



Proposed Isolation Stables

Design and Access Statement

Hever Stud Farm, Edenbridge TN8

Sep 2021

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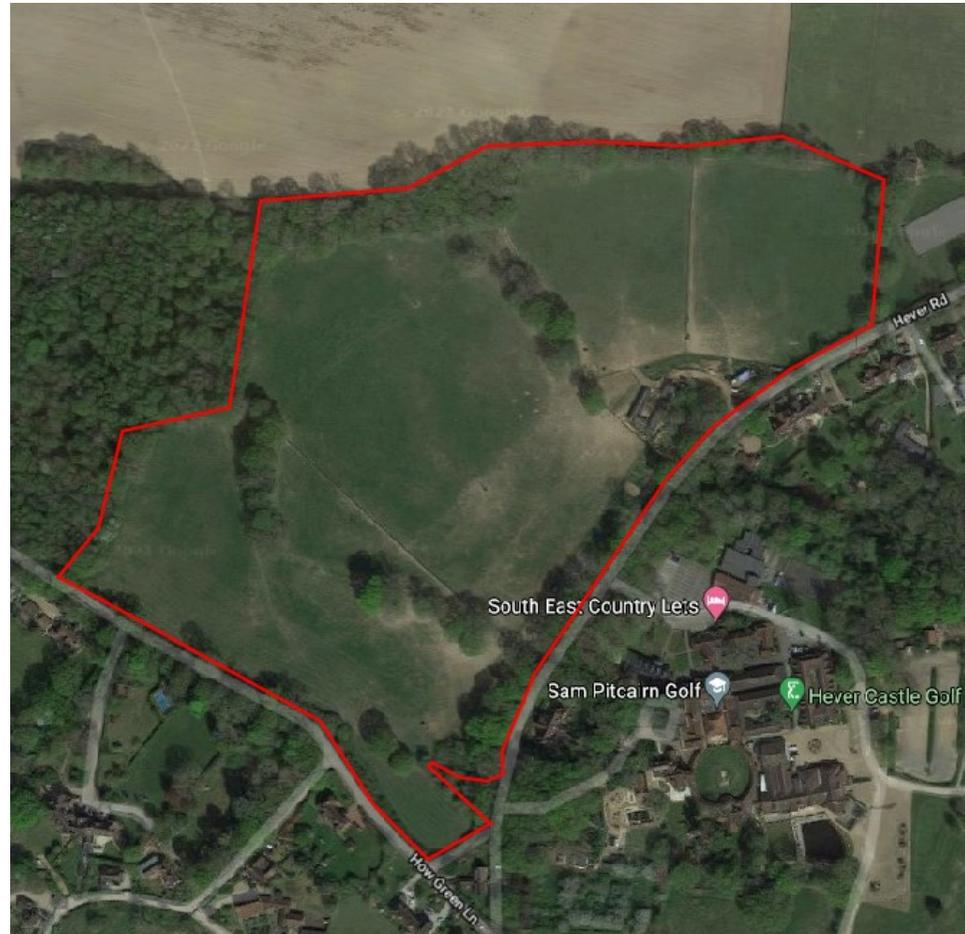
1.0 Introduction

This statement is submitted to Sevenoaks District Council in support of a proposal for the erection of two separate isolation stable buildings, at Hever Stud Farm, Hever Road, Edenbridge TN8 7NP

2.0 The Site

The site has been in equine use for the last 35 years. The south east boundary of the site is flanked by Hever Road and the south west boundary is flanked by How Green Lane, both these boundaries are screened by established planting and mature trees. The east boundary is flanked by densely planted trees on the neighbouring field, whilst the north boundary is more open in nature with fields beyond and mature trees only on the boundary line. The site is relatively level and is of irregular shape. It extends to approximately 1 hectare.

Along the opposite sides of both Hever Road and How Green Lane sit a mix of property consisting of terraced semi-detached and detached properties.



Approximately half-way along the Hever Road frontage on the opposite side of the Road is Hever Castle Golf Club and Hotel.

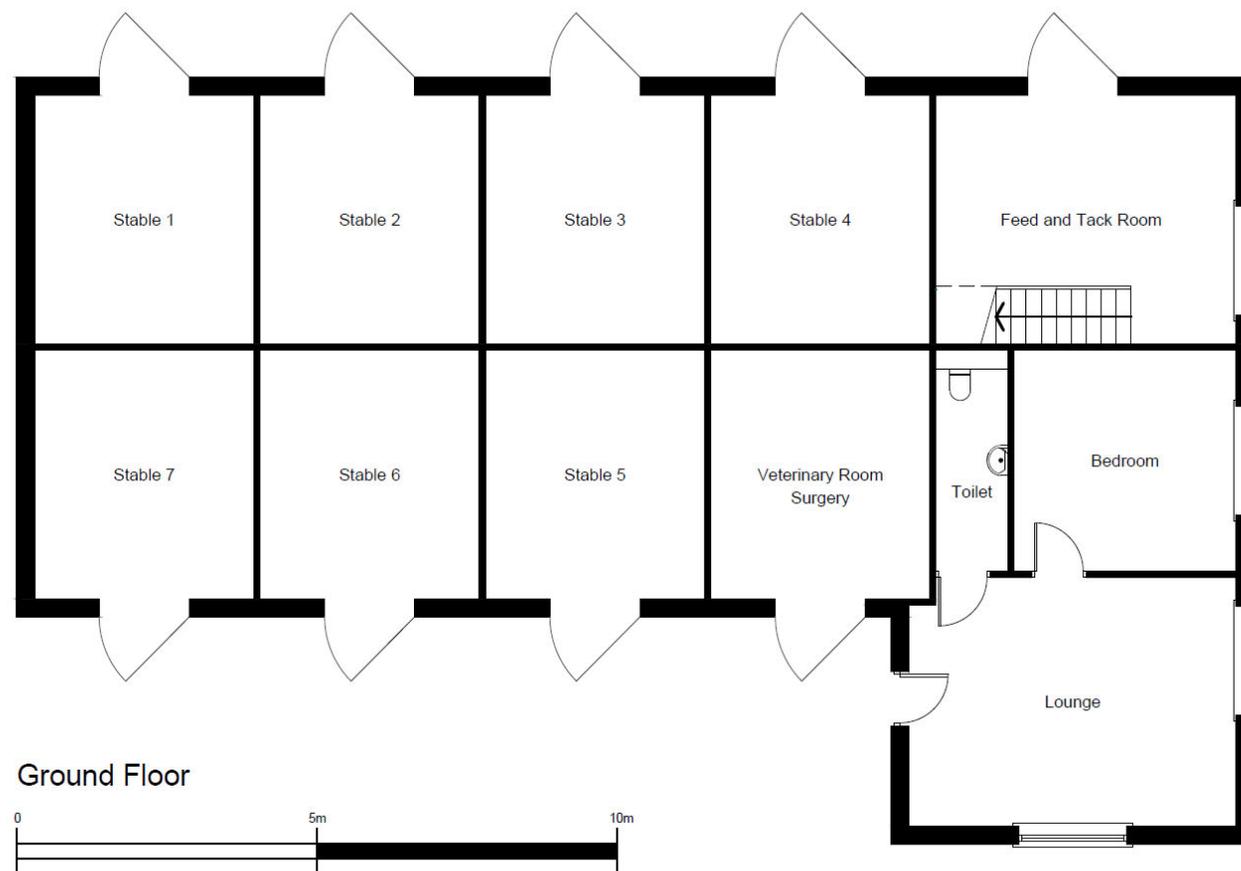
3.0 The Proposal

The proposals seek to provide two separate isolation stable blocks each consisting of 7 stables, a vet/surgery room, feed/tack room together with some overnight accommodation required for staff.

Above the stable accommodation provided within the roof space is both a hay and straw storage area.

Hever Stud Farm, formally Hever Castle Stud was formed in 1983. The Stud breeds thoroughbred racehorses.

Hever Stud purchased and stood the stallion Elfisio, champion first season sire and bred many notable winners including Hever Golf Rose, 13 wins £664,894 including the Prix de L'Abbege Longchamp, GR1 Pips Pride, 6 wins £316,402 including, Heinz 57 Phoenix Stables GR1. There are currently forty horses on the north and south sections of the stud farm.



The Stud needs isolation units to isolate horses with contagious diseases, together with a stud groom, feed, bedding and vet room. It is imperative that the stud groom area of the isolation unit is only to be used when isolating horses.

The constant sending and receiving of horses has created a loss of 4 horses in the last 2 years alone. A supporting letter dated 15 April 2021 by the Stud Vets Priors states:

The stud report stock losses due to infectious disease outbreaks associated with movement of horses on and off the yard. In the interest of biosecurity the stud should have isolation units that are separate from its breeding and stock, young stock and other resident horse areas. Separate isolation units are needed to deal with the risk of introducing disease into the herd by horses moving on and off the premises, and also to house any infectious horses away from other horses on the farm.

We are in support of the planning application in the interest of biosecurity on the farm.

Another separate isolation unit is required specifically for a virus EHV-1 EHV-4 Rhinopneumonitis and herpes virus which cause mares to abort the foal they are carrying. Information relating to these viruses and isolation thereof are available to read on the internet.

A supporting letter dated 21 April 2021 by The Thoroughbred Breeders Association states:

Equine infectious disease presents a significant strategic risk to breeders and with Strangles, Equine Influenza (EI) and Equine Herpesvirus (EHV) being endemic across Europe, there is an on-going requirement to quarantine horses before they are re-introduced to the resident herd. High biosecurity standards can help contain disease outbreak to those housed within the isolation facilities and prevent infection of other stock, which is especially important with Equine Herpesvirus, which can cause a pregnant mare to abort her unborn foetus or produce a non-viable full-term foal. Transportation is also considered to be stressful for the horses and these conditions can cause asymptomatic carriers of disease to become unwell or start shedding, such as new arrivals of heightened risk of sickness and transmission. These individuals therefore require close monitoring from attending staff.

The Thoroughbred Breeders' Association recommends on-site supervision of valuable bloodstock at all times; as horses (particularly thoroughbreds) are flight animals they are at an increased risk of injury in comparison to other species. The knowledgeable and experienced individuals responsible for their care need to make regular and immediate decisions based on the changing weather conditions; the particular health requirements of the equines they manage; and other external factors beyond their control (such as fire displays), to ensure their optimum welfare. This requirement for close monitoring is particularly true for pregnant mares, who may require assistance at foaling; and for young foals, who need incremental exercise regimes and close observation of nutritional intake (suckling from the mare), as well as demonstration of normal behaviours.

Thoroughbred breeding is an extremely labour-intensive industry and the provision of a highly qualified and motivated labour force is essential to the developing and ensuring the longevity of these thriving rural businesses.

The isolation units are necessary to continue the operating of the business at Hever Stud Farm, Edenbridge, Kent.

The proposals have been sited to suit the operational requirements of the Stud whilst retaining an openness of the green-belt.

4.0 Comments on Officer's Report from Previous Application

Use of CCTV as a viable alternative to a stable hand in residence within the isolation unit. The reasoning put forward in the report is fundamentally flawed and fails to acknowledge the cross-contamination issues which is the sole purpose of the isolation unit. It is critical to note that the attending stable hand must be isolated from the other parts of the stud farm and from the other horses on the stud farm in the same way that the horse within the isolation unit are kept separate. The proposed use of CCTV and the attendance of the existing stable hands fails to address this fundamental aspect and is therefore not a workable solution. It should also be noted that the accommodation for the stable hands within the isolation units will only be used when horses are resident within the isolation units. There is therefore an essential need for a rural worker to be housed within the units.

It is also worth noting at this point why there is a need for two units as this has not previously been fully explained. It is simply to allow isolation of horses from more than one source to be handled at any given time, which is a common event due to the horse sales occurring at specific periodic times across the country and the rotation of horses being sent out for breaking and training.

The Report questions the scale of the proposed units in relation to the scale of the operation of the stud. There is a total of 22No. loose boxes across the two sites which accounts for a portion of the horses currently owned by Hever Stud Farm. At any one time there is a minimum of a further ten horses which are being broken and or in training at specialist trainers throughout the UK. These horses are part of the stock that frequently return to the site, along with visiting stud sires and newly acquired breed mares that need to be isolated when they arrive. The number of isolation units within each block has been determined from the records of horse movements from previous years and seven units per isolation unit is the appropriate number.

The Report discusses the size of the grazing area and the number of horses that can be accommodated but then effectively answers the question raised by reference to the storage of feed within the isolation units. There appears to be a lack of knowledge regarding the feeding of thoroughbred horses. All horses are fed significant dietary supplements in order to promote strong and rapid healthy growth, particularly amongst the new foals. The horses are destined to be top athletes within the equine world and the nutrition is a hugely important aspect of achieving success, just as it is with human athletes. The conclusion is that the number of horses currently resident across the two sites is well within the capacity of the acreage.

The Report questions the need for a veterinary room within the isolation units. This again demonstrates a lack of knowledge regarding the essential animal husbandry methods when dealing with high value equine stock. The isolation units would be relatively useless without this essential facility.

The Report states that the proposal has a significant adverse impact on openness. The new revised proposal has relocated the units in more discrete locations and further away from existing residential properties which mitigates these concerns.

The Report states that the hardstanding and other paraphernalia will have an adverse impact on openness. The details of the access routes and areas around the isolation units could easily be made conditional and therefore remove this consideration as a reason to refuse the application.

The Report states that Biodiversity has not been addressed. This is an outline application and it is considered reasonable to expect that a Biodiversity report will only be produced as part of a detailed application and that this could be made a condition of an outline planning approval. This is therefore not a reason to refuse outline permission.

5.0 Conclusions

Below is the relevant Policy relating to this site taken from Sevenoaks Council's Supplementary Planning Document

- 2.1 The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent uncontrolled spread of urban areas by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of the Green Belt are its openness and its permanence.
- 2.2 The Green Belt serves five purposes:
 - to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 2.3 The Green Belt performs all these purposes in Sevenoaks District.
- 2.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 87) sets out that inappropriate development in the Green Belt is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in Very Special Circumstances. Inappropriate development in the Green Belt is harmful in principle, even if it is not visible from a public viewpoint.
- 2.5 Paragraph 89 states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:
 - buildings for agriculture and forestry;
 - provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
 - the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
 - the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
 - limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan;

- limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development; or
- local needs housing on rural exception sites in accordance with Core Strategy policy SP4.

As discussed above the Isolation Stables are essential in continuing to operate the Hever Stud Farm and avoid the unacceptable loss of both horses and foals that have become an issue in recent years or the stud will close with the loss of five jobs.

The scheme we believe has been designed to retain the openness of the green belt. The scheme has been revised so that the isolation units have been repositioned away from existing residential properties. The only local objections were regarding this feature so we believe that the relocated of the Isolation Units addresses these local concerns.

It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.