

Planning Statement

**Down Farm House, Down Farm
Lane, Tunworth, RG25 2LE**

Prepared For
Mr & Mrs Petre

3206
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CHARTERED TOWN PLANNERS

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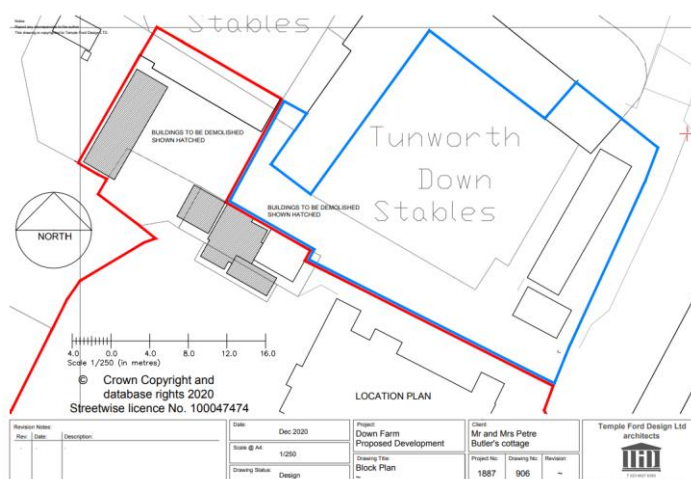


1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement supports the planning application for the erection of a garage and incidental outbuilding, together with the formation of a parking area and associated landscaping following the demolition of five stable blocks at Down Farm House, Down Farm Lane, Tunworth, RG25 2LE.
- 1.2 An Ecology Report (including Technical Note Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculations) has been prepared by Simlaw Ecology and accompanies the submission.
- 1.3 The application site is located to the north of Tunworth within a cluster of buildings which comprise dwellings and former commercial stable buildings. The site is outside any defined settlement boundary and is therefore considered as countryside. According to the Council's policies map, there are no other formal designations on the site.
- 1.4 The site has an area of 0.12 hectares and is well enclosed by surrounding buildings and hedges that run along the boundaries.

BACKGROUND AND PLANNING HISTORY

- 1.5 The existing use of the site has been subject to careful consideration as part of previous planning applications.
- 1.6 Recently the Local Planning Authority (LPA) considered planning application ref. 20/03035/FUL which sought permission for the demolition of existing stable and four sheds and replacement with open garage, ancillary living accommodation and store. The below plan was submitted as part of that application.



Location Plan 20/03035/FUL

- 1.7 The Officer Report considered, in some detail, the use of the site and the extent of residential curtilage associated with Down Farmhouse. It set out the following:

'Planning history at the site presents inconsistencies with the red line and extent of residential curtilage associated with Down Farmhouse. Application BDB/61629 sought the conversion of some of the stable buildings to ancillary accommodation serving Down Farmhouse (amongst other operational development). Notwithstanding an Officer recommendation for refusal; where it was considered that the stable buildings fell outside of the residential curtilage of the Farmhouse, the Development Control Committee resolved to grant planning permission. Notably, the red line included within this previous application encompasses the stables sought to be demolished and replaced as part of this current application. Nevertheless, there are historic previous uses at the site as part of an equestrian enterprise (stabling for racehorse training).

Whilst 'residential curtilage' is not defined in statute, it is generally understood as comprising of a small area forming part and parcel with the house or building which it contained or to which it was attached. Case law typically suggests that to fall within the curtilage of a building, land should serve the purpose of the building in some reasonably necessary or useful manner and there must be an intimate association. Nevertheless, in planning terms, 'curtilage' is a matter of fact and degree and there are no precise limits against which to test whether a building or an area lies within the curtilage. It is however widely accepted that ownership and function are useful tools. Previous planning history acknowledges that the stable building falls within the same



ownership and Down Farmhouse, however this does not conclusively imply that the buildings are located within the curtilage of the dwelling.

In support of the application, the Agent claims that the stables have a close functional, physical and visual relationship to the dwelling. Furthermore, the submitted Planning Statement states that the stables and outbuildings have been used in association with Down Farmhouse since 2004 when the racing training enterprise ceased. During an Officer site visit, it was observed that some of the outbuildings to be removed were being used for the storage of domestic items, but there was no evidence that the stable building was being used for domestic purposes. Notably, there is no planning history for a change of use of the site for ancillary residential purposes, nor are there any applications for a lawful development certificate for the use of the land for domestic ancillary purposes. Nevertheless, based on the information provided and observations made during a site visit, it is likely that the use of the site as incidental to the main dwelling now be immune from enforcement action. On that basis, it is considered that the erection of a garage/store/office incidental to Down Farmhouse is principally acceptable.

Some of the additional former stables have been converted to provide additional dwellings within the farmyard context.'

- 1.8 Planning application ref. 20/03035/FUL was granted permission on 26th March 2021 subject to five conditions.
- 1.9 The most recent permission for the site relates to a Section 73 application (ref. 22/00839), which sought to vary Condition 1 of planning permission ref. 20/03035/FUL, to include dormer windows and a flue. The Officer Report prepared as part of that application concluded with the following in relation to the extent of residential curtilage:

'Under the previous application, it was acknowledged that the planning history at the site presented inconsistencies with the red line and extent of residential curtilage associated with Down Farmhouse. Application BDB/61629 sought the conversion of (amongst other operational development) some of the stable buildings to ancillary accommodation serving Down Farmhouse. Notwithstanding an Officer recommendation for refusal; where it was considered that the stable buildings fell



outside of the residential curtilage of the Farmhouse, the Development Control Committee resolved to grant planning permission. Notably, the red line included within this previous application encompassed the stables sought to be demolished and replaced as part of application 20/03035/FUL. As such, notwithstanding the historic use of the stables as part of equestrian enterprise (stabling for racehorse training) whilst the stable building was not considered to fall within the residential curtilage of the site, it was considered to be an incidental use to the main dwelling.'

- 1.10 In light of the above, the Council has most recently concluded that the stable buildings included within the red line were incidental to the main dwellinghouse at Down Farm House. This application includes those stable buildings and the others immediately adjacent the site, which make up the former stable yard. Therefore, on that basis and in line with the previous decisions made relating to this site, the demolition of the stable buildings and the erection of a garage and outbuilding incidental to Down Farm House is acceptable in principle.

PROPOSAL

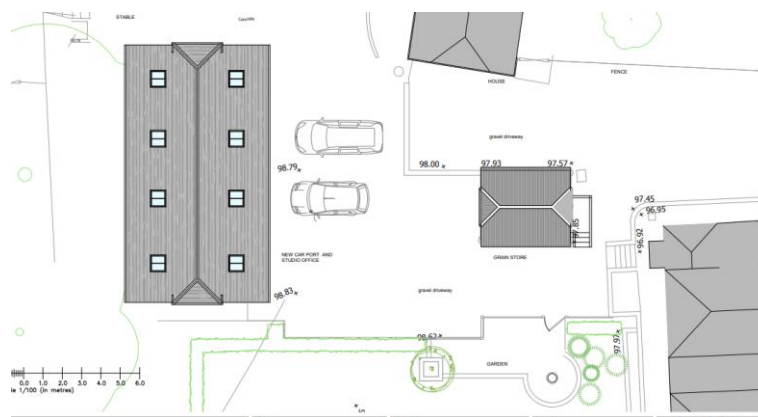
- 1.11 The application proposes the erection of a garage and incidental outbuilding, together with the formation of a parking area and associated landscaping following the demolition of five stable blocks at Down Farm House, Down Farm Lane, Tunworth, RG25 2LE.
- 1.12 The proposal would remove five existing stable buildings which were formally used in connection with a commercial livery business. The buildings have become tired and are no longer fit for purpose or safe for the keeping of horses, as demonstrated in the photographs below.



- 1.13 All of the stable buildings would require extensive works to bring them to a standard that a commercial livery would expect. Given the amount of work and the relatively constrained nature of the site, with residential properties located on three sides, it is simply no longer viable to be operated as a commercial livery.
- 1.14 More recently, the buildings have been used incidental to the residential use of Down Farm House. Following the grant of planning permission ref. 20/03035/FUL which permitted the demolition of existing stable and four sheds and replacement with open garage, ancillary living accommodation and store, the applicants are seeking instead to demolish all of the dilapidated, unsightly stable blocks on site and use the land more effectively. Furthermore, instead of erecting a large single garage block permitted as part of permission ref. 20/03035/FUL, the applicants are seeking permission to erect two smaller outbuildings of a much more modest scale and sympathetic design.
- 1.15 The garage building permitted as part of permission ref. 20/03035/FUL comprised a first-floor element with ancillary living accommodation. The proposed building measured 13m in length, 7.5m in depth and with its accommodation in the roof space, measured 6.3m in height.

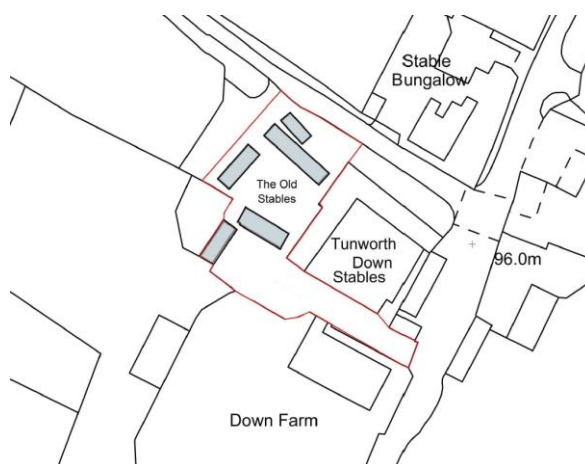
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Garage with ancillary accommodation above (Permission ref. 20/03035/FUL)

- 1.16 The two outbuildings proposed as part of this current application would be of a scale and appearance which would be far more reflective of the rural context and character of this out of settlement countryside location.
- 1.17 The existing stable blocks total approximately 155 sq.m. in floor area and are spread out across the land, in a courtyard formation.

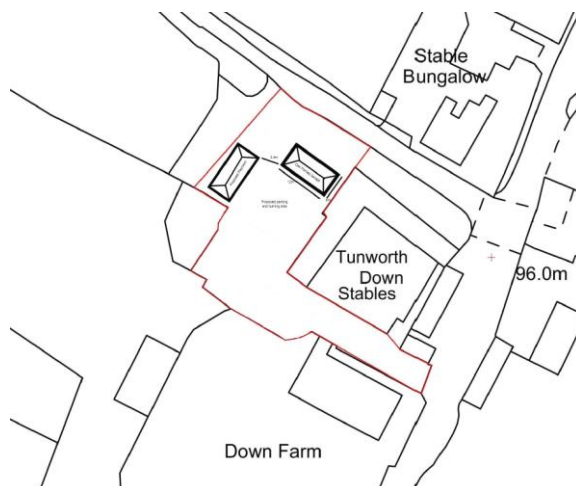


Existing Site Plan (with the buildings to be demolished highlighted in grey)

- 1.18 The proposed outbuildings as part of this current application would measure 12m in length and 6m in depth. The buildings would be single storey and measure 5m in height. The proposed outbuildings would have a total floor area of approximately 140sq.m, therefore resulting in a net reduction of 15sq.m. They would also consolidate the built form currently spread across the site so that it is centred round a courtyard area which would provide a parking and turning space.

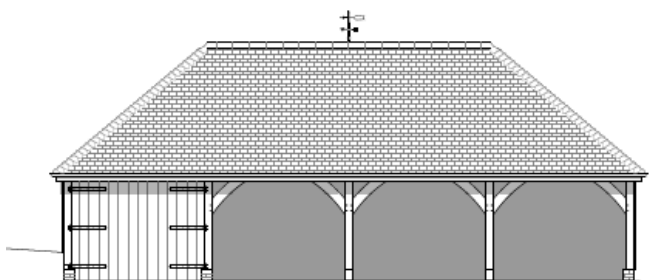
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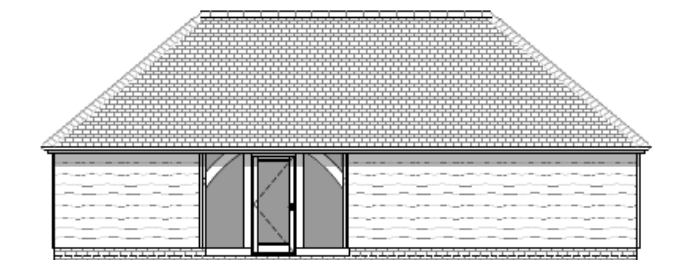


Proposed Site Layout

- 1.19 The design of the outbuildings reflect detailing of local rural vernacular; low roof lines, barn style appearance, hipped roofs, small casement style windows. Full height windows reflect a stable/barn door appearance. The front elevations of the outbuildings are shown below.



Proposed Garage Building



Proposed Outbuilding

- 1.20 The siting and orientation of these two outbuildings ensures that they remain physically and functional close to the host dwelling at Down House Farm, whilst providing ample space between the buildings to provide vehicular access to the existing track that runs along the northern boundary of the application site.



2 POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The relevant Development Plan for the consideration of this planning application is the Adopted Local Plan 2011 – 2029 (BDLP). Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents are material considerations such as Design and Sustainability, Housing, Parking Standards and Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 is also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 2.2 Policy SD1 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011 - 2029 sets out that the council will take a positive approach to determining proposals that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development within the NPPF, working proactively with applicants to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. The Policy also establishes that applications that are in accordance with the policies in the Local Plan, will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Consideration of the relevant Local Plan Policies are provided below.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT AND PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND

- 2.3 As set out above, the site has historically been used as a commercial livery and this has been noted by officers, as recently as within the Officer Report for application ref. 20/03035/FUL (and the subsequent S73 application). More recently the site has been in use associated with the host residential property at Down Farm House. Officers noted that *'it was considered to be an incidental use to the main dwelling'*. On that basis, officers concluded that *'it is considered that the erection of a garage/store/office incidental to Down Farmhouse is principally acceptable.'*
- 2.4 This application also seeks to demolish the stable blocks, albeit this application includes all of the buildings formed around the courtyard.
- 2.5 The NPPF definition of Previously Developed Land or Brownfield Land is:

'Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.'



- 2.6 The application site, therefore, constitutes previously development land and comprises buildings which have been accepted by the Council to be in an incidental use to the main dwelling at Down House Farm. This proposal simply seeks to demolish the existing buildings and erect two outbuildings which would also be in an incidental use to the enjoyment of the main dwelling. Therefore, it must follow that the current proposal is acceptable in principle.
- 2.7 In addition, as set out above, the proposal would result in a net reduction of built form by 15 sq.m. The proposal would also consolidate the built form currently spread across the site so that it is centred round a courtyard area which would provide a parking and turning space. This would bring about a planning benefit to be weighed in the balance.

DESIGN, IMPACTON CHARACTER OF THE AREA AND WIDER LANDSCAPE

- 2.8 Local Planning Policy CN9 requires development proposals to be of high quality, sustainable in design, construction and layout. Local Planning Policy EM1 permits development which demonstrates that proposals are sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area concerned. Paying particular regard to; b) the visual amenity and scenic quality c) the setting of a settlement, including important views to, across, within and out of the settlements
- 2.9 Local Planning Policy EM10 requires proposals to be of high quality, based upon a robust designed approach where they are required to respect the local environment and amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with such principles; b) provide a high quality of amenity of occupants of developments and neighbouring properties, having regard to such issues as overlooking, access to natural light, outlook and amenity space in accordance with the Design and Sustainability SPD c) have due regard to the density, scale, layout and history of surrounding area and the relationship to neighbouring buildings, landscapes and heritage assets e) provide appropriate parking provision, in terms of design, layout and location, in accordance with the adopted parking standards
- 2.10 The prevailing character is rural, with development often either comprising large dwellings set within spacious plots or centred around a courtyard. Some properties front the highway, others are located in backland positions. Whilst the site sits in a cluster of buildings, these are interspaced by access drives serving development set behind frontage development which includes residential, equestrian and agricultural buildings with open fields beyond.



- 2.11 The application site is located within a backland position and is bound by existing development and is already served with an access, albeit shared with the existing backland development that adjoins it.
- 2.12 The design of outbuildings is considered to appropriately reflect the historical merits of surrounding buildings through the integration of a half-hipped roof and a standard traditional vertical rhythm between fenestrations. The proposed Oak Frame material with reduced amounts of glazing is considered a neutral palate reflective of the traditional grain of area. In any case, the orientation of the site and the setback positioning of the site means there is little to no visibility from the public realm. In this regard, this element of design is therefore considered acceptable.
- 2.13 It must also be noted that the proposal seeks to demolish five stable blocks which feature flat roofs and are of a relatively poor, functional design. They do not contribute to the rural character of the site.
- 2.14 Given the proximity of residential properties in the locality, the reuse of this previously developed site from a commercial livery to buildings incidental to the residential use of Down Farm House would be an improvement and an appropriate use of the land. Furthermore, given that the site is adjacent and accessed from an existing drive that serves residential properties the use of the site for residential development over commercial or business use would be far more suitable and not harmful to the amenities of existing occupiers that share the access or are in close proximity to the site.
- 2.15 Policy EM1 of the BDLP is the broad ranging landscape policy that lists extensive criteria to ensure protection of the Borough's landscapes. Essentially proposals must demonstrate that they are sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area concerned. Particular regard must be given including visual amenity and scenic quality and the setting of settlements and important views.
- 2.16 The development of this site would not visually or physically encroach further into the countryside beyond that of the existing previously developed site. The height and form of the proposed development is single storey. The buildings would be largely screened by existing higher ridge lines of surrounding development, whether that be residential, agricultural or equine. The existing tree and hedgerow field boundaries would further screen the site.



- 2.17 The proposed development would not diminish the prevailing form of the locality. The proposal would result in an appropriate re-use of this previously developed site whilst not detracting from the character of the wider landscape.

IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

- 2.18 The design of the outbuildings has been carefully considered to ensure against any material loss of amenity to neighbouring properties. The nearest adjacent property is The Old Stables, formerly known as 'Tunworth Down Stables'. As shown on the submitted plans, the proposed outbuildings would be no closer to this building than the existing stable blocks. Given the replacement buildings would also be single storey and of similar scale and massing, there would be no harm in terms of loss of light or an overbearing impact. The proposed outbuildings would not feature any windows on the side elevations looking onto that property. As such, there will be no overlooking of the property at The Old Stables.

IMPACT ON TREES

- 2.19 The only element of the scheme which would result in any development within close proximity to a tree on site is the demolition of one of the stable blocks. The replacement outbuildings would be sited away from any nearby trees and not near to their respective Root Protection Areas (RPAs). These trees would therefore be completely unaffected given the location of the proposal. The previous planning application which related to the demolition of the stable block nearest to the tree on site provided an assessment of any impact to the tree and confirmed the extent of the RPAs. Given it is now proposed to site the development even further from the location of the previously approved development, there would be no impact to nearby trees and the proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy EM1 of the Local Plan.

HIGHWAYS AND PARKING

- 2.20 The application site is to be served by the existing access that serves the site which also serves Down Farm House.
- 2.21 The site has historically been used as a commercial livery, thereby the use of the buildings incidental to the residential use of Down House Farm would offer an improvement over the existing servicing practices for the site. There would clearly be a net decrease in vehicular movements as a result of the loss of the commercial livery, which without control by condition could intensify without express permission from the Local Planning Authority.



- 2.22 The garaging would provide additional car parking spaces and a relatively large turning space would be retained to the front. Therefore, it is not considered that the scheme would result in any highway concerns.

BIODIVERSITY, POLLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- 2.23 The Local Planning Authority has a duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to have full regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity which extends to being mindful of the legislation that considers protected species and their habitats and to the impact of the development upon sites designated for their ecological interest. These requirements are also reflected within the NPPF (para 118) and Policy EM4 of the Local Plan.
- 2.24 Given the small scale of the development, and the overall blueprint of the proposed outbuildings being smaller than existing, the proposal is not considered to have any impact on biodiversity of the site in terms of ecological loss. It will be built over previously developed land also without encroaching onto surrounding green or forested areas.
- 2.25 Furthermore, the scheme has been submitted alongside a biodiversity report which includes that there would be no impacts on protected species. The biodiversity officer has however recommended a condition securing biodiversity net gains. The proposal is considered acceptable in such respects in relation to Policy EM4.

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

- 2.26 The application site is situated within Flood Zone 1. There is a very low risk of flooding from any type of water source. Policy EM7 of the BDLP requires any development within such areas to provide appropriate assessment and mitigation that any development proposals will not overload the capacity of the Drainage Area.

UTILITIES

- 2.27 There is water, electricity and broadband in the area. A package treatment plant will be required for the foul drainage and this will be factored into the design at Building Regulations stage.



3 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The application would make efficient use of previously developed land. It would demolish buildings in a poor state of disrepair, result in a net reduction of built form on site which would also be consolidated.
- 3.2 It would utilise a site where the Council has already accepted the buildings are in an incidental use to Down Farm House. The proposed buildings would remain physically and functionally related to the host dwelling.
- 3.3 The application site is not within any designated area denoting high environmental or landscape value.
- 3.4 The proposed residential use is an appropriate use given the proximity of residential development in the locality.
- 3.5 The scale of the proposed development by way of its layout, form and design is appropriate to the site context. The development is sympathetic to its locality and would not be detrimental to the character of the area or the landscape setting. It would clearly be a significant improvement visually when compared to the existing site.
- 3.6 The proposal has therefore been considered to be acceptable in principle as the outbuilding would be replacing existing outbuildings on site which have been found by the Council to be incidental.
- 3.7 Even if that was not the case, the former commercial livery is no longer a viable use. Nor is it an acceptable use in planning terms given the proximity to nearby residential properties. As such, the construction of out an outbuilding in this located has been considered acceptable by the Council and to accorded with relevant policy and guidance.
- 3.8 As has been assessed, the proposal is acceptable in terms of its design and neighbouring amenities, parking amenity and trees and biodiversity. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF, Local Plan policies EM1, EM4, EM10, EM11 & CN9, and the Design & Sustainability and Parking SPDs.