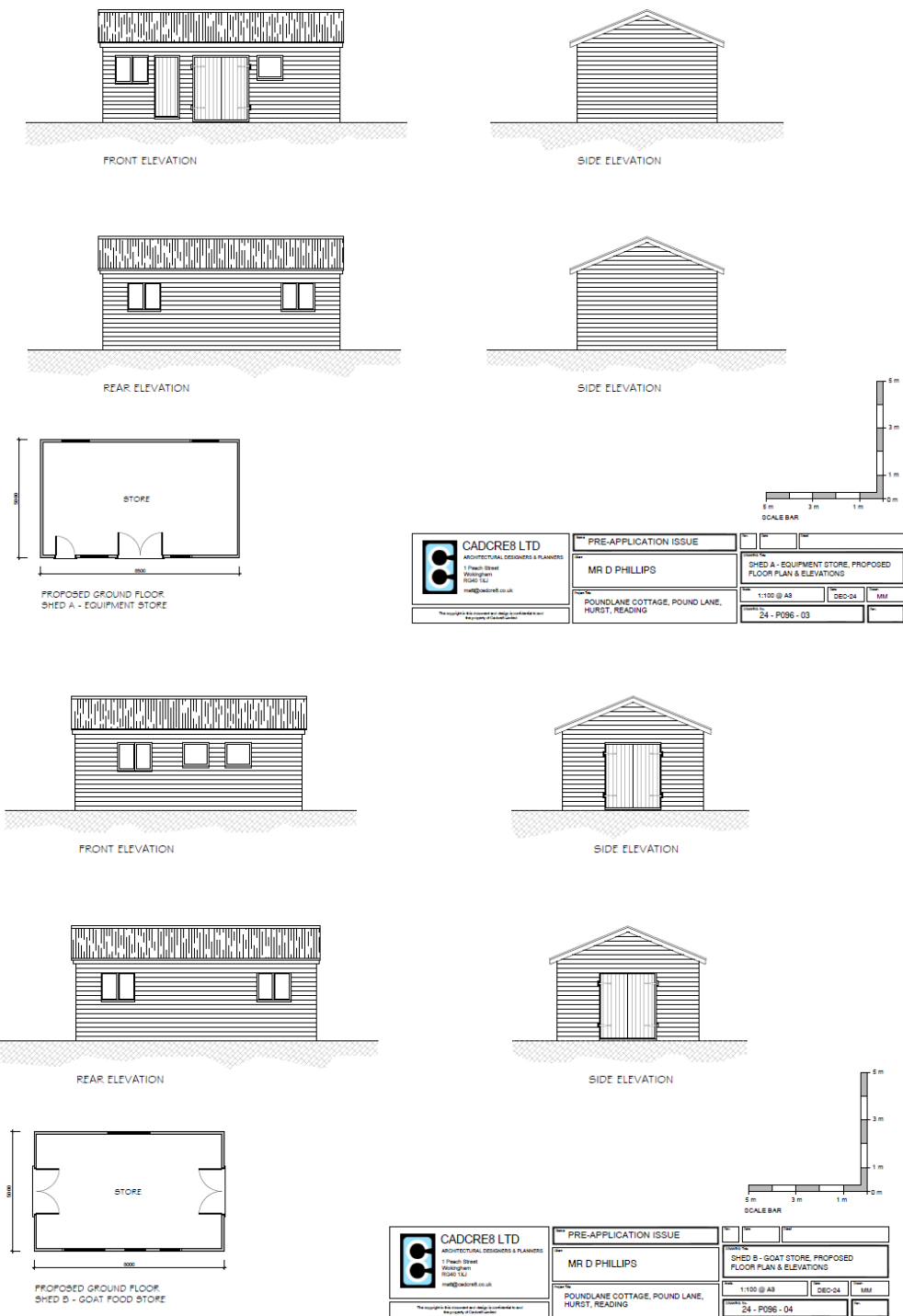
The two storage buildings would be clad in timber panels with a corrugated roof material. These types of materials are typical of the surrounding rural area (see below).

(e) Landscaping

The proposals would maintain all existing trees and would provide a new hedge around the land to be used for builders' storage to soften its appearance and to maintain a landscaped character. The application is accompanied by a full tree report which confirms the retention and enhancement of an existing buffer zone.

(f) Access

Each use would be individually access from Pound Lane via its own gated entrance.



6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The application should be supported for the following reasons:

- i) The principle of the proposed uses and associated buildings is considered to be acceptable. The proposal meets CS Policy CP11 and should be supported as an appropriate rural enterprise.
- ii) The proposal would not result in the loss of removal of any on-site trees which will be retained, protected and enhanced through new planting Policy TB21 is therefore met.
- iii) The Biodiversity Impact Assessment confirms that the site is of low-moderate ecological value. The BIA identifies a range of enhancements and mitigation measures suitable for this scale of development. The BNG assessment confirms that this can be achieved on-site and on neighbouring land owned by the applicant.