



Supporting Planning Statement

Proposed change of use from stables and 2.no flats for equine related tenants to 4.no holiday accommodation units for holiday and short and long term lettings (Part Retrospective)

79 Ecton Lane, Sywell, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN6 0BA

Prepared on behalf of Mr David Bletsoe-Brown

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May 2022

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Appendix A – Supporting Photographs of the Site

Appendix B – Decision Notice (Ref. WP/2012/01064)

Appendix C – Supporting Letters

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 CC Town Planning has been appointed by Mr David Bletsoe-Brown ('the Applicant') to prepare a detailed Planning Statement to accompany a full planning application for the proposed development at No.79 Ecton Lane, Sywell, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN6 0BA ('the site').
- 1.2 The planning application is submitted to North Northamptonshire Council ('NNC') (Wellingborough Area) as the determining Local Planning Authority ('LPA') for the area and seeks full planning permission.
- 1.3 The statement is structured to provide the LPA with the requisite level of information to justify the proposal and to enable the determination of the planning application at the earliest opportunity. Each section seeks to address a specific point and the document is structured as follows;

Section 2: Site & Surroundings

Section 3: Planning History

Section 4: The Proposed Development

Section 5: Planning Policy Context

Section 6: Planning Justification

Section 7: Conclusion

- 1.4 The following supporting drawings and reports are also submitted with the planning application:

- Existing and Proposed Floor Plans 0428-01 A
- Proposed Elevations 1 0428-02 A
- Proposed Elevations 2 0428-03

2 SITE & SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site, located along the eastern side of Ecton Lane, is positioned directly adjacent to the village confines of Sywell, as per the adopted proposals map for the Borough of Wellingborough. As such, the site is technically classified as being within the open countryside. However it is material to note that as the site immediately adjoins the confines of the village and that the village contains many local facilities, that the sites location would be considered to be preferable, in sustainability terms, to a more remote site located away from such facilities.
- 2.2 Located within the confines of the site lies the large detached dwelling of No.79 Ecton Lane and the existing building in which this retrospective planning application relates to, along with a number of outbuildings used primarily for storage purposes. The existing uses of the site are illustrated by the supporting photographs attached to **Appendix A**.
- 2.3 The area surrounding the site to the north and south predominantly comprises of open countryside used for agricultural purposes. The site is bound to the west by Ecton Lane, where a mix of properties varying in size, scale and design are positioned, with a wildlife site of ecological value positioned towards the east. Overstone Solarium is also located directly towards the south of the site.
- 2.4 The site itself benefits from an existing access point located off Ecton Lane, which serves the large dwelling of No.79 Ecton Lane, constructed in the 1980's, as well as the various outbuildings positioned within the confines of the site, including the existing building which is the subject of this detailed planning application.
- 2.5 It is material to note that the building positioned at the site, which this application is in relation to, is positioned the closest to Ecton Lane, towards the western boundary of the site.
- 2.6 The below extract from the accompanying 'Site Location Plan' illustrates the location of the site and the extent of its surrounding areas. It should be noted that the land edged in blue also falls within the ownership of the applicant.

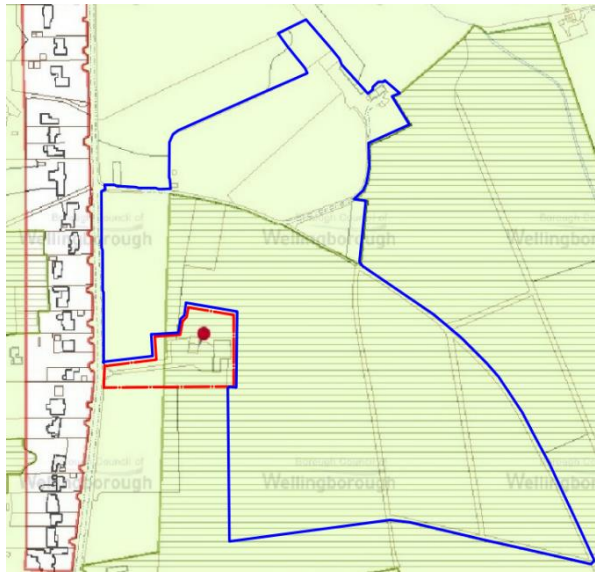


Figure 1 – Extract from Accompanying Site Location Plan

- 2.7 The site, which lies adjacent to the village confines of Sywell, is located within walking distance from a number of services and amenities including 2no. public houses, The Horseshoe and Overstone Manor, Sywell C of E Primary School and a local convenience store, positioned in the adjacent village of Overstone. In addition, local employment opportunities at Sywell Aerodrome (and surrounding business estate) and Overstone Solarium are within walking distance, less than 1 mile away from the site.
- 2.8 Furthermore, the site also benefits from access to the extensive public transport network, with a number of bus stops located along Overstone Rad to the north of the site, which are served by the bus route of No.10. This service provides local residents of Sywell with direct access to the major towns of Northampton and Kettering, as well as the nearby surrounding areas. Therefore, the site is positioned in a sustainable location to accommodate units for holiday accommodation purposes, allowing direct connections for any visitors to the site.
- 2.9 The site is not located within the designated Sywell Conservation Area, and there are also no Listed Buildings situated adjacent to the site or within the immediate surrounding area.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The site itself has an extensive planning history given the scale of development which has taken place at No.79 Ecton Lane since the construction of the main dwelling associated with the site, where the applicant currently resides (Ref: BW/1984/1003). Nonetheless, the relevant planning history in relation to the building in which this retrospective planning application is regarding is set out below.

- **WP/2012/01064** – Full planning permission was granted by the LPA for the construction of a detached stable unit with ancillary grooms' accommodation above on the first floor and ancillary works. This building was subsequently constructed for

the approved purposes and now forms the basis of this retrospective planning application.

- **WP/20/00785/FUL** – A retrospective planning application for the conversion of the ground floor stables to from 2.no one-bedroom flats and the change of use of the 2.no first floor one-bedroom flats from restricted local equine related employment occupation to unrestricted residential use was refused by the LPA. The application was ultimately refused for a number of reasons, including the fact that unrestricted residential use of the existing building located in the open countryside is contrary to adopted Development Plan strategy. Other reasons for refusal related to concerns regarding the impact of noise and the proposed units lack of compliance with national minimum space standards.
- **NW/21/01064/FUL** – A resubmission of the above retrospective application was submitted to the LPA for the change of use from the existing stables into 2.no one-bedroom flats and the 2.no flats at first floor level from equine related tenants to standard residential units. The application was refused by the LPA for similar reasons as set out above in the previous retrospective planning application.

3.2 Further to the above, it is of significance to highlight Conditions 2, 3 and 4 of the initial consent granted by the LPA for the aforementioned building (Ref: WP/2012/01064). The decision notice for this application is attached to **Appendix B** of this statement. As set out by these conditions, the occupation of the ancillary residential accommodation shall be limited to persons solely or mainly working in the locality in equine related employment. Furthermore, the residential accommodation permitted must not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as 79 Ecton Lane. Finally, it was added that the permitted stables shall not be converted to residential accommodation without the express planning permission of the LPA. Therefore, as a result of the applicant converting the stables into one-bedroom apartments for residential use, and using the first floor apartments for general, unrestricted residential use, the LPA has taken the view that the applicant is currently in breach of Conditions 2, 3 and 4 of the consented scheme. Consequently, a breach of condition notice was served by the LPA on the 3rd December 2021.

3.3 Despite the above considerations, it is material to note that this accompanying planning statement seeks to support a detailed planning application for the change of use of the stables and ancillary accommodation at first floor level, to form 4.no holiday accommodation units for short and long term lettings, which if approved, would override the status of the breach of condition notice which has been served on the Applicant. The application has been developed to overcome the reasons for refusing previous applications as summarised above,

including amended plans to provide additional window openings and additional information relating to the operation and nature of the proposed accommodation. As demonstrated by the below assessment, such a proposed use of the existing building is considered to be in full compliance with the adopted Development Plan for the North Northamptonshire area.

4 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 This application seeks full (part) retrospective planning permission for the proposed change of use from stables and 2.no flats for equine related tenants to form 4.no holiday accommodation units for short and long term lettings.
- 4.2 As aforementioned, the approved stables have been converted by the applicant to form 2.no one-bedroom habitable units, thus resulting in a breach of Condition 4 attached to the consented scheme ref. WP/2012/01064. Therefore, this application seeks to permit the use of the converted stables for holiday accommodation units.
- 4.3 Each of the 4.no holiday accommodation units will comprise of an open plan living and kitchen area, a bathroom and a bedroom. All habitable rooms, including bedrooms and living spaces, are to be served by appropriately positioned windows to ensure that sufficient natural light is supplied to each of the respective units, as well as ensuring that any occupants of the holiday accommodation units enjoy a good standard of outlook from all habitable rooms. This has been achieved by the insertion of additional windows into the accommodation (when compared with the recently refused application) as demonstrated within the submitted amended plans.
- 4.4 The below extract from the submitted floor plans for this proposed development illustrates the extent of the one-bedroom holiday accommodation units which are to be located on the site at No.79 Ecton Lane, subject to the LPA's approval of this application.

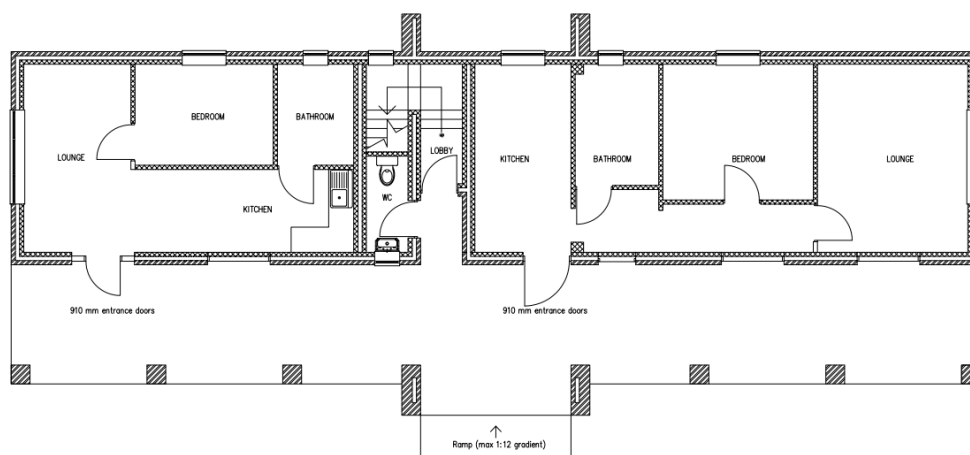


Figure 2 – Extract of Proposed Ground Floor Plans

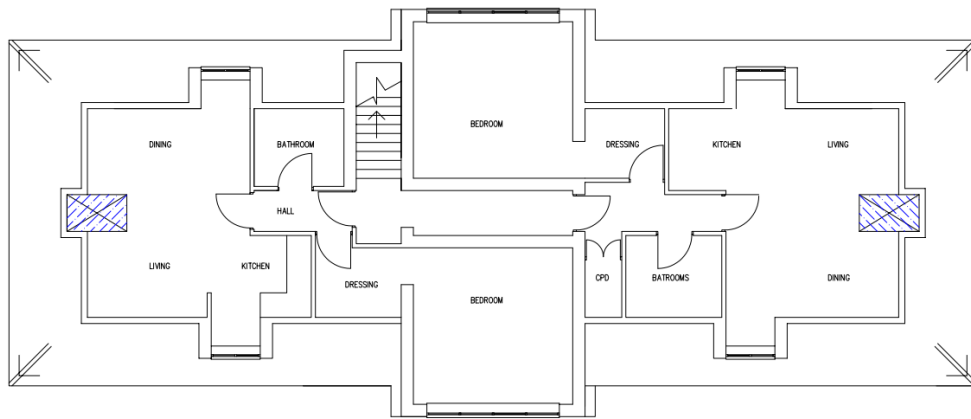


Figure 3 – Extract of Proposed First Floor Plans

- 4.5 Given that the proposed development relates to an existing building, there are no major construction works required to facilitate this development proposal. The only works required to the exterior of the building include the erection of windows into habitable rooms which are currently not served by natural light.
- 4.6 To ensure that the ground floor holiday accommodation units are accessible to all, a small ramp is proposed at the access point to the building.
- 4.7 Given the large size of the site, it is considered that adequate space for parking will accompany this proposed change of use. A large gravel area, positioned directly to the front of the existing building which this application relates to, provides ample space for the parking of multiple vehicles. Such space is considered to be adequate given the use of the proposed building along with a consideration as to the size of each of the proposed one-bedroom holiday accommodation units. An existing site access will also be utilised.
- 4.8 As the units are to provide holiday accommodation, national minimum space standards are not required to be complied with given the different way in which this type of accommodation is required, whereby occupiers will have a primary residence elsewhere and as a consequence requirements for storage and accommodation are reduced.

5 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (The Act) requires that decisions on planning applications be taken in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is also reinforced within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at Paragraph 2.

5.2 In assessing the planning policy context, consideration has been given to the adopted development plan and also to national planning guidance. All relevant documents are set out below in order of national and local levels.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (updated in July 2021) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The document sets out the Government's view of sustainable development and gives an overview of the economic, social and environmental roles which planning should play.

5.4 At the heart of the NPPF at Paragraph 11 lies the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' which sets out that for decision making this means;

- *Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- *Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:*
 - *The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or*
 - *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

5.5 Section 6 of the NPPF sets out the Government's objective of building a strong, competitive economy, with particular focus on supporting a prosperous rural economy.

5.6 Paragraph 84 provides that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas through conversion of existing buildings. It is also stated that decision should allow for sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside and enable the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities.

5.7 Paragraph 85 continues to state 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.

Furthermore, the use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

- 5.8 Section 8 of the NPPF relates to the need to create healthy and safe communities, and requires development to promote social interaction, be safe and accessible and enable and support healthy lifestyles.
- 5.9 Section 9 of the NPPF relates to the need to promote sustainable transport. At paragraph 107 it notes that when setting parking standards, a number of factors should be taken into account including: the accessibility of the development; the type, mix and use of development; the availability of public transport; and local car ownership levels. At paragraph 111 it notes that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 5.10 Section 11 of the NPPF relates to the need to make effective use of land and encourages the redevelopment of underutilised land and buildings and prioritises the use of previously developed land. More specifically, at paragraph 120 c) the NPPF gives substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land, with 120 d) promoting and supporting the development of under-utilised land and buildings. Paragraph 122 also notes that planning policies and decisions should reflect changes in demand for land.
- 5.11 Section 12 of the NPPF notes that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. At paragraph 130 it notes that development should: function well and add to the overall quality of the area; be visually attractive; be sympathetic to local character and history; and optimise the potential of the site.

The Development Plan

- 5.12 The Development Plan for the site currently comprises of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014) and the Part 2 Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough (2019).

North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2016)

- 5.13 The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (NNJCS) is the strategic Part 1 Local Plan for the Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough areas of North Northamptonshire Council and covers the period 2011 to 2031. The plan sets out the key strategic policies and the long-term vision and objectives for the entire plan area for the period up to 2031. Those policies considered relevant to the determination of this application are outlined below.

- 5.14 Policy 1 of the NNJCS sets out the LPA's presumption in favour of sustainable development. When considering development proposals the Local Planning Authority will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible.
- 5.15 Policy 3 requires development to be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscape setting.
- 5.16 Policy 6 notes that the local planning authorities will seek to maximise the delivery of development through the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings.
- 5.17 Policy 7 provides that development should support and enhance community services and facilities.
- 5.18 Policy 8 sets out the north Northamptonshire place shaping principles. This includes a number of criteria, including the need to create a distinctive local character and ensure quality of life and safer and healthier communities through protecting amenity and preventing development from resulting in unacceptable levels of noise.
- 5.19 Policy 11 sets out the distribution of development across the urban and rural areas of North Northamptonshire. Development in the rural areas will be limited to that required to support a prosperous rural economy. Furthermore, rural diversification and the appropriate re-use of rural buildings will be supported in accordance with Policy 25.
- 5.20 Policy 25 of the NNJCS relates to rural economic development and diversification. It sets out that sustainable opportunities to develop and diversify the rural economy that are of an appropriate scale for their location and respect the environmental quality and character of the rural area will be supported. Furthermore, encouragement will be afforded to the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities and the enhancement of local supply networks. Sustainable rural diversification activities should seek to complement and support the ongoing viability of the existing business. Where proposals involve the re-use of rural buildings, a mix of uses will be supported, including tourist accommodation.

The Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough (Part 2) (2019)

- 5.21 The Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough (PBW) (Part 2) was adopted by the Council on 26th February 2019 and aims to guide future planning decisions in the area. Those policies considered relevant to the determination of this application are outlined below.
- 5.22 Policy SS1 sets out that the village boundaries maps will be used to interpret whether sites are within or adjoining villages for the purposes of Policies 11 and 13 of the NNJCS.

6 PLANNING JUSTIFICATION

6.1 The following section seeks to provide justification for the proposed development in light of the content of the relevant planning policies identified above.

Development Principle

- 6.2 The proposed development is seeking full planning permission for the change of use from a stables and ancillary accommodation at first floor level to form 4.no holiday accommodation units for short and long term lettings. Despite the site being located outside, but adjacent to, the village confines of Sywell, there is sufficient Policy contained within both the NPPF and the adopted local Development Plan which supports such a proposal, given its significant contribution to the local rural economy.
- 6.3 It should be noted that Policy 1 of the NNJCS is clear that when considering development proposals, the local planning authority must take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out within the revised NPPF.
- 6.4 Section 6 of the NPPF seeks to offer support to create a prosperous rural economy. It is considered that this development proposal will help contribute towards this objective of the NPPF, given the proposed nature of the scheme for holiday accommodation units. Such accommodation will help to support the existing rural business of the Bluebell Woods B&B and attract further tourism to this rural area of North Northamptonshire, which in turn will offer support to local businesses within the surrounding areas.
- 6.5 More specifically, the proposed development will have direct benefits for the established rural business of the Overstone Solarium, positioned towards the south of the site, as demonstrated by the accompanying letters attached to **Appendix C**. This park comprises of circa 200 permanent homes along with 800 units used solely for holiday accommodation purposes. However, the large number of permanent residents of the park are required to vacate their home for a minimum of 2 months every year, with staff members also not permitted to live on the site itself. As such, this creates a high demand in the locality for low cost, and often smaller short term accommodation units.
- 6.6 With there currently being an extremely low supply of small affordable homes within this area of North Northamptonshire, it is considered that the proposed development will offer a number of units for short term lettings, where there is a real need for such accommodation. With one of the flats already being home to an employee of the Overstone Solarium, it is evident that the units provide appropriate accommodation that can ultimately support established local rural businesses, including that of the Overstone Solarium.

- 6.7 In addition, with a number of employees working within the confines of the application site, including a housekeeper and maintenance provider, it is considered that the proposed units will further support local employment. Both of these members of staff live locally and as such, the proposed accommodation units will provide further affordable short term options within an area where the majority of dwellings comprise of large, family sized homes and where affordable accommodation is scarce.
- 6.8 Furthermore, Paragraph 84 of the NPPF provides additional support for this proposed development. It is considered that the expansion of all types of rural businesses via the conversion of existing buildings should be supported, in particular if such a conversion is to allow for and promote sustainable rural tourism. As the initial analysis above has provided, this proposed development seeks to convert the existing building located at No.79 Ecton Lane, which was previously home to a small stable block and ancillary accommodation, into 4 no one-bedroom holiday accommodation units, thus utilising an existing building to promote sustainable tourism. With the well-established Bluebell Woods B&B, which featured on Channel 4 'Four In A Bed' series, also positioned within the confines of the site, it is determined that this change of use to an existing building will help and support the expansion of an existing and established rural business which provides facilities for tourist accommodation.
- 6.9 It is also of real importance to highlight Paragraph 85 of the NPPF, which also falls under this objective of the NPPF, which seeks to support a prosperous rural economy. Whilst the development of a site which lies adjacent to or further afield from the settlement boundary may not usually be supported by the adopted Development Plan, the development of such a site which seeks to support a local rural business will be supported. Such an approach is further encouraged if the proposed development, which aims to support a local business, utilises previously developed land.
- 6.10 Although the application site lies outside of the village confines for Sywell, it is however situated directly adjacent to the village boundary. With the aim of this development to support the existing rural business of a B&B and offer support to nearby local businesses, it is considered that such a development is consistent with the approach adopted within the NPPF. The LPA should further encourage this proposal as it seeks to utilise previously developed land, and make most effective use of an underutilised building, which otherwise will remain vacant.
- 6.11 Given the above, it is considered that this development proposal will contribute significantly towards the creation of a prosperous rural economy, and as such, is in full accordance with the adopted approach set out at Section 6 of the NPPF.

- 6.12 Furthermore, Section 11 of the NPPF seeks to make most effective use of land through directly encouraging and promoting the redevelopment of underutilised land and buildings, whilst specifically prioritising the use of previously developed land. Paragraph 120 c) gives substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land, whilst Paragraph 120 d) promotes and supports the development of under-utilised land and buildings.
- 6.13 It should be noted that historically, the equestrian use of the site was far more intensive than the current operations which are undertaken at the site at present, with the Applicants daughter, who has now vacated the home, competing in equestrian activities at a high level. As such, a number of equestrian related employees previously worked at the site, therefore establishing a real need for accommodation units required specifically for those working within equestrian related employment. However, whilst some equestrian use continues to take place within the confines of the site, the scale of this use has since been reduced significantly. Therefore, there are no longer any individuals employed at the site for equestrian purposes, thus lowering the demand for equestrian related accommodation within the area. This is further evidenced by the supporting marketing strategy.
- 6.14 Nonetheless, the justification to allow for equestrian related accommodation at the site is not drastically different to that of the current proposal, given the short term, low cost nature of the accommodation proposed to support the local demand within an area where affordable accommodation is in short supply. As such, this proposed development will ensure that most effective use is made of a vacant building to support local needs, given the reduced demand for equestrian related accommodation resulting from alterations to the use of the application site.
- 6.15 Subsequently, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed development is in full compliance with the above strategy as this scheme will utilise a building for purposes that will support the local rural economy, which otherwise would remain vacant and underutilised. As such, it is in the LPA's interest to approve this development proposal which seeks to make most effective use of an existing building which, without granting consent to this application, would remain vacant and underutilised, contrary to the adopted approach contained within the NPPF.
- 6.16 Weight should also be afforded to Paragraph 122 of the NPPF which recognises changes in the demand for land. With this in mind, given that the Applicant no longer requires the existing building for its consented use, due to a reduction in the local demand for equestrian related accommodation, the LPA should adopt a positive and proactive approach to this proposal, in accordance with the approach contained within the NPPF.

- 6.17 The above assessment is also supported by the adopted approach encompassed within the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. Policy 11 places a restriction on development within rural areas, except for those proposals which help to support a prosperous rural economy. Given that the above has demonstrated that this proposed scheme will help to support the local rural economy through the provision of additional tourist accommodation in an area where there is an established demand for such, it is considered that this development is in full compliance with Policy 11 of the NNJCS.
- 6.18 This conclusion is further supported by the fact that Policy 11 also encourages and supports the re-use of existing buildings, which this application ultimately complies with, as the above has demonstrated.
- 6.19 The above policy is also accompanied by supporting text within the NNJCS contained in table 1, which makes direct reference to the spatial role of the open countryside, which is of real significance to this application as the site itself is classified as being located within such a designated area. The objective set out herein is to support development within the open countryside for the purpose of leisure and tourism, as well as supporting other appropriate rural businesses. As this planning application will provide for one-bedroom holiday accommodation units, it is considered that the scheme will further enhance the leisure and tourism industry within the open countryside areas. Therefore the scheme is in full compliance with the spatial strategy for North Northamptonshire's open countryside areas.
- 6.20 As aforementioned, the scheme will also help to support the Overstone Solarium, offering alternative accommodation during times of need for permanent residents and staff. Through this scheme, many of the residents and staff will be able to remain within the local area, despite the two month restriction in place at the Solarium, thus maintaining and further enhancing the leisure and tourism industry within North Northamptonshire.
- 6.21 Furthermore, the approach to the open countryside also aims to encourage diversification through the re-use of existing buildings and promotion of new tourism. With the development involving a change of use to an existing and under utilised building, whilst also promoting further tourism within the area, it reasonable to determine that this application is in full accordance with the LPA's adopted spatial strategy to the open countryside. The building is no longer required for its previous use, however a valuable addition to local housing supply can be provided by this proposed scheme, which has also been supported by the Parish Council on this basis.
- 6.22 Policy 25 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy is also of real importance to this development proposal, given its reference to rural economic development. This policy, amongst others, aims to support the expansion of existing tourist facilities within the rural

areas of North Northamptonshire. With the existing and established Bluebell Woods B&B positioned at the site, it is considered that No.79 Ecton Lane already benefits from a strong reputation in offering tourist accommodation to numerous visitors within the area.

- 6.23 Through the approval of this development proposal, the existing business on site will be able to expand and operate on a greater level than it currently does, offering further tourist accommodation. The one-bedroom holiday accommodation units will offer potential visitors to the area with a greater variety in type of accommodation which they can chose from, thus boosting opportunities for increased levels of rural tourism with the area. This not only will expand and encourage growth of the existing business, but will also be to the wider benefit of the Northamptonshire area, encouraging a number of tourists to visit the area and support other nearby local businesses and employment opportunities.
- 6.24 With the area benefiting from a number of tourist attractions, including stately homes, country parks, shopping complexes and other attractions, it is considered that such a development will help to support these facilities thus enhancing the economy of the entire North Northamptonshire area, and not just the local rural economy. Through the provision of holiday accommodation, this development will supply local attractions with numerous visitors to the area throughout the year, thus providing wider benefits beyond the existing business located at No.79 Ecton Lane.
- 6.25 The Parish Council have also demonstrated their support of this proposal, subject to the ownership of the flats being linked to the main house associated with the site and thus not being sold as a separate dwelling to No.79 Ecton Lane. With the associated B&B at the property, a link to the main dwelling at the site can be achieved, with the potential for meals to be provided to the occupants of the proposed flats via the existing B&B arrangements. As such, the applicant would be happy to agree to a condition attached to an approval setting out a restriction on the occupancy of the proposed units based on providing a link to the main dwelling of No.79 Ecton Lane.
- 6.26 Given all of the above, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed development will provide for tourist and short term accommodation within the rural area of North Northamptonshire, that will promote further tourism and allow for an existing business to expand within the confines of the site. The benefits of this development will also filter into the surrounding areas and the wider North Northamptonshire district. In addition, the proposal will make most effective use of an existing and underutilised building, and therefore should be supported by the LPA. As such, the proposed development is therefore considered to be in full accordance with Policies 11, and 25 of the NNJCS as well as Sections 6 and 11 of the NPPF.

Design and Appearance

- 6.27 Given that this application is in relation to an existing building, it has already been established that the LPA are content with the exterior design and appearance of the property, as confirmed in their approval of the application for a stables and ancillary accommodation at first floor level ref. WP/2012/01064.
- 6.28 To facilitate the development, small windows will be erected to ensure that all habitable rooms are provided with sufficient natural light. This will marginally alter the appearance of the existing building, however such minor changes are considered to be acceptable given their minimal visual impact upon the existing building. Overall, it is therefore considered that the changes proposed, given their minor nature, would not significantly impact upon the appearance of the existing building, thus maintaining the visual amenity of the application site. This is illustrated by the below extract.

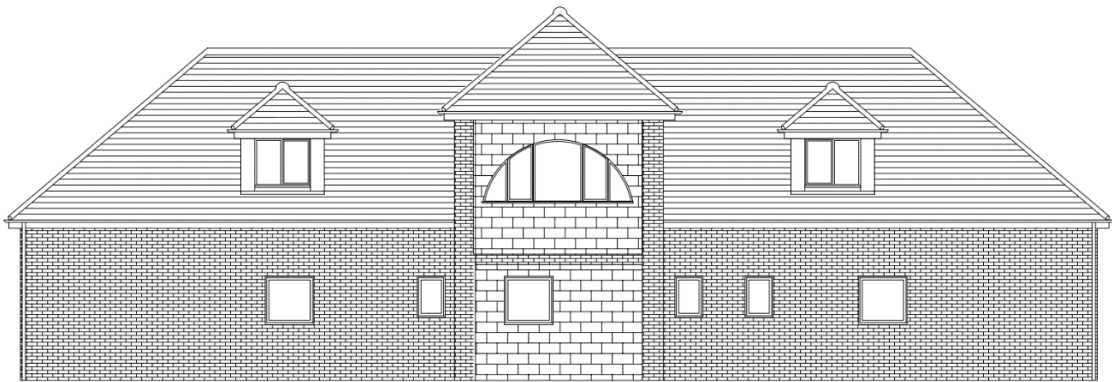


Figure 4 – Proposed western elevation with inclusion of new windows into all habitable rooms

- 6.29 As the interior alterations have already occurred, despite being in breach of a condition attached to the previous consent for this building, no other major alterations are required to facilitate this proposed development for the change of use to create 4.no holiday accommodation units.
- 6.30 It is therefore considered that the proposed development, based on its design approach, would result in a scheme that is in full accordance with the prevailing character and appearance of the existing building, the site itself and the wider surrounding area. As such, the proposal is held to be in full accordance with Policy 8 of the NNJCS and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

- 6.31 For the previous applications in relation to this existing building, the LPA refused the scheme due to a poor standard of residential amenity based on a lack of windows within all habitable rooms and the respective one-bedroom 'apartments' not all meeting the prescribed national minimum space standards. The LPA also refused the aforementioned applications due to a

failure to demonstrate that the proposed 'apartments' satisfied category 2 of the national accessibility standards as a minimum.

- 6.32 As such it was held by the LPA that the past applications in relation to this existing building at No.79 Ecton Lane, failed to comply with Policies 8 (e) (ii), 30(b) and 30(c) of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy as well as Paragraph 130 of the NPPF.
- 6.33 Despite the above, it is material to note that this application seeks full planning permission for 4 no holiday accommodation units for short and long term lettings, rather than 4 no unrestricted residential dwellings, which was the proposed development submitted within the previous applications submitted to the LPA. As the type of accommodation provided will not have the same requirements for storage demand, given that any future occupant will benefit from a main residence elsewhere, compliance with the National Minimum Space Standards is unnecessary and should not be required as a result of the nature of the proposed units. Notwithstanding, it is of significance that the proposed holiday let units will offer a high standard of amenity to any temporary future occupant.
- 6.34 Although it is acknowledged that the flats fail to meet category 2 of the accessibility standards, it is considered that given the nature of the use of the units that these flats are not required to comply with such standards, given that they will host temporary residents. Notwithstanding, the ground floor flats are accessible to all, with a ramp from the gravel area in place to give direct access from the parking area to the ground floor units. In addition, with extant permission for the first floor units, albeit for equestrian related use, it is considered that such standards should not apply to this proposed scheme.
- 6.35 Nonetheless, it is material to note that the Applicant has afforded consideration to the standard of accommodation to be offered to any future user of the holiday let units. Therefore, to address the LPA's previous concerns, revised floor plans and elevations accompany this detailed planning application, ensuring that windows are placed into all habitable rooms within the proposed holiday accommodation units, including all bedrooms and living spaces. Although not a strict requirement given the proposed nature of the use, this will offer any future occupant with a good standard of amenity with adequate levels of natural light entering all habitable rooms. The inclusion of such windows will also provide the occupants with a good standard of outlook to the surrounding areas, which is characterised by open countryside.
- 6.36 Notwithstanding, it is considered that the amenity of surrounding properties, including any occupant, permanent or temporary, of the main dwelling at No.79 Ecton Lane will be protected and will not be detrimentally impacted as a result of this proposed development. Within previous submissions to the LPA it was held that sufficient separation distances would

be provided thus ensuring that an adequate level of residential amenity is experienced by occupants of neighbouring properties as well as any future occupants of the proposed holiday accommodation units.

- 6.37 The flats themselves will also be fully furnished and residents often take comfort in the security provided at the site. Despite there being a slight shortfall in national minimum space standards, it is material to note that any temporary resident will have full access to the entire 30 acre estate for amenity purposes. Therefore, the level of amenity on offer to future occupants of the proposed units is considered to be of a high quality.
- 6.38 Nonetheless, the first floor flats have always been capable of occupation, albeit for equestrian related use. Under the granting of planning permission ref. WP/2012/01064, the LPA accepted that the accommodation was adequate, and therefore the LPA should adopt a consistent approach when determining this detailed planning application.
- 6.39 Residents will also have direct access to an external storage area should this be required.
- 6.40 It should also be highlighted that under the previous application, the LPA raised a number of concerns regarding the level of noise generated from existing uses of the site. This was the result of the Applicants failure to provide sufficient details of such uses within the previous submissions relating to this building.
- 6.41 To provide the LPA with sufficient context, the current use of the site comprises of a large residential dwelling, which is home to the applicant and the existing B&B business, as well as outbuildings used for storage purpose and large fields which are grazed by horses. Some equine related activity does also occur at the site. Nonetheless, such uses are not considered to generate significant levels of noise that would be to the detriment of the temporary occupants of the proposed one-bedroom holiday accommodation units. Further, it is evident that the LPA considered that the noise environment for the approved equine restricted accommodation was satisfactory in granting planning permission in 2012. The use of the accommodation for holiday/guest accommodation is therefore not materially different in that respect.
- 6.42 Furthermore, there are no commercial activities currently taking place within the confines of the application site, with the previous wedding venue ceasing to exist. The applicant has no intention of extending the license to run weddings from the site, which expired this year. Nonetheless, the flats are properly insulated and therefore benefit from noise mitigation measures through the design of these existing units.
- 6.43 Given this detailed information relating to the existing uses of the site at No.79 Ecton Lane it is reasonable to suggest that any occupants will not be adversely impacted by noise levels,

thus protecting the amenity that can be enjoyed. Such existing uses generate very little noise pollution and subsequently, the proposed development is considered to be in full compliance with Policy 8(e) of the NNJCS.

- 6.44 Overall, given that both existing and future amenity will be protected despite the proposed development, it is considered that the scheme is in full compliance with Policy 8 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy as well as Sections 8 and 12 of the NPPF.

Access and Parking

- 6.45 Policy 8 (b) of the NNJCS sets out a number of requirements that new development should achieve with regards to highway, pedestrian and other sustainable transport matters and also seeks to ensure a satisfactory means of access and provision for parking, servicing and manoeuvring in accordance with adopted standards.
- 6.46 An existing access point will be utilised, located off of Ecton Lane, which serves the existing building and the main dwelling of No.79. Sufficient visibility splays are present at this established access point.
- 6.47 Furthermore, ample space within the site confines is available for car parking space, with a large gravel area directly to the east of the existing building offering adequate space for parking, should any of the temporary occupants of the proposed holiday let accommodation units be reliant upon their privately owned car during their stay.
- 6.48 It is also significant to note that the Local Highways Authority raised no objection on highway safety and capacity grounds in relation to the previous application at the site, which sought permission to utilise the existing building for 4.no unrestricted residential apartments. Given a similar nature of use is proposed within this application, albeit more akin to temporary holiday accommodation, it is considered that such a conclusion should still stand as the site benefits from ample space for parking as well as a satisfactory and established means of access.
- 6.49 As previously concluded by the LPA, the space available for parking demonstrates that the development would be in full compliance with policy 8 (b) of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, the Northamptonshire Parking Standards. With identical parking arrangements proposed to that of the previously submitted scheme, it is therefore determined that this development should not be prevented or refused on highways grounds given that it would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the wider road network, in accordance with the approach adopted at Paragraph 111 of the NPPF.
- 6.50 Overall, given the proposed access and parking arrangements, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed development provides for satisfactory provision in relation to highway

safety matters. It is therefore considered that the proposed scheme is in full accordance with Policy 8 (b) of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy as well as Section 9 of the NPP.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This statement has been prepared to accompany a full planning application for the proposed development at No.79 Ecton Lane, Sywell, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN6 0BA.
- 7.2 The proposed development, which seeks retrospective planning permission, comprises of the change of use from a stables and 2.no flats for equine related tenants at first floor level to form 4.no holiday accommodation units for short and long term lettings. The internal configuration of the building will operate as it exists to date, with new windows provided within the rear elevation of the existing building to ensure that all habitable rooms benefit from adequate levels of natural light and a good standard of outlook.
- 7.3 Given the policy context surrounding the site, it has been established that the principle of development cannot be questioned. This supporting Planning Statement has set out that the proposed development will significantly contribute to creating a prosperous rural economy, through the provision of further tourist accommodation units at the application site, thus facilitating the expansion of an appropriate existing rural business. Such a use has also been illustrated as appropriate, despite the application site being located outside of the settlement confines of Sywell, and within the open countryside.
- 7.4 In addition, given the nature of the proposed use of the one-bedroom units, along with minor alterations to the existing building, it is considered that future occupants will experience a good level of amenity without impacting the amenity of the existing occupants of neighbouring properties. Furthermore, with only minor alterations proposed to the exterior elevations of the existing building, through the inclusion of additional windows, it has been determined that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of its quality of design and impact upon the character and appearance of this rural area of North Northamptonshire.
- 7.5 As with the previous applications relating to this existing building at No.79 Ecton Lane, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed development is acceptable on matters relating to highway safety, given the proposed parking and access arrangements.
- 7.6 The above assessment has evidently demonstrated that the Applicant has overcome the reasons for refusal provided by the LPA within the previous application determined for this site. It has been demonstrated that the principle of development cannot be questioned due to the economic benefits to the local rural economy, and that noise need not be a concern

given the existing operations which take place at the application site. Furthermore, with the proposed nature of use as holiday let units, it is considered that accessibility standards and national minimum space standards need not be complied with, although the proposed units will continue to offer an excellent standard of amenity for any future occupant. Furthermore, with the amended plans including the addition of windows into all habitable rooms, it is determined that high quality living conditions can be provided.

7.7 As such, it has therefore been demonstrated that the proposed development is in full accordance with the various adopted local Development Plan documents, as well as national planning policies contained within the NPPF. We therefore respectfully request that the submitted application is approved by the LPA without delay.

Appendix A – Supporting Photographs of the Site





Appendix B – Decision Notice (Ref. WP/2012/01064)

Appendix C – Supporting Letters