
Planning, Design and Access Statement

Job Number: 3M-293

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Three Magnets Planning on behalf of the applicant, Mr Martin King who is seeking the change of use to equestrian and erection of 1 no. hay barn and 1 no. stable block with hardstanding at Sweetwater Lane, Thornbury, BS35 3JX.
- 1.2 The Planning, Design and Access Statement has considered the proposal in light of the adopted development plan, national policy and key material consideration from comparable sites planning history. It sets out the rationale for why it is considered that the proposals accord with the development plan and that the application should therefore be approved.
- 1.3 This statement describes the proposal, its context and planning history. This supporting statement should be read alongside the submitted application forms, and proposed plans. The remainder of this statement is structured as follows:
 - **Site Context** – provides a description of the site context and relevant planning history;
 - **The Proposed Development** – describes the proposed development and the supporting evidence provided;
 - **Planning Context** – sets out the national and local planning policy framework against which the application is to be considered;
 - **Planning Assessment and Conclusion** – evaluates the application proposal in the context of relevant planning policy framework and other material considerations to reach an overall conclusion.

2 The Site and Relevant Planning History

Site Context

- 2.1 The application site comprises existing agricultural fields (currently used for grazing) located to the north of Sweetwater Lane, Elberton. The site is approximately 2.05 ha in size and bound to the West by agricultural land. Further agricultural and equestrian land at Kyneton Park Lodge to the North. To the South are equestrian paddocks at Seven Oaks. The site itself comprises two interconnected fields with typical field boundaries i.e. hedges and rural stone walling along Sweetwater Lane.

- 2.2 The site is relatively flat and currently accessed via the existing access at the eastern end of the site. The eastern most field contains a small agricultural store which will be retained.

Planning Policy Designations and Constraints

- 2.3 An inspection of the South Gloucestershire Policies Map confirms that the site is not allocated or safeguarded for a specific form of development. The proposal site is located outside the settlement boundary of Elberton and overwashed by Green Belt.
- 2.4 The site is situated within Flood Zone 1 and as such is not considered to be at risk of flooding. The site is not located within a Conservation Area, nor within reasonable proximity of any Listed Buildings. There are no environmental designations impacting the site.

Relevant Planning History

- 2.5 The site has no known planning history, but the following applications for equestrian development are considered good examples of the planning issues relevant to the proposed development and the determination of this application:
- **P22/03979/F** – Change of use of land to equestrian (keeping of horses) as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). Erection of stable block (resubmission of P22/02419/F) – South View Farm Church Road, Rudgey, South Gloucestershire, BS35 3SH – Granted January 2023.
 - **P21/02645/F** – Change of use of land from agriculture to mixed agriculture and equestrian (retrospective) and erection of replacement stables – Kyneton Park Lodge Sweetwater Lane Thornbury South Gloucestershire BS35 3JX – Granted June 2021.
 - **P19/5455/F** – Erection of 1 no. hay barn and 1 no. stable block with hardstanding, access track and associated works – The Stables Adjacent To 'Severn Oaks' Sweetwater Lane, Thornbury, South Gloucestershire, BS35 3JX – Granted August 2019
 - **PT15/2691/F** – Erection of barn and associated access track and change of use of land from agricultural to equestrian use (as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). (Retrospective) – Seven Oaks, Sweetwater Lane, Alveston, South Gloucestershire – Granted September 2015.
- 2.6 The applications have been identified as they represent a very recent consideration of a comparable scheme at Rudgey and the planning history of surrounding sites on Sweetwater Lane that are now largely in equestrian use following the granting of planning permissions between 2015 and 2021.

3 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 Full planning permission is sought for the change of use to equestrian and erection of 1 no. hay barn and 1 no. stable block with hardstanding. The stable block is formed in an 'L' shape creating a semi-enclosed, semi-sheltered external area of hardstanding. The open hay barn is located just north of the stable block. The proposal use improves the existing access and provides accommodation for 5 horses with associated tack

room and adequate hardstanding for vehicle parking and turning.

4 Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 38 (3) of the Act confirms that the development plan consists of Regional Spatial Strategies and Development Plan Documents.
- 4.2 The Development Plan, therefore, currently comprises the South Gloucestershire Core Strategy (2013) and the Policies, Sites and Places Development Plan Document (2017).
- 4.3 In terms of national planning policy, significant weight is attached to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019). The document was updated in February 2019 and it sets out the Governments planning policies for England. Additional considerations include the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and relevant adopted supplementary planning guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.4 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021) is the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', as set out in Para. 11. For decision taking this means:
- “approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
1. 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; or
 2. specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”
- 4.5 The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The NPPF itself is clear at Paragraph 11 that planning applications should continue to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 12 goes on to confirm that any proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved.
- 4.6 For decision-taking, Para. 38 states that *“Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”*
- 4.7 NPPF Para. 137 states that *“The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts.*

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”.

- 4.8 NPPF Para, 138 sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt:
- A. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - B. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - C. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - D. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - E. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 4.9 NPPF Paragraph 147 states that “Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”.
- 4.10 Paragraph 148 of the NPPF confirms that “when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt...”
- 4.11 NPPF Para 149 lists forms of development that the LPA should not regard as inappropriate in the Green Belt. One exception is:
- *“the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it; South Gloucestershire Development Plan”*

South Gloucestershire Core Strategy (2013)

- 4.12 The Core Strategy was adopted in 2013 and is the key planning policy document for South Gloucestershire, setting out the general location of development, its type and scale, as well as protecting what is valued about the area.
- 4.13 **Policy CS1: High Quality Design** states that development proposals will be required to demonstrate, with relevance to the proposal, that:
- “Siting, form, scale, height, massing, detailing, colour and materials, are informed by, respect and enhance the character, distinctiveness and amenity of both the site and its context; and density and overall layout is well integrated with existing adjacent development and connected to the wider network of foot, cycle and public transport links;..”*
- 4.14 **Policy CS5: Location of Development** states with relevance to the proposal, that the North and East Fringes of the Bristol urban area are focuses for most new development. It states that *“other proposals for development in the Green Belt will need to comply with the provisions in the NPPF or relevant local plan policies in the Core Strategy”*.
- 4.15 **Policy CS8: Improving Accessibility** states that any car parking and vehicular site access should be well integrated into the proposal so that it supports the street scene and does not compromise walking, cycling and highway safety. Additionally, safe and secure cycle parking should be provided in accordance with the Council’s standards.

- 4.16 **Policy CS9: Managing The Environment and Heritage** states that “new development will be expected to conserve and enhance the natural environment avoiding and minimising impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity” *conserve and enhance the character, quality, distinctiveness and amenity of the landscape”.
- 4.17 **Policy CS34: Rural Areas** states that “Development proposal... will protect, conserve and enhance the rural areas distinctive character, beauty wildlife, landscape, biodiversity and heritage”.

South Gloucestershire Policies, Sites and Places DPD (2017)

- 4.18 The Policies, Sites and Places Plan (PSP Plan) was adopted on the 8th November 2017. The PSP Plan contains detailed planning policies which are used to manage new development and allocate and safeguard various sites for different types of development. The PSP Plan replaces those remaining ‘saved’ policies of the 2006 Local Plan and 2002 Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Key policies include:
- PSP1 Local Distinctiveness
 - PSP2 Landscape
 - PSP3 Trees and Woodland
 - PSP7 Development in the Green Belt
 - PSP19 Wider Biodiversity
 - PSP20 Flood Risk, Surface Water, and Watercourse Management
 - PSP30 Horse Related Development
 - PSP44 Open Space, Sport and Recreation

5 Planning Assessment and Conclusion

- 5.1 The following paragraphs set out the main planning issues and our analysis.

Development in the Green Belt

- 5.2 The NPPF states that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and will not be acceptable unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated that clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt; and any other harm. CS5 of the Core Strategy instructs that in the Green Belt, development proposals will need to accord with the provisions of the NPPF and relevant local plan policies in the Core Strategy. Horse related development policy is also relevant to this proposal and is covered by policies PSP30 and PSP44 of the PSP Plan discussed below.
- 5.3 Paragraph 149 of the NPPF outlines types of development which are appropriate within the Green Belt; One such form of development, which is relevant to this scheme, is ‘the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with existing use of land or change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as these facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it’.
- 5.4 The application is proposing the change of use of land from agricultural to equestrian use. The proposed building is for use as a stable block and hay barn associated with the adjacent land. The stable block and hay barn would be situated close to the

Eastern boundaries of the field, in close proximity to existing boundaries and a small existing agricultural building. The stable building is comprised of 5no. stables and a tack/store room. The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the outdoor recreation use outlined in paragraph 149 of the NPPF and is not considered to harm the openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, it is considered that the change of use of the land would have no materially greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt than the existing agricultural use in a similar manner to other equestrian permissions in the immediate vicinity.

Horse Related Development

- 5.5 Adopted policy PSP30 supports proposals for horse related development outside of the defined urban areas and rural settlement boundaries provided it does not have an unacceptable impact in relation to the environment, residential amenity, highway safety and horse welfare.
- 5.6 The proposed stables would be located close to existing buildings including the existing agricultural store and nearby buildings at Sweetwater Cottage and Kyneton Park Lodge, which follows the general presumption in favour of situating new rural buildings close to existing buildings. There is an existing building on site, however this is an agricultural building that would not be suitable for the intended use as stables and by reason of the very small size of the building, would not lend itself to a conversion to a stable.
- 5.7 The applicant intends to keep up to 5no horses. It is considered that the internal layout provides sufficient accommodation and the field at over 2ha provides sufficient exercise area in line with British Horse Society Standards of 0.4-0.6ha per horse. There is also suitable access to various riding routes within the local area. Having regard to the need to ensure horse welfare is maintained, the applicant is happy for a suitably worded condition to be applied to limit the number of horses kept on the land to no more than 5.
- 5.8 Vehicular access is provided via the existing access to the agricultural store building. It is considered that the proposed change of use of the land for keeping horses would not be in a commercial capacity and would result in only a very minor increase in usage. Again, a suitably worded conditions could be applied if it is felt necessary to ensure that no commercial use takes place. The proposal provides a suitable and proportionate area of hardstanding to allow for loading and unloading of horses, and parking/turning in connection with the use.

Design and Landscape

- 5.9 The proposed stables have a dual pitch roof, with an external finish of timber boarding to the walls and profile tiles for the roof. It is considered that the design, scale and massing of the stable would be appropriate for the proposed use and the materials are typical of development of this nature. The overall appearance is considered appropriate for a rural location and in keeping with the landscape.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The planning history of surrounding sites indicate that the change of use to equestrian and erection of associated buildings is appropriate development in the Green Belt and acceptable development in the countryside.
- 6.2 From a review of the relevant development plan policy covering the site, it is considered that the development is in accordance with the development plan. The proposed plans show that the development can be achieved without harm to the Green Belt and meeting policy requirements for horse related development, transport, landscape and design.
- 6.3 In light of the above it is concluded that the granting of permission would accord with the development plan and there are no other material considerations that would indicate otherwise.