

Shedfield Equestrian Centre, Botley Road

Planning, Design and Access Statement (inc. Climate Change Statement)

On behalf of Shedfield Equestrian

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Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Site Description	1
3.	Planning History	2
4.	Planning Policy Framework	2
5.	Application Proposal	7
6.	Planning Considerations.....	7
7.	Conclusion.....	10

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Nova Planning Limited has been instructed by Shedfield Equestrian to prepare and submit a Full planning application to Winchester City Council (“WCC”) for the change of use of an existing equestrian building for mixed equestrian and events venue. This proposal is part of the diversification of the existing rural enterprise.
- 1.2 Planning permission was originally granted for the existing building under Ref. 12/02417/FUL, and a subsequent planning permission under Ref. 22/00577/FUL was granted consent for use of part of the upper floors of the building as incidental accommodation.
- 1.3 This statement sets out 1) an assessment of the site context; 2) a description of the proposals; 3) a summary of the relevant policy framework; 4) an assessment of the proposed development; and 5) conclusions based on the preceding sections.
- 1.4 The application is accompanied by the following plans:
 - Proposed Site Location Plan;
 - Proposed Site Plan;
 - Proposed Elevations
 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan; and
 - Proposed First and Second Floor Plans
- 1.5 This Planning, Design and Access Statement should be read alongside the plans and other illustrative material and technical/environmental reports listed in the accompanying Covering Letter.

2. Site Description & Context

- 2.1 The site is located on the south-western side of the A334 (Botley Road), connecting the settlements of Wickham and Botley. It is situated within open countryside according to the Council’s Local Plan and it lies outside the South Downs National Park. It is not subject to any other site-specific, area or constraint-based designations.
- 2.2 The wider enterprise comprises two distinct building complexes to the front and rear of the site. The front complex, which sits adjacent to Botley Road, comprises a mixture of small business units in various uses (some ancillary to the pre-existing equestrian and horticultural uses). The rear complex is set approximately 170m back from Botley Road and comprises the Equestrian Centre. This features a

number of stable buildings, two menages (one covered) and a number of other incidental and ancillary equestrian buildings.

2.3 The equestrian use has evolved and diversified over time. It provides full and part time DIY liveryes. Riding lessons are provided at the site and equestrian events are held throughout the year. The facility has a strong connection with the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) with specific lessons and events held for disabled riders.

2.4 This planning application relates to the largest building on site, which provides a covered menage, café, briefing area, and incidental accommodation.

3. Planning History

3.1 There following applications are most relevant:

- Planning permission granted for the erection of a covered menage building under Ref. 12/02417/FUL with subsequent permissions under Refs. 15/01841/FUL, 18/01236/FUL and 22/00577/FUL relating to the approved building.
- Planning permission was granted under Ref. 22/00577/FUL for the creation of incidental overnight accommodation comprising 3no. flats within an existing equestrian building.

4. Planning Policy Framework

4.1 This section reviews the planning guidance and policies on a national and local level that are most relevant to the application proposal.

National Policy

4.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, section 38(6) states that:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

4.3 Paragraph 2 states that:

“Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material

consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements”.

4.4 The Development Plan comprises Part 1 and Part 2 of the Winchester Local Plan.

4.5 The Council also uses a variety of supplementary planning documents and guidance which form material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

i. National Planning Policy Framework

4.6 Paragraph 11 states at:

“Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

4.7 For decision taking this means:

“approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay;

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:

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.”

4.8 Paragraph 38 confirms that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

4.9 The Framework supports the protection and growth of the rural economy. It acknowledges the importance of rural enterprises and the role of diversification in ensuring a strong rural economy. Paragraph 84 is particularly relevant in this context. It includes the following policy objectives:

- the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.

- The retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

4.10 Paragraph 85 states that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements and in locations not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings and does not have an unacceptable impact. The use of previously developed land, and sites, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

4.11 Paragraph 119 similarly encourages making as much use as possible of previously developed or "brownfield" land.

ii. [Winchester Local Plan](#)

Winchester District Local Plan Part 1: Joint Core Strategy (2013)

4.12 **Policy MTRA 4 – Development in the Countryside** - In the countryside, defined as land outside the built-up areas of Winchester, Whiteley and Waterlooville and the settlements covered by MTRA 2 and 3 above, the Local Planning Authority will only permit the following types of development:

1. development which has an operational need for a countryside location, such as for agriculture, horticulture or forestry; or
2. proposals for the reuse of existing rural buildings for employment, tourist accommodation, community use or affordable housing (to meet demonstrable local housing needs). Buildings should be of permanent construction and capable of use without major reconstruction; or
3. expansion or redevelopment of existing buildings to facilitate the expansion on-site of established businesses or to meet an operational need, provided development is proportionate to the nature and scale of the site, its setting and countryside location; or
4. small scale sites for low key tourist accommodation appropriate to the site, location and the setting.

Development proposed in accordance with this policy should not cause harm to the character and landscape of the area or neighbouring uses or create inappropriate noise/light and traffic generation.

4.13 The site is situated on the southwestern edge of Shedfield and within the countryside as defined by Local Plan Part 1. Policy MTRA 4 is the overarching policy for development proposals in the countryside. In the

context of this application, it supports development proposals, in principle, that satisfy any of the above criteria, subject to there being no associated harm to character of amenity.

4.14 Policy CP20 – Heritage and Landscape Character - The Local Planning Authority will continue to conserve and enhance the historic environment through the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans and/or other strategies, and will support new development, which recognises, protects and enhances the District’s distinctive landscape and heritage assets and their settings. These may be designated or undesignated and include natural and manmade assets associated with existing landscape and townscape character, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, listed buildings, historic battlefields and archaeology.

4.15 Particular emphasis should be given to conserving:

- recognised built form and designed or natural landscapes that include features and elements of natural beauty, cultural or historic importance;
- local distinctiveness, especially in terms of characteristic materials, trees, built form and layout, tranquility, sense of place and setting.

4.16 This policy seeks the protection of the historic environment and landscape character. The proposal relates to internal works contained within the existing building and would therefore not conflict with the objectives of this policy.

4.17 Policy CP13 - High Quality Design - New development will be expected to meet the highest standards of design. In order to achieve this all proposals for new development (excluding small domestic applications and changes of use) should demonstrate that:

- an analysis of the constraints and opportunities of the site and its surroundings have informed the principles of design and how the detailed design responds positively to its neighbours and the local context;
- the proposal makes a positive contribution to the local environment and creates an individual place with a distinctive character;
- the public realm has been designed to ensure that it is attractive, safe, accessible and well connected to its surroundings, including walking and cycling routes to and within the development, to encourage their use; and
- the accompanying landscape framework has been developed to enhance both the natural and built environment and maximise the potential to improve local biodiversity.

4.18 This policy focusses on the architectural merit of proposed development and its impact on the external appearance of the area and its relationship with the wider landscape. As the proposal relates to internal works only, the only design considerations relate to the internal amenity of the proposed flats. Each flat provides a generous level of accommodation, and it is the purpose of this application to enable the applicant to progress with obtaining building regulations approval which sets the requirements in terms of internal design.

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management & Allocations (2017)

4.19 **Policy DM13 – Leisure and Recreation in the Countryside** - Outside defined settlement boundaries, the development of new leisure and recreational facilities for which a countryside location is necessary, the expansion of established facilities, and the use of land for leisure and recreational activities will be permitted, where it accords with the Development Plan and:

- the development does not create unacceptable visual or noise intrusion in the countryside, either by itself or when viewed cumulatively with other developments;
- additional buildings, structures and ancillary developments are the minimum required for the operation of the site;
- the operation of the site will not cause an unacceptable alteration in the character of the area, including by all forms of pollution, or harm biodiversity, heritage assets, tranquility, or public safety;
- appropriate landscaping schemes and screening are provided; and
- Artificial lighting will only be permitted where visually acceptable and strictly necessary. Its design and operation may be limited by condition in order to minimise light pollution in the countryside.

4.20 This policy supports the expansion of existing recreational facilities in the countryside subject to a number of criteria specified in the policy. These criteria reflect various references within Policies MTRA4, CP13, CP20. These issues have been considered above and confirmation has been provided to satisfy any related concerns. This view is endorsed in the Officer’s Report for Ref. 15/01841/FUL.

4.21 There are various other criteria-based policies that are material to the development proposal but replicate the intentions and objectives of Policies MTRA 4, DM12, DM13, DM23, CP13 and CP20. The relevant issues have been considered above however the other policies are listed below to acknowledge their importance and to confirm that they have been considered in our assessment of the proposal and its compliance with the Development Plan.

Policy DM15 – Local Distinctiveness

Policy DM18 – Access and Parking

Policy DM23 – Rural Character

5. Application Proposal

- 5.1 The application seeks permission to use the existing covered menage building to host events alongside the retained equestrian use. The building would host weddings and other functions with a capacity of up to 200 guests.
- 5.2 The buildings can accommodate the proposed use without any internal or external works. The existing equestrian use includes all of the facilities necessary for the proposed use, including catering facilities and toilets (inc. disabled access and toilets).
- 5.3 The events would be accessed via an existing track from Botley Road, and parking would be provided in a dedicated 59-space car park (inc. disabled parking bays and staff parking) immediately north of the building. These arrangements are shown on the submitted Site Plan

6. Planning Considerations

- 6.1 Having reviewed the relevant planning policies at both national and local levels, the key issues in the determination of this planning application are considered to be:
 - The principle of providing the events use on site having regard to the existing uses and location;
 - The impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the rural area and impacts on residential amenity; and
 - Measures to address Climate Change.

i. Compliance with the Development Plan

Principle of Development

- 6.2 The principle of the development is supported by Policy MTRA 4 and Paragraph 28 of the NPPF, which supports the expansion and diversification of existing businesses in the countryside, subject to ensuring that development is not detrimental to the character of rural area.
- 6.3 The proposed development would satisfy criteria 2 and 3 of MTRA 4 as follows:

Criterion 2 – the covered menage is an existing rural building and the proposal seeks to reuse this building for events, including weddings and other functions. The building would serve the local community in providing a venue for functions. It would be capable of accommodating this use without any reconstruction.

Criterion 3 – the grant of a Certificate of Lawfulness in 2012 formally established a commercial equestrian use on the site. It follows that any additional development thereafter that sought to expand or diversify this use is acceptable in principle. This is reflected in the various subsequent planning permissions on the site, including the most recent planning permission under Ref. 22/00577/FUL. The use of the existing building for events is a further expansion of the existing rural enterprise. The events would be accommodated within the existing building without the need for any changes or physical works. All of the facilities necessary to support the events are provided for within the building. This includes the provision of including commercial kitchen and toilet facilities, which are shown on the submitted Ground Floor Plan.

The scale of the development is proportionate to the scale of the site by virtue of the fact that the building can comfortably accommodate 200 guests without the need for any changes or works. The site already hosts circa 50 equestrian events a year where attendances are at an average of 300 persons. During these events, the access and parking arrangements reflect the current proposal. These events are catered for by mobile food and beverage facilities, which remain on site for the duration. The application would simply formalise these arrangements.

Impacts on Character and Amenity

- 6.4 Policy MTRA 4 includes the requirement that the proposal will not be detrimental to the exiting landscape or the amenity of neighbouring land uses.
- 6.5 Regarding the landscape impact, the building exists in the landscape and the proposed use can be accommodated within it without any alteration. Parking would be provided by extending the existing parking area into the adjacent paddock, between the building and Botley Road. This area is physically and visually enclosed by the building itself (west), the existing complex of buildings to the front of the site (south) and the access road, which is itself framed by existing development (north). It is proposed that a native hedgerow and trees would be planted along the eastern and northern perimeter of the parking area. This would soften views of parking area which is currently framed by post and rail fencing. It would also provide ecological enhancement by increasing green infrastructure connections through the site.
- 6.6 The policy references noise, light and traffic as relevant considerations, which reflects Policy DM13 of LPP2.

- 6.7 An Acoustic Assessment has been undertaken by Clarke Saunders to establish the baseline noise conditions and to assess the impact of the proposed events use. The report concludes that predicted noise levels in the building would not exceed ambient noise levels. It concludes that pre-existing average ambient noise level would increase only marginally with access, and the general character of the ambient noise would not change owing to the noise climate which is established by road noise on Botley Road.
- 6.8 The existing building is well removed from any residential properties, with the closest dwelling situated circa 150m to the south. This distance coupled with the measures outlined in the Acoustic Assessment, will ensure that there is no detrimental impact on amenity.
- 6.9 The proximity of the proposed car parking area to the building ensures that there is no need for significant external lighting. The applicant is happy to accept a planning condition to this effect, seeking 1) the submission and approval of lighting details and 2) the installation of the agreed lighting scheme prior to commencement of the proposed use.
- 6.10 The application is accompanied by a Highways Technical Note from Nick Culhane Highways Consultant. It documents that a pre-application enquiry was submitted to the Highway Authority, Hampshire County Council (HCC), prior to the submission of this planning application. HCC confirmed that the proposed access arrangements are acceptable, including the connection to Botley Road and the predicted trip generation associated with the development. HCC confirmed that the proposed parking arrangements are acceptable, subject to the provision of passing areas on the site access and planning conditions to secure 1) an events management plan; and 2) restrictions limiting capacity to 200 persons. The applicant is happy to accept conditions to this effect.

Measures to respond to Climate Change

- 6.11 There are two stages of the development to consider in this regard – 1) the construction phase; and 2) the operational Phase.
- 1) Construction Phase - The proposed development provides sustainability benefits by using an existing building for the proposed use whilst continuing to service the existing equestrian use. This avoids the significant carbon emissions that would result from construction of a new building.
 - 2) Operational Phase - The applicant is keen to reduce carbon emissions during the operational phase of the development. With this in mind the applicant will accept a suitable planning condition to secure the provision of Solar Photovoltaics on the roof of the building and the provision of two Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points within the proposed car parking area for use by staff and guests. A plan will be submitted during the course of the planning application to be referenced in any planning permission.

Compliance with other relevant policies

- 6.12 Policy DM13, DM15 and DM23 of LPP2 have some overlap with MTRA 4 of LPP1 in seeking to ensure that the character of the rural area is not compromised by development. These considerations are covered in the preceding paragraphs.
- 6.13 Policy DM13 includes other provisions relating to noise, lighting and amenity. This is addressed above in respect of Policy MTRA 4 (paragraphs 6.7 – 6.9).
- 6.14 Policy DM18 deals with access and parking considerations. This is addressed above in respect of Policy MTRA 4 (paragraph 6.10).
- 6.15 Policy DM23 deals with rural character. This is addressed above in respect of Policy MTRA 4 (paragraph 6.5).

ii. Other Material Considerations

- 6.16 The proposed development would generate economic growth and job creation to support the local rural economy in accordance with Paragraphs 84 and 85 of the NPPF.
- 6.17 The proposed use would generate 9 additional Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs and 6 Part Time jobs, which would have a direct benefit to the local area in terms of economic growth. The use would also generate a significant number of indirect benefits to the local economy through the use of related services, including florist, hair & beauty, taxis and food and drink suppliers.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This planning application relates to an established Equestrian Centre. It seeks permission for an existing equestrian building approved under 12/02417/FUL (inc. subsequent permissions under 15/01841/FUL and 18/01236/FUL for extensions) to be used as a venue to host events and functions. It would allow an existing rural enterprise to diversify in accordance with LPP1 Policy MTRA 4 and LPP2 Policy DM13. The proposal also accords with relevant sections of NPPF, in particular paragraphs 84 and 85.
- 7.2 The proposal has considered all relevant impacts, including noise, lighting, neighbouring amenity and access. In all respects, the proposed development is considered to have an acceptable level of impact, which can be managed as necessary by way of suitably worded planning conditions.
- 7.3 The proposed use would be contained within the existing building. Associated parking would be provided on land, which is physically and visually contained by existing buildings, and where parking has been provided regularly for equestrian events held at the site. As a result, the proposed development would not materially alter existing views of the site and would not therefore impact on the landscape amenity

of the surrounding rural area. The provision of additional landscaping will provide a betterment in both landscape and ecological terms.

- 7.4 The proposal will deliver material benefits in terms job creation and of supporting the rural economy, both directly and indirectly.
- 7.5 With the above considerations in mind, the planning balance weighs heavily in favour of granting planning permission.