

BPA Ref: 21.158

Development Management
West Oxfordshire District Council
Elmfield
New Yatt Road
Witney
OX28 1PB

29th October 2021

Submission of full application for the change of use from agricultural to equestrian including the installation of horse arena and lunge pen and extension to existing barn for private use only at Boulters Barn Farm, Churchill Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire OX7 5UT.

Dear Development Management,

This covering letter accompanies the above planning application submitted via the Planning Portal under reference **PP-10345348v1**.

The following documents have been submitted for consideration:

Site Location Plan (drg no. 21.158-001);
Block Plan (drg no. 21.158-002);
Existing and Proposed Floorplans (drg no. 21.158-100);
Existing Elevations (drg no. 21.158-101);
Proposed Elevations (drg no. 21.158-201); and
Covering Letter (this document).

The Site

The site is located 1.5km to the north-east of the village of Churchill in the Chipping Norton region of the Cotswolds. The site lies adjacent to the B4450 and comprises an agricultural field and associated barn which lies to the north east of the owners dwellinghouse, Boulters Grange. The agricultural field and barn are not in use currently. Aside from the site's location within the

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Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, there are no land designations restricting planning on the application site.

The Proposal

The proposed development is submitted under a full planning application which seeks to change the use from agricultural to equestrian and includes the installation of a horse arena, and lunge pen and extension to the existing barn. The proposed development is for private use only to support the applicants professional career in Dressage. More details are set out further in the design and access statement section below.

Design and Access

The application site area measures 7065 sqm or 0.71 hectares.

The horse arena will measure 60m x 20m in line with standard competition size arenas. The external boundary of the horse arena will comprise of a 600mm high timber kickboard with a 600mm high hawthorn hedging to the outside to retain the rural feel of the site. On the north-eastern boundary of the arena, mirrors measuring 2400m x 1200m will be installed to assist rider and horse in training. Please see the picture below for an example of mirrors in this context.



Martin Collins Activ-track will be used to surface the arena. The area will be open-air and so no further materials aside from the mirrors will be used above the height of 600mm. No external lighting is proposed.

The lunge pen will consist of a timber fence surround with a Martin Collins Activ-track surface.

Alterations to the existing barn include an 8m extension to the main body of the barn and the installation of a lean-to storage area. Internal changes to the barn will include the creation of 7 stables, 2 wash bays, a tack room and a toilet. All external materials used will match those used in the existing building.

Vehicle and pedestrian access to and from the site will remain as existing which is via the main driveway of the applicant's home, Boulters Grange.

Planning Policy Context & Assessment

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan covering the site is the West Oxfordshire Local Plan which covers the period 2011-2031 and was adopted on 27th of September 2018 (the 'development plan'). The policies and guidance within the revised 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material consideration.

Policy OS2 of the West Oxfordshire Plan (Locating development in the right places) is of relevance to this proposal. The policy stipulates, appropriate development located in small villages, hamlets and the open countryside includes the re-use of appropriate existing buildings which would lead to the enhancement of their immediate setting.

As the site lies wholly within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Policy EH1 is of relevance to this application. The policy states:

"In determining development proposals within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and proposals which would affect its setting, great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty, landscape and

countryside, including its wildlife and heritage. This will include consideration of any harm to the contribution that the settlement makes to the scenic beauty of the AONB.”

In addition, West Oxfordshire’s Landscape Character policy (Policy EH2) relates to this development. This policy outlines the importance of the landscape and outlines:

“New development should conserve and, where possible, enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive natural and man-made features of the local landscape, including individual or groups of features and their settings, such as stone walls, trees, hedges, woodlands, rivers, streams and ponds. Conditions may be imposed on development proposals to ensure every opportunity is made to retain such features and ensure their long-term survival through appropriate management and restoration.”

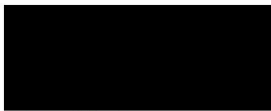
In terms of landscape impact, the site is discreetly located by virtue of its siting within the undulating form of the wider landscape and its enclosure by established and mature hedgerows and trees. The proposed is considered small scale and low key which will blend seamlessly into its surrounds by reusing an existing building and sensitively locating the ancillary structures in the least prominent parts of the site area. Furthermore, equestrian use is a typical feature in this rural landscape and for this reason will not appear out of place.

By virtue of the nature of the sport, equestrian requires a countryside location. The empty barn on site provides an excellent opportunity to re-use and re-purpose an existing rural building and enhance the immediate surroundings through the introduction of equestrian facilities in accordance with Policy OS2. Furthermore, the re-use and restoration of the barn will ensure that the building and its surroundings are kept appropriately maintained as to ensure the long-term survival of the building and conservation of the local landscape which otherwise may be negatively impacted if the building were to fall into disrepair. In addition, the proposed development has been carefully designed to include natural materials wherever possible to ensure the site retains its rural aesthetic to minimise any visual impact on the surrounding landscape in line with policies EH1 and EH2. The proposed development and change of use from agriculture to equestrian should therefore be considered commensurate with the site and its surroundings and should be approved without delay (Paragraph 11, NPPF)

Summary

I trust the above and enclosed provides you with sufficient information to validate this application and progress it towards determination. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I Yours sincerely,



Sophie Lennon
Planner