



WILKINSON
PLANNING

Planning Statement

SITE

Bower Meadow, Bower Farm, Thurleston Lane,
Akenham, Fairview, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 6TQ

PROPOSAL FOR

Continued use of agricultural land for equestrian
use, including retention of associated buildings and
siting of caravan (non-residential).

PROPOSAL BY

Mr S Craig

March 2022

Contents

1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Site and Surrounding Area	2
3.0	Proposal	4
4.0	Planning History	5
5.0	Planning Policy	5
6.0	Material Planning Considerations	6
7.0	Planning Balance	12

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is produced for and on behalf of Mr S Craig in respect of an application for; Continued use of agricultural land for equestrian use, including retention of associated buildings and siting of caravan (non-residential) at Bower Meadow, Bower Farm, Thurleston Lane, Akenham, Fairview, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 6TQ.
- 1.2 It will consider the planning policy position and provide an overview of the relevant material considerations relating to the proposed development.
- 1.3 The extract below shows the location of the site relative to its surroundings and other nearby development:

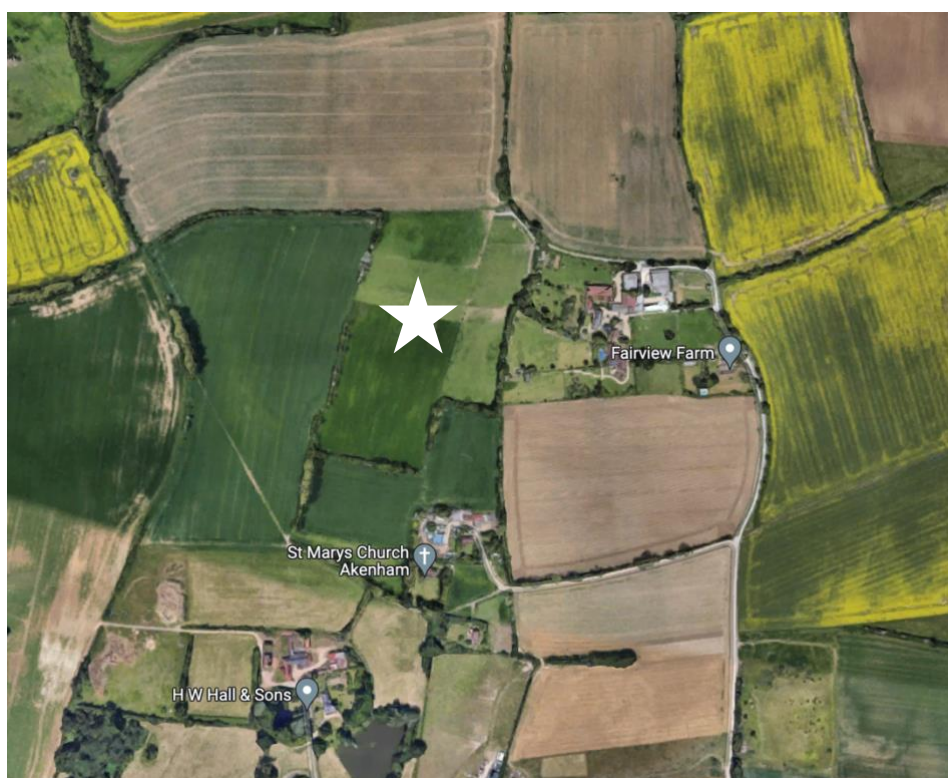


Figure 1.3.1 Aerial View

2.0 Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The application site comprises of agricultural land located in the Parish of Akenham. The site falls to the west of a small cluster of dwellings (Barley Lodge, Bower Farm, Bower House and Longacre, Fairview Farm and Glebe Farm) accessed via private track from Thursleston Lane. To the north, west and south is a mixture of Grade 2 and Grade 3 agricultural land. There are

two Public Rights of Way located east along Thurleston Lane, which are bridleways 5 and 6. The site is located approximately 1.4 miles north of Ipswich.

- 2.2 The site does not fall within any Conservation Area and the nearest listed building is located approximately 330 metres to the south west of the site (Grade II* listed Church of St Mary). The site itself is comprised of agricultural grazing land. The site is not within any designated landscape area (for example Special Landscape Area or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). There are no trees on site or nearby which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. The site sits within Flood Zone 1 (low fluvial flood risk) and is also at a low risk of pluvial flooding:



Figure 2.2.1 - Site Location Plan

3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal is for; Continued use of agricultural land for equestrian use, including retention of associated buildings and siting of caravan (non-residential). The proposed plan provides context:



Figure 3.1.1 - Proposed Site Plan

3.2 The application is supported by a suite of plans and documents including:

- Application Forms
- Planning Drawings
- Planning Statement
- Flood Risk Statement
- Design Expectations Form

4.0 Planning History

4.1 The site has not been subject to any form of planning application submission when assessed against the LPA's planning system, however, the proposal follows an enforcement investigation under LPA Planning Enforcement Reference EN/21/00226.

4.2 Pre-application advice was sought from the LPA following the advice from the Enforcement Officer. The applicant obtained pre application advice under reference DC/21/06861, which concluded:

"The siting of the caravan on site for associated storage would likely be considered acceptable if the change of use of land was also considered acceptable."

4.3 Since the pre app advice was issued, the applicant has considered the existing change of use and associated operational development factors engaged. What is proposed, is a balanced scheme which responds to the comments expressed in the pre application advice. The scheme has been meticulously considered, in light of the concerns raised and long term requirements of the applicant, as this statement will go on to discuss.

5.0 Planning Policy

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, then that determination must be made in accordance with 'the Plan' unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) contains the Government's planning policies for England and sets out how these are expected to be applied. Planning law continues to require that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policies contained within the NPPF are a material consideration and should be taken into account for decision-making purposes.

- 5.3 The NPPF is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which assists applicants and decision makers in interpretation the NPPF.
- 5.4 The site does not fall within an emerging or adopted Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 5.5 The development plan for Mid Suffolk consists of:

Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Core Focused Review (2012)

- FC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- FC1.1: Mid Suffolk Approach to Delivering Sustainable Development

Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008)

- CS2: Development in the Countryside and Countryside Villages
- CS5: Mid Suffolk's Environment

Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998)

- CL2: Development within Special Landscape Areas
- CL8: Protecting wildlife habitats
- CL21: Facilities for horse riding
- GP01: Design and layout of development
- H16: Protecting existing residential amenity

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Suffolk Parking Guidance (2019)
- Suffolk Design Guide (2000)

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- Para 7: Achieving sustainable development
- Para 8: Three dimensions to sustainable development
- Para 11 – 14: The presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Para 47 – 50: Determination of planning applications
- Para 124 – 132: Achieving well-designed places
- Para 85: Local business and community needs
- Para 174: Natural Environment

5.6 The proposed development has been primarily assessed having had regard to core policies FC1, FC1.1, CL21 and GP01.

5.7 This statement will consider other material planning policies in turn.

6.0 Material Planning Considerations

6.1 Principle of Development

6.2 At a local level, development plan policies FC1.1 and CL21 operate inter-alia, with FC1 offering a general presumption in favour of development.

6.3 Furthermore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is set out in policy FC1 of the Development Plan and seeks to replicate the terms of the presumption as found within paragraph 11 of the NPPF. It is clear, therefore, that the presumption is set out within the development plan and, as such, the application of the presumption is not simply weighed as a material consideration within the NPPF but is a consideration against which all proposals must be determined. The LPA cannot choose not to apply it. The development plan has primacy and the LPA would be incorrect in law if they chose not to apply it.

6.4 Policy CL21 identifies that the use of land for keeping of horses and other equestrian activities is acceptable provided that there is no adverse effect on landscape, wildlife habitat, road safety or residential amenity.

6.5 At a national level, paragraph 10 of the Revised NPPF states; *“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”*.

6.6 Paragraph 85 is intrinsically focussed on supporting a prosperous rural area:

“Planning policies and 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. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings,



does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist”.

6.7 The proposal site would accommodate 4 no. horses in total, with 2 no. Shetland ponies, all of which would be kept privately with no commercial or livery element attached to the use.

6.8 The management, welfare and maintenance duties include:

- Inspecting stabled horses early morning before the normal working day, during the day and at least twice after the normal working day
- Feeding all stabled horses
- Bedding-down and cleaning out stables
- Checking all horses late at night for any problems and bringing in any horses turned out in controlled environment if poor weather conditions
- Monitoring susceptible horses for signs of colic
- Monitoring all stabled horses for incidents of becoming cast
- Bringing in any horses that are turned out if an air balloon flies over, or there is a sudden thunder and lightning storm (day and night)
- Administering routine treatments and medication with assistance of veterinary professionals
- Checking all stock late at night for any problems and shutting in if poor weather conditions
- Monitoring groups of mares and young stock for signs of bullying
- Changing and dressings and flushing wounds where necessary
- Grassland management operations such as harrowing, rolling, topping and fertiliser spreading
- General maintenance duties

6.9 The applicant is an experienced equestrian professional with over 45 years’ experience in horse care and welfare. The proposal site offers a suitable parcel of land for the proposed end use, which would be managed through strict equine measures. The result would be a bespoke equine site operated on a private basis:



- Total of 4 no. horses
- Total of 2 no. Shetland ponies
- 1 no. storage building (lawful through the passage of time)
- 1 no. storage building for feed
- 1 no. storage building for machinery
- 2 no. field shelters
- 1 no. shelter for Shetland ponies
- 1 no. polytunnel
- Private use only
- No exercising / working of the horses at all
- Paddocks only to be used for grazing
- Temporary field shelters (moveable)
- Post and rail fencing (electric lines where necessary)
- Siting of 1 no. horse trailer to be used incidentally
- Storage area for tractor
- Siting of 1 no. caravan for storage, tea / coffee rest room
- Extensive planting to the northern boundary
- Ecology enhancement throughout the site
- Biodiversity benefits through bee keeping

6.10 It is not uncommon for agricultural land in rural areas to be used for equine purposes. Certainly, the working of horses on the land is not proposed, therefore the equestrian paraphernalia associated with equestrian use would not be a blight on the landscape. The proposal would not have a menage, showing equipment or any other form of jumping / equine exercise equipment. The site is purely for field grazing, shelter and storage. The equine element of the scheme is proportionate to the area and does not extend above and beyond the realms of the rural character.

6.11 The LPA have no reason not to support the scheme in principle, when considered against policy CL21 and the NPPF. The principle of the proposal is acceptable in this respect, and there is nothing before the LPA to suggest otherwise.

6.12 Highways Access, Parking and Safety



- 6.13 Policies T09 and T10, paragraphs 110 and 111 of the NPPF and the supplementary Parking Standards require that all new development will allow for safe and sufficient highways access, including adequate parking provision relative to the scheme proposed.
- 6.14 The proposal utilises an existing site access to LHA standard. On site, a type 1 gravel access driveway would provide sufficient space to allow a vehicle to manoeuvre within the site and re-enter the highway safely. The primary access is suitably set thus not to create unacceptable highways risk and in any event is proposed to be upgraded and improved.
- 6.15 The proposal responds well to local and national policy as well as parking guidance. There is nothing before Officers to suggest the scheme should be refused upon Highways grounds.
- 6.16 Design, Layout and Impact on the Character of the Area
- 6.17 Policies GP01 seeks to encourage good design and layout in new development. The LPA will grant permission for proposals which meet the design criteria. Furthermore, the NPPF places a strong emphasis on good design, in particular through Chapter 12 'Achieving well-designed places' containing a number of policies which can support the delivery of good design and stating that planning decisions should ensure that developments at paragraph 130; *"are visually attractive as a result of good architecture"*.
- 6.18 The scheme harmonises with the character and form of the area and would consist of:
- 1 no. existing storage building (lawful through the passage of time)
 - 1 no. storage building for feed
 - 1 no. storage building for machinery
 - 2 no. field shelters
 - 1 no. shelter for Shetland ponies
 - 1 no. polytunnel
 - 1 no. greenhouse
 - 1 no. bee keeping hut
 - 1 no. mini shed for storage
 - Post and rail fencing throughout
 - Devoted parking area with turning space, surfaced with type 1 gravel

- Extensive planting to boundary edges
- 6.19 The external appearance of the site, fencing, storage buildings and incidental field shelters are entirely appropriate and modest within the area, and would result in a scheme which settles and blends within its immediate vicinity, whilst reflecting their functionality. Certainly, the visual appearance of the proposal would not be unacceptable.
- 6.20 The proposal responds favourably to policy GPO1 of the development plan and Chapter 12 of the NPPF. There is little before the LPA to suggest the scheme should be refused upon design and layout grounds.
- 6.21 Residential Amenity
- 6.22 Policy H16 seeks to ensure development harmonises with the amenity of its surrounding areas taking into account privacy, overlooking, outlook, noise, smell, light, visual impact, pollution, daylight and sunlight. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF also holds regard to the protection and preservation of residential amenity, which the scheme wholly delivers.
- 6.23 The site is suitably set out with appropriate management thus not to create any form of residential amenity harm. Temporary field shelters, fencing and associated equine use would not impinge upon the private amenity levels of neighbouring property. The location of the built form set towards the western boundary affords appropriate separation distances to neighbouring property. The proposed use, scale, form and layout of the proposal responds well to residential amenity requirements of inter-alia policies.
- 6.24 Specific mitigation would be applied to prevent nuisance and detriment to neighbouring amenity:
- No burning of waste and manure, all manure is to be loaded and moved off site
 - No post mounted lighting
 - No more than 6 no. horses and 2 no. ponies on site at any one time

- 6.25 The proposal responds favourably to policies H16, CL21 and GP01 and Paragraph 130 of the NPPF. There is little before the LPA to suggest the scheme should be refused upon residential amenity grounds.
- 6.26 Landscape
- 6.27 Policy CS05 and CL02 underpin the notion of preserving and enhancing landscape and character areas through appropriate design.
- 6.28 Whilst it is noted that there are PROWs to the east, the proposed landscaping and relatively open and undeveloped nature of the proposal would limit any adverse views from public vantage points. It is difficult to accept that the character of the area would be adversely affected. Even if harm were identified from this principally rural operation in a principally rural area, appropriate mitigation has been incorporated and could in any event be applied through condition(s).
- 6.29 The location of the proposed buildings and associated features of the site are suitably located to the northern and western edges of the site so as to prevent any dominant or intrusive appearance within the locality and landscape. The site is to remain largely open and undeveloped. The applicant would welcome discussions with the LPA to restrict equestrian paraphernalia noting such paraphernalia was expressed as a potential concern.
- 6.30 The proposed boundary treatments would be characteristic of the rural locality and other equestrian development within the locality and district. A post and wire fence would be erected around the boundaries of the site, alongside a mixture of hedgerow and trees that will be planted between neighbouring fields and the application site to retain rural character.. The scale and form of the scheme is designed to generate a limited to low impact upon the surrounding rural locality and area and would not result in any overriding landscape harm.
- 6.31 The applicant acknowledges that the site is set within a visually unconstrained area. The site is not set within any SLA, AONB, Conservation Area or National Park, or a high quality agricultural land type. There is nothing which would staunchly oppose the development in landscape terms given the limited constraints identified on the Council's planning constraints map.

6.32 Flood and Water

6.33 The site is not located in a vulnerable flood zone or area, therefore the risks of flooding (pluvial and fluvial) are considered to be low. In any event the site would remain largely undeveloped, and the gravel driveway would be permeable to encourage natural surface water discharge.

6.34 Each building is connected to IBC water butts, which operate effectively in harvesting rainwater throughout the course of the year.

6.35 Land Contamination

6.36 There is no known land contamination issue, with an extremely low contamination potential. The site is not considered to present risk to future owner / occupier through land contamination.

7.0 **Planning Balance**

7.1 The proposal seeks planning permission for; Continued use of agricultural land for equestrian use, including retention of associated buildings and siting of caravan (non-residential).

7.2 Policy supports the principle of development with demonstrable social and environmental benefits accruing. The applicant acknowledges the LPAs position concerning planning conditions and welcomes discussion around agreement of conditions.

7.3 The meticulous design and layout is offered in direct response to the open rural locality. The proposal is a wholly deliverable prospect, making effective use of land, without undue harms. The scheme is robustly supported at a local and national level offering a truly sustainable scheme which is heavily aligned to local and national planning policies.

7.4 In light of this, and taking account of all the considerations set out above, it is hoped that the LPA will support this sustainable development by granting planning permission in the terms requested.

