



PLANNING STATEMENT

**22 Acre Paddock
Cheddington Road, Mentmore LU7 0QD
for Elizabeth Hough**

28 JULY 2023



Contents

1.0	Context	1
1.2	Historical Context	1
2.0	Site Characteristics	2
3.0	Planning History	3
4.0	Proposal	3
4.1	Background	3
4.2	What is Dressage?	3
4.3	British Dressage	4
4.4	The Applicant	5
4.5	The Requirement	5
4.6	The Current Use	5
4.7	The Proposed Use	6
4.8	Manège	6
5.0	Planning Policy	7
5.2	Relevant VALP Policies	7
5.3	National Planning Policy Framework	7
5.4	Main Issues	7
5.5	Principle of Development	8
5.6	Design, character and appearance	8
5.7	Best & Most Versatile Agricultural Land	9
5.8	Impact on Historic Environment	10
5.9	Residential amenity	12
5.10	Highways	13
5.11	Ecology	14
5.12	Flood risk	15
5.13	Public Rights of Way	15
5.14	NOTE: Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Zone of Influence	16
6.0	Design & Access	16
6.1	Amount	16
6.2	Layout	16
6.3	Scale	17
6.4	Landscaping	17



6.5	Appearance	17
6.6	Access	17
7.0	Application Documents.....	17
8.0	Summary.....	18

Appendix 1 Sales Particulars

Appendix 2 Landscape Character Assessment



1.0 Context

- 1.1.1 Mentmore is situated north east of Aylesbury, it lies within the authority of Buckinghamshire Council – Aylesbury Vale Area. The application site is known as “22 Acre Paddock” (the “Site”) which is located north off the Cheddington Road, due north west of the village centre of Mentmore.
- 1.1.2 The Site is laid to grazing land extending to 8.9 hectares or thereabouts which is registered under three title numbers.
- 1.1.3 There are three accesses to the Site, two are directly from the Cheddington Road and one is via third party owned land. Cheddington Road is a C-Road which is maintainable at public expense. There are no formal rights of access via the latter gateway.

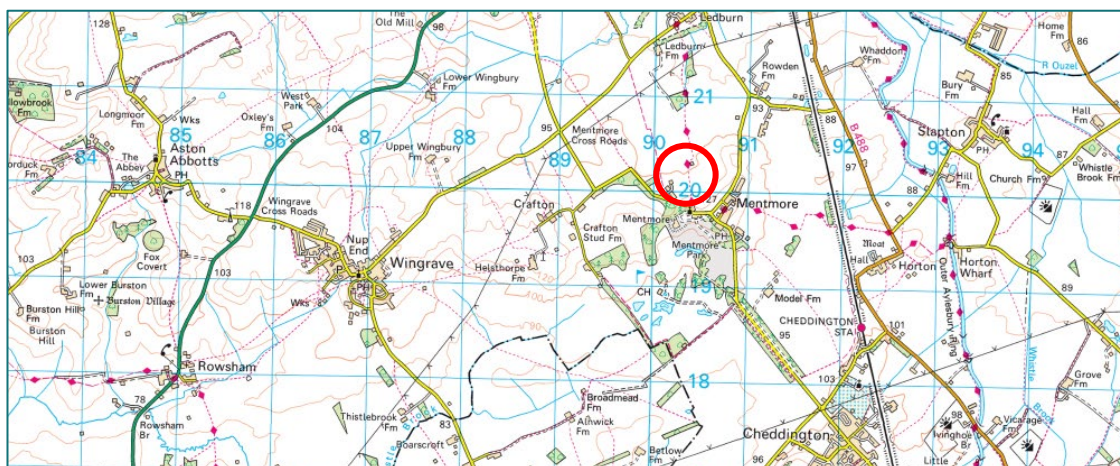


Figure 1: Location of 22 Acre Paddock

- 1.1.4 The primary access to the Site is via the eastern access off Cheddington Road which is secured with a classic style, timber five bar gate with extended curved hanging stile. There are three galvanised metal five bar gates hung on timber post and rail at the paddock end of the Site which forms two small corrals.
- ## 1.2 Historical Context
- 1.2.1 There is evidence that 22 Acre Paddock formed part of the riding school from 1914 when the 5th Earl of Rosebery added the Mentmore Stud to the Crafton Stud, the latter of which is in the neighbouring hamlet.
- 1.2.2 In 1975, Bidwells and Hamnett Raffety sold 22 Acre Paddock and associated buildings as “Lot 4 – The Riding School”. An extract of the Sales Particulars is included at Appendix 1 of this Statement. The particulars describe the lot as; “Included with the stable buildings is a useful 22 acre paddock for grazing and schooling.” The Lotting Plan clearly shows the extent of the 22 Acre Paddock.



2.0 Site Characteristics

- 2.1.1 Mentmore is set on a low ridge, forming a key part of the character of the village, with the rising approach to the village forming a distinctive sense of arrival and approach to the main entrance to Grade I Mentmore Towers and its grounds. At the entrance of the Mentmore Towers a T-junction diverts the road to the west towards the hamlet of Crafton and the east towards the village of Cheddington. At the junction, lies The Green, formed by a village green and surrounding residential properties.
- 2.1.2 Residential properties extend further to the north up to the former Mentmore Stud. To the west of the T junction, the road zig zags through the village, before descending the ridge. Along this section of the road lie a number of scattered large dwellings and amongst these is St Mary's Church. Further to the west are three detached residential properties and a yard comprising three portal framed buildings which adjoin the north western boundary of 22 Acre Paddock. Immediately to the north of the Site's western field is the Mentmore Cricket Club pitch and pavilion.
- 2.1.3 The land surrounding Mentmore village is primarily laid to arable rotation or grass paddocks which are grazed by sheep, cattle and horses.



Figure 2: 22 Acre Paddock in the context of the wider landscape

- 2.1.4 Since 2020 the Application Site has been included within the Mentmore Conservation Area. Also at district level the Application Site lies within the "LCA 4.14 Wingrave-Mentmore Ridge (LCT 4). The LCA is contained at Appendix 2 which summarises the areas as

"A shallow ridge which extends south from the plateau landscape to the north and is defined by the Vale landscape to the south. The ridge is also defined to the north by a wide local valley.



The village of Wingrave sits on the ridge. There are long distance views over the Vale landscape to the south and in particular from the southern edge of Wingrave. Mentmore House and parkland sits on the eastern end of the ridge. At Mentmore there are long distance views towards Ascott House and the southern edge of Wing and eastwards over the Ouzel Valley. Medieval earthworks feature at Crafton.”

2.1.5 The landscape guidelines for Wingrave-Mentmore Ridge are to conserve and reinforce, specifically one of the guidelines is cited as:

- *Ensure the preservation of archaeological earthworks by maintaining grassland.*

3.0 Planning History

3.1.1 An online search of planning applications associated with the Site includes an outline planning application associated with part of the Site proposed for residential development; this was dismissed at appeal (AOP/2257/88).

3.1.2 An enforcement notice was served for the “*Unauthorised construction of an access track and area of hard standing*” on the eastern road access and private way. The Enforcement Notice is subject of a current appeal.

3.1.3 This Application follows a former application (22/02050/APP) for a similar proposal which was withdrawn.

4.0 Proposal

4.1 Background

4.1.1 The Applicant purchased Stable Cottage on 5 January 2022, within the same transaction they also purchased 22 Acre Paddock.

4.1.2 The Applicant has two horses which she competes at Prix St Georges dressage level – the eldest is 15 and her gelding offspring is 10. The horses are used for private recreational use.

4.2 What is Dressage?

4.2.1 The word “dressage” comes from the French term, “dresseur” meaning training.

4.2.2 Dressage is learning to work with the horse to help him/her achieve greater suppleness, flexibility and obedience; enhance his/her natural movements and ability and improve his/her athleticism. Dressage was originally developed by the cavalry in the 17th century for these reasons – having an unresponsive or undisciplined horse on the battlefield could have meant the difference between life or death! Only later did it develop into the more flamboyant “dancing” that people associate with the sport today.



4.2.3 As a sport, dressage is all about putting training into practice in front of a judge (or judges) to show how the horse's development is progressing against a set ideal. From the lowest level to the pinnacle, horse and rider perform movements in a rectangular arena and are awarded marks for their efforts by a judge or panel of judges.

4.2.4 The sport has more recently risen in popularity since Team GB, and in particular Charlotte Dujardin, enchanted audiences to win three gold medals at the Olympics.



Figure 3 – Charlotte Dujardin freestyling Grand Prix

4.3 British Dressage

4.3.1 British Dressage (“BD”) is the governing body for the Olympic sport of Dressage and the Paralympic sport of Para-Dressage. BD is a member of the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) linking them to the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) for all international affairs.

4.3.2 Each year BD select teams to represent Great Britain at championships as part of Team GBR at senior, para, young rider, junior and pony levels. They oversee all affiliated dressage in the United Kingdom which incorporates around 17,000 members competing at 2,400 shows at 188 venues. BD develop rules and policies which shape the sport.

4.3.3 BD claims *“Dressage is a truly equal sport – we have members aged from six to 92, men and women compete on equal terms and disabled athletes compete alongside their able-bodied counterparts or in dedicated classes. Put simply, we’re open to all!”*

4.3.4 Dressage Competitions

4.3.5 There are several levels which make up dressage competitions; starting with the most basic “Intro” through to Novice, Elementary, Medium, Advanced Medium, Advanced, Prix St George, Intermediate I, Intermediate II and Grand Prix. Each level is made up of a number of unique “tests” within the same level sharing the same movements.

4.3.6 Each level of competition is divided in to three sections Gold, Silver and Bronze. The section into which a member may enter is determined by the horses and rider’s experience and points won at each level of competition;

- **Bronze sections** are for less experienced horses and riders who have just started competing at a given level so that they can compete against those with a similar ability.



- **Silver sections** are designed for those combinations that have achieved more ability at a level and have demonstrated that they are no longer a beginner at that level.
- **Gold sections** are for riders who have gained experience at higher levels and are riding a horse with less experience, or for combinations who have demonstrated that they are competent at a level. There is no obligation for a combination to move out of the Gold section at any given level should they not wish to compete at the levels above.

4.3.7 Riders win points when they compete in an affiliated class and score a minimum of 60%. Points are awarded to the horse/rider according to the percentage they score. Points accumulated at each level then count towards the horse or riders eligibility for future competitions.

4.4 The Applicant

4.4.1 The Applicant has ridden since an early age gaining experience across the broad range of sporting disciplines including show jumping, cross country and dressage. Today the Applicant concentrates on her passion for dressage.

4.4.2 The Applicant is a member of British Dressage and has regular training sessions with Stephen Moore, a renowned trainer of the Team GB Dressage Squad.

4.5 The Requirement

4.5.1 Dressage is not seasonal; competitions are held throughout the year and it is necessary to exercise horses regularly so that they maintain a good level of fitness and wellbeing, stamina to be able to compete and formal training.

4.5.2 There exists good access to the local bridleway network however to be competitive and successful at dressage it is necessary to school and train the horses regularly on a flat surface. Although riding on grass is possible the erratic climate makes this difficult throughout the year;

- During wet winters the ground is extremely wet which is limiting the ability to ride and train regularly (if at all). Exercising on the fields during the Autumn and Winter months is quite dangerous in that it is generally too soft and “greasy” (slippery).
- Frozen ground and dry ground, typically in the summer months, is hard and has a jarring effect on the horses legs.

4.5.3 In reality as well, competitions are also held on surfaced arenas and thus to be able to train on a surfaced arena has serious advantages. An all the year round riding surface is essential to practice for the level of competition that the Applicant rides at.

4.6 The Current Use

4.6.1 22 Acre Paddock formerly is laid to grass. The land previously formed the 5th Earl of Rosebery’s Riding School as has previously been explained.

4.6.2 Whilst the land was used for the grazing and keeping of horses for many decades, in more recent years it has been used for the grazing of sheep and cattle.



4.7 The Proposed Use

- 4.7.1 The proposal is for the change of use of land to equestrian use and the construction of a 20m x 60m dressage manège for the exercising of horses and ponies for personal use.
- 4.7.2 This Application is made concurrently to another for the change of use of the land and siting of barn housing stables, tack room, rug room, hay and bedding store and feed room.

4.8 Manège

- 4.8.1 Dressage arenas are 60 metres x 20 metres. The letters within the arena that sit on the centre line aren't visible on a physical dressage arena, however the outside letters around the short and long sides of the arena will be physical markers and the entrance to the arena at A which sits on the short side of the dressage ring.
- 4.8.2 Dressage tests take place within the 60 x 20m space.
- 4.8.3 The exercise arena will have an additional width of 5 metres around the edge of the required arena perimeter. This additional space allows for riders to ride around the outer edge to warm up before entering the actual arena area to perform the test.
- 4.8.4 Currently the Applicant travels with her horses to other stables with purpose built exercise facilities 3 - 5 times per week. This is time consuming and costly.
- 4.8.5 It is proposed that the manège is sited close to the proposed stables on previously disturbed land but close to existing field boundaries.
- 4.8.6 The external arena is intended to be surfaced with a neutral and permeable surface. It is not intended that the arena be fenced but the surfacing contained by low lying kickboard to maintain the openness within the landscape.
- 4.8.7 FlexiRide is proposed for the surface of the outdoor arena. Its dark colouration will be muted in the landscape which is aligned with the desires of the Chilterns Conservation Board.

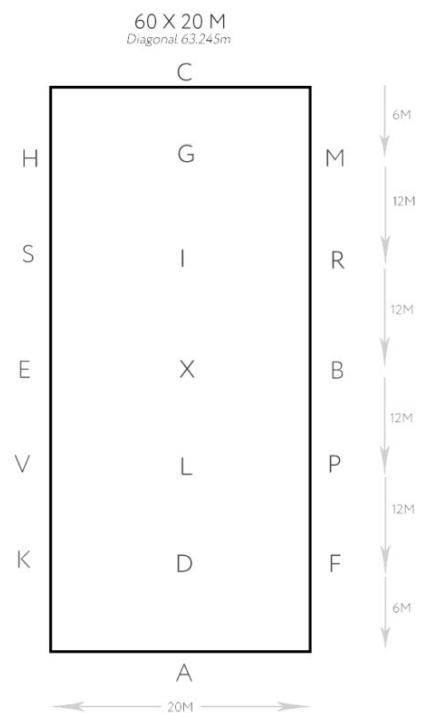


Figure 4 – FlexiRide Appearance



5.0 Planning Policy

5.1.1 The current planning policies for Buckinghamshire Council – Aylesbury Vale Area are primarily set out in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (“VALP”), adopted 15th September 2021.

5.1.2 Mentmore Parish Council does not have a Neighbourhood Plan.

5.1.3 Prior to submitting this Application consideration was given to relevant local policies and The National Planning Policy Framework (20 July 2021) (“NPPF”).

5.1.4 Since the “2020 Review” the Site has been included within the Mentmore Conservation Area and is within locally designated Area of Attractive Landscape.

5.2 Relevant VALP Policies

- Policy S1: Sustainable development for Aylesbury Vale
- Policy T6: Vehicle Parking
- Policy BE1 Heritage assets
- Policy BE2: Design of new development
- Policy BE3: Protection of the amenity of residents
- Policy NE1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy NE4: Landscape character and locally important landscape
- Policy NE7 Best and most versatile agricultural land
- Policy I4: Flooding
- Policy C2 Equestrian development

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

- Section 2: Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4: Decision making
- Section 11: Making effective use of land
- Section 12: Achieving well-designed places
- Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

5.4 Main Issues

- Principle of development
- Design, character and appearance
- Impact on Historic Environment
- Residential amenity
- Parking and highway implications
- Ecology
- Flood risk



5.5 Principle of Development

5.5.1 The Site lies on the north east boundary of Mentmore Village. An arable field separates the land from physical development to the north and east. The Application Site is however abounded by residential and substantial portal framed buildings, and, the Cheddington Road on the southern and western boundaries.

5.5.2 The VALP recognises that the riding and keeping of horses are popular leisure pursuits and equestrian businesses can contribute to the rural economy. As such the VALP is very thorough in its advice and policy in relation to equestrian development.

5.5.3 The preamble for C2 Equestrian development states; *“A riding arena (or manège) or other exercise facilities (such as horse exercisers) may be permitted in association with a ... private recreation and leisure use. The Council will expect an applicant or private individual to be able to explain why an arena or other facility is required, and to be able to justify its intended size and scale. Siting and scale will be key issues in the design.”*

5.5.4 Neither *“Recreation and leisure use”* nor *“equestrian development”* is defined in the NPPF or local planning policy. Whilst not extant, Planning Policy Statement 7 provided guidance on development in Rural Areas, in particular chapter 32 referred to equine-related activities and stated;

“Horse riding and other equestrian activities are popular forms of recreation in the countryside that can fit in well with farming activities and help to diversify rural economies. In some parts of the country, horse training and breeding businesses play an important economic role. Local planning authorities should set out in LDDs their policies for supporting equine enterprises that maintain environmental quality and countryside character. These policies should provide for a range of suitably located recreational and leisure facilities and, where appropriate, for the needs of training and breeding businesses.”

5.5.5 Justification for the proposed manège dimensions and location is set out in 4.8. The manège is to provide a suitable practice and exercise area for the Applicants horses which are kept on the land. It is considered that the provision of a manège on the Application Site is for recreation and leisure facilities which accords with local Policy C2 Equestrian development.

5.6 Design, character and appearance

5.6.1 The manège will be a surfaced area of land at ground level. It is intended that kick boards surround the manège so as to contain the dark surface which will blend into and not appear “bright” within the landscape. The use of kick boards rather than timber post and rail fencing also avoids the introduction of vertical features into the landscape.

5.6.2 It is considered that the provision of a manège for low intensity, recreational purposes, is not visually intrusive in the landscape. Equestrian development is, by its very nature, typically located in rural areas and is read as usual within the landscape.

5.6.3 The proposal does not conflict with the provisions of Policy BE2: Design of new development.



5.7 Best & Most Versatile Agricultural Land

- 5.7.1 Local Policy NE7 identifies that proposals involving the development of best and most versatile agricultural land should be avoided. The best and most versatile land is defined as grades 1, 2 and 3a by policy guidance (Annex 2 of the NPPF). This is land which is most flexible, productive and efficient in response to a inputs and which best deliver feature crops food and non-food sources such as biomass and pharmaceuticals.
- 5.7.2 Grade 3 land is that with moderate limitations that affect the choice of crops, timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. Where more demanding crops are grown yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in grades 1 and 2. Clearly the protection of best and most versatile land is to enable agriculture and food production.
- 5.7.3 Subgrade 3a is good quality agricultural land which is capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops e.g. cereals or a moderate yield of wide range of crops e.g. cereals, oil seed rape, potatoes, sugar beet and less demanding horticultural crops.
- 5.7.4 Subgrade 3b is moderate quality agricultural land which is capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops mainly cereals and grass or low yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass for grazing and harvesting.
- 5.7.5 The land on which the stables are proposed is permanent pasture and its agricultural land quality is Grade 3 (as determined by the Natural England Regional Agricultural Land Classification Maps).
- 5.7.6 The Site is laid to permanent pasture and has been for at least 100 years according to the research undertaken and evidence contained within this Statement of the land being associated with the 5th Earl of Rosebery's Riding School and Stud since at least 1914. Historically, in the medieval period, the land was farmed as is indicated by the ridge and furrow landform which is present across some of the Site. Whilst the land is productive it is limited to grazing and cropping of hay due to the relict for a landform consequently it cannot be considered to be best and most versatile land the proposals neither proposals will result in the loss of best of most versatile agricultural land.
- 5.7.7 The Site is part of a "living landscape" wherein the primary use of grazing, be it by horses, cattle or sheep, over the years has preserved the landform. The Heritage Report which accompanies this Application recognises the importance of the ongoing grazing of the land. It is intended that the majority of the Site continues to be grazed but to enable this to happen the Applicant seeks to secure permission for stabling of her horses on the land as well as the change of use of the Site to mixed agricultural and equestrian.
- 5.7.8 The proposal cannot be described as "significant" nor is it affecting best and most versatile agricultural land, it is therefore not considered contrary to Policy NE7.



5.8 Impact on Historic Environment

5.8.1 Policy BE1 Heritage assets highlights that proposals for development shall contribute to heritage values and the impact must be assessed in proportion to the significance of the heritage asset. It also emphasises that development proposals that would cause substantial harm to, or loss of a designated asset and its significance, to provide a thorough heritage assessment setting out a clear and convincing justification as to why the harm is considered acceptable on the basis of public benefits that outweigh that harm.

5.8.2 The Site is located to the north of Grade II* Mentmore Towers Historic Park and Garden however whilst historically linked to the Gardens though association the properties are not visible from or to each other. The Proposal will not directly impact on the Historic Park and Garden or its setting.

5.8.3 Since March 2020 the Site has been included within The Mentmore Conservation Area. A Landscape and Visual Statement accompanies this Application which provides further detail so the Conservation Area Review and in particular states;

“The Review sub-divides the Conservation Area into thirteen character areas, with the Site being located in Character Area 12: North Park. The Area is described as ‘ornamented agricultural land’ with little designed tree planting and containing a 20th century cricket ground and farmstead nearby. The main function of the Area is to provide a setting for the public roads from Wing and Leighton Buzzard. It features in views from the approach to the village from Leighton Buzzard and panoramic views from The Green. Whilst it is noted that the Area has survived intact, it is also noted that many of the trees and some of the field boundaries have been removed, and the land is now managed as arable farmland rather than pasture. It should be noted that the latter does not apply to the Site, which has remained as grassland used for horse grazing. The significance of the Area is defined as forming the setting for the northern village approaches and views over it from The Green. The historical significance is assessed as being High-Medium and the level of survival of the historic fabric is assessed as Medium.”

5.8.4 Landscape and Visual Statement goes on to assess the effect of the development on the landscape in particular at 1.28 – 1.31 wherein it states the development;

“would appear as a modest new built feature in keeping with the rural character and equine history of the land and history of Mentmore. Similarly, the proposals would also not adversely affect North Park, with the significance of the Area being retained largely unaffected in relation to the setting of the northern village approaches and views over it from The Green. The open panoramic views would be retained, and any discerned change would be consistent with the existing land use, rural character and equine history of Mentmore.”

5.8.5 Policy BE2 requires new development to respect and complement the physical characteristics of the site and its surroundings, appreciate local distinctiveness and vernacular character of the locality, note the natural qualities and features of the area and avoid harmfully impacting important public views and skylines. The Site is also covered by a designated Area of Attractive Landscape. Policy NE4 is also considered to be of particular relevance to the visual impact of the development.



Figure 5: Location of Proposal as viewed from Mentmore Green



Figure 6: View From Footpath 3 within the Application Site

5.8.6 Previous conversations with the LPA have considered siting the manège closer to the Cheddington Road, however following conversations with the Conservation Officer this was discounted as it would require a considerable cut and fill exercise and also be in a much more visually prominent location.



5.8.7 Furthermore the use of the menage is to be used exclusively by the horses which are to be stabled on the land. The manège is proposed to be located a short distance from the proposed stables to enable easy access. The stable location is considered the optimum location within the overall site from a visual and amenity perspective.

5.8.8 22 Acre Paddock comprises parcel of land in undulating open countryside which falls away from the Cheddington Road to the north. It is proposed that the barn is located in a logical location, close to the proposed stables and parallel with the boundary to the adjoining sports field.

5.8.9 The use of topography, planting and reinforcement of existing and new native hedgerow planting to soften and even screen the development from any public vantage points that might be attainable of the site. In this regard, the Site is afforded very limited views, from the public highway.

The manège will introduce no vertical elements on the land and will be at ground level.

5.8.10 Light pollution is not in issue as external lighting is not proposed

5.8.11 Given the distance from public views from Cheddington Road and Mentmore Green, the latter with intervening planting, the proposal will be barely visible from the highway and not visually prominent in the landscape. The development proposals respect the physical characteristics and historical land use of the site and surroundings and not appear incongruous. Overall, it is considered the impact to the wider landscape would be minimal, and in any case the equestrian development would not appear out of keeping within the surrounding area and would comply with BE1, BE2, NE4 and the NPPF.

5.8.12 The County Archaeologist did not raise any objection to the previous application.

5.8.13 It is noted that when interpreting the previous application scheme correctly at the outset the no objections were raised by the Heritage Officer. A subsequent objection was raised by Heritage but this was as a consequence of an incorrect assumption that an extensive internal farm track would be laid and surfaced . This is not to be the case.

5.9 Residential amenity

5.9.1 Policy BE3 Protection of the amenity of residents states that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would unreasonably harm any aspect of the amenity of existing residents and would not achieve a satisfactory level of amenity for future residents.

5.9.2 The manège is proposed to be located 76 metres from the rear elevation of the nearest residential dwelling (at the closest point). To put this into context the neighbouring portal framed barn to the north west is 19 metres from the nearest elevation of the same dwelling. It is entirely shielded by established planting and proposed stable barn. A former comment that either a mounted rider would lead to the loss in privacy is unsubstantiated.

5.9.3 The manège is not expected to impact detrimentally on the amenity of any dwellings in the vicinity.



5.10 Highways

- 5.10.1 Cheddington Road is classified as a C road which runs along the southern boundary of the Application Site. There are two agricultural accesses from Cheddington Road into the Application Site. The western access is unsurfaced with a downward gradient into the land.
- 5.10.2 The Eastern access is the primary access to the Application Site and has been used as such for many decades. This access has recently been resurfaced with road planings over crushed stone and tiles.
- 5.10.3 The speed of the Cheddington Road in this location is restricted to 30mph and therefore it is necessary to provide 2.4m x 43m visibility splays; visibility splays are afforded in excess of this distance in either direction. Also important to note is that vehicles likely travel much slower than 30mph at this point along the road given the configuration of the road bends and camber.
- 5.10.4 A transport statement accompanies this Application confirming that the required visibility splays can be achieved.
- 5.10.5 We have advised that a concurrent application has been submitted for the siting of stables for the Applicants private recreational use. It has been proposed that a condition be imposed along the lines of;
- The development hereby permitted shall not be used for any commercial purposes without the prior written approval of the local planning authority.*
- 5.10.6 We confirm that a similar condition would be acceptable in this instance, furthermore as the proposed manège is to be used solely in connection with the stables which are proposed on the land a further condition restricting its use to those horses kept on the land would be acceptable. Previous concerns were raised that the manège will be used for competitions, this is not the case. It is clearly intended for the Applicant's private use so that she can exercise her horses which are to be kept on the land. Such a condition would ensure that this would remain the case.
- 5.10.7 The use of the manège solely in connection with the stables approved on the Site would result in no vehicle movements using the access as a result of this proposal.
- 5.10.8 The NPPF states at paragraph 111 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.*"
- 5.10.9 It is intended that the land continues to be accessed by the original access which has existed for many years. The provision of a manège for the Applicants' personal use will not cause unacceptable and severe detriment to the highways network.
- 5.10.10 The proposal is considered to accord with local highways policies and the NPPF.



5.11 Ecology

5.11.1 A preliminary ecological appraisal is submitted with this Application which concludes;

Both the proposed development boundary and the wider ownership boundary predominantly comprise sheep grazed improved grassland fields. The majority of the site boundaries and internal field boundaries are demarcated by post and wire fences, however a wall and some tree lines and small sections of hedgerow are present. Four small agricultural buildings are present within the ownership boundary, all of which lie outside of the proposed development boundary. The preliminary ecological appraisal has highlighted potential issues with the following ecological receptors on or adjacent to site: hedgerows and trees, amphibians, bats, badgers, hedgehogs, brown hare and other mammals. Provided these issues are addressed in accordance with the recommendations detailed in this report, the development may proceed without adversely impacting the aforementioned ecological receptors.

The development also presents an opportunity to enhance the habitats available to wildlife on site. The provisioning of bat and bird nest boxes on site will provide improved roosting and nesting opportunities into the long-term future of the site.

Newts

5.11.2 The development falls within the red impact risk zone for great crested newts. Impact risk zones have been derived through advanced modelling to create a species distribution map which predicts likely presence. In the red impact zone, there is suitable habitat and a high likelihood of great crested newt presence.

- *There are 12 ponds within 500m of the development proposal. The closest pond is located adjacent to the northern site boundary. There is 1 pond located 385m to the north-east. There are 5 ponds located 55m, 90m, 110m, 175m, and 465m to the east. There are 3 ponds located 305m, 360m, and 425m to the south of the site. The last 2 ponds are located 360m and 370m to the west.*
- *There are great crested newt records within 300m of the site.*
- *There is connectivity between the development and surrounding features in the landscape via grassland, hedgerows, and woodland.*

5.11.3 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) by United Environmental Service Ltd (June 2022, site survey and GCN eDNA survey conducted on 14th May 2022) for the site at 22 Acre Paddock, Cheddington Road, Mentmore, Leighton Buzzard LU7 0QG has been submitted and concluded:

The terrestrial habitats within the proposed working area entirely comprise sheep-grazed improved grassland and a hardstanding access track. These habitats provide very limited foraging, sheltering and commuting opportunities for amphibians and are broadly unsuitable for use by GCNs. The hedgerows and tall ruderal habitats at the boundaries provide some higher quality habitat, although these habitats are very small in area and will all be retained as part of the proposals.



- 5.11.4 The eDNA surveyed returned negative results (0/12 positive replicants) for all three ponds, indicating that GCNs are not present within these ponds and are not using these ponds for breeding purposes. Given that Pond 4 was completely dry at the time of the survey, during the peak GCN breeding period, this pond is considered to be unsuitable for use by breeding GCNs.
- 5.11.5 Although the presence of GCNs on site is considered unlikely, the works should still be completed under RAMs to ensure that other common amphibian species are not affected by the works.
- 5.11.6 The Buckinghamshire Newt Officer is satisfied that the PEA by United Environmental Service Ltd (June 2022) adequately demonstrates the very low likelihood of the proposed development impacting great crested newts and/or their habitats.
- 5.11.7 A Precautionary Working Method Statement – Newts is submitted with this Application following advice from the Buckinghamshire Newt Officer.

Other Species

- 5.11.8 The Applicant relies on professional advice provided by the qualified ecologist who found that there would be no detriment to 2 protected species by the provision of the stables.
- 5.11.9 Barn owls are known to roost, but not nest, in the old byre and stables which are 245 metres from the proposed location of the manège. The byre and the stables are separated by a public right of way and fencing. There is no evidence that the keeping of or the riding of horses will disturb the barn owls.
- 5.11.10 Previous comments were made that the grazing of horses which are wormed will impact on the food stuff of the little owl. The practice of worming horses has evolved and in modern days worming occurs only when there is a significant worm count within manure. In any case little owls are not restricted to feeding solely on the Site and nor are they restricted to solely eating dung beetles. It is also important to note that the land is continue to be grazed by sheep which would present a good source of dung and feed stuff for the beetle.
- 5.11.11 The proposal does not conflict with Policy NE1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

5.12 Flood risk

- 5.12.1 The site is located within flood zone 1 and therefore a low probability of flooding.
- 5.12.2 It is considered there would be no adverse flood risk as a result of the permeable manège being provided and the proposal is not contrary to the provisions of Policy S1 Sustainable development for Aylesbury Vale and Policy I4 Flooding.

5.13 Public Rights of Way

- 5.13.1 An online search of the Buckinghamshire online mapping was undertaken which provides an indicative map of the local path network. It is noted that Mentmore Footpath 3 crosses the Site. Notwithstanding this the proposals will have no impact on the public right of way.

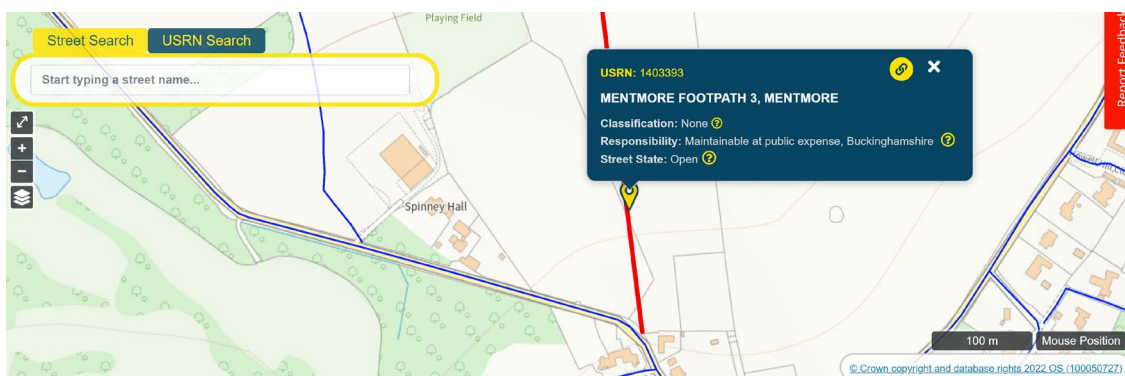


Figure 7: Location of PROW

5.14 NOTE: Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Zone of Influence

- 5.14.1 Natural England has recently written to several Councils about damage to the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) resulting from high visitor numbers.
- 5.14.2 The SAC is an internationally recognised designation with habitats and species of significant ecological importance. Due to its status, the SAC has legal protection.
- 5.14.3 An ecology report undertaken on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council recognises that additional residential development within and around the SAC will lead to more visitors and an increase in adverse activities such as trampling, mountain biking and dog fouling. The report reveals action is needed to help protect the SAC and mitigate any adverse impact of development.
- 5.14.4 Whilst the Beechwoods SAC is outside of Buckinghamshire, a Zone of Influence Plan has been produced which identifies the areas where visitors come from that potentially impact the SAC. Whilst the Site is located within the Zone of Influence the proposals are not for a residential use and nor will they result in an increase of footfall within the SAC.

6.0 Design & Access

6.1 Amount

- 6.1.1 The Application Site extends to 0.38 hectares on an overall landholding of 8.9 hectares (c 22 acres), the manège will extend to 1200 sqm.

6.2 Layout

- 6.2.1 The manège is to be sited parallel with the boundary of the village cricket pitch to the north. This has the least impact on the historic landform of ridge and furrow which is present across some of the landholding evidencing the former arable use of the land.
- 6.2.2 Given the low intensity of use of the manège and the ability to manage when horses are exercised there will be no conflict between the use of the manège and the cricket games played on the adjoining sports ground.



6.3 Scale

6.3.1 The manège will be at ground level and will not introduce any vertical features into the landscape.

6.4 Landscaping

6.4.1 It is proposed to lay an indigenous hedgerow alongside the north boundary with the cricket pitch and also to bolster the existing hedgerow with the arable field to the north. This will provide additional screening but also to provide increase biodiversity within the land.

6.4.2 Please refer to the Planting Plan which accompanies this Application which positively contributes to the principles of Policy NE1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

6.5 Appearance

6.5.1 The manège will have a dark surface so it does not appear prominent in the landscape. In any case it is typical for equestrian development to be located in the rural area and is not uncharacteristic within such a landscape.

6.6 Access

6.6.1 Access to the Application Site remains the same as that which has existed for many years.

7.0 Application Documents

7.1.1 The following provides a summary of the application documents which have been submitted via Planning Portal.

REFERENCE	DOCUMENT TITLE
PP-12350251	Application Form
2758/11785/001	Planning Statement
2758/11785/002	Site Location Plan
2758/11785/003	Block Plan
2758/11785/004	Proposed Manège Cross Section
2758/11785/005	Landscaping Scheme
2758/11785/006	Flood Map for Planning
2758/11785/007	Ecology and Trees Checklist
UES0374101 PEA	Ecological Survey & Phase 1
2758/11785/008	Precautionary Working Method Statement - Newts
B22022 Stable Cottage	Landscape & Visual Assessment
1899/MPF/1	Heritage Statement
2758/11785/009	Highways Statement

Table 2: Application Documents



8.0 Summary

- 8.1.1 The proposal is for small scale equestrian development which is not inappropriate development in the open countryside and a rural location.
- 8.1.2 Equestrian land uses are acceptable in the countryside and, subsequently, a manège for exercising horses is a form of development that could reasonably be expected in the countryside. The manège would be located to the north of the land holding which will be barely visible from public viewpoints within and those limited external views into the holding.
- 8.1.3 This location of the development is considered to be discreet due to proximity to the site boundaries and existing built development. The materials to be used are traditional and are considered sympathetic to the Conservation Area and the Area of Attractive Landscape.
- 8.1.4 It is respectfully requested that the application be determined positively.



APPENDIX 1

Sales Particulars



**MENTMORE & CRAFTON
STUDS**

BIDWELLS

HAMNETT RAFFETY

Particulars

MENTMORE AND CRAFTON

World Famous Studs with a History of Success

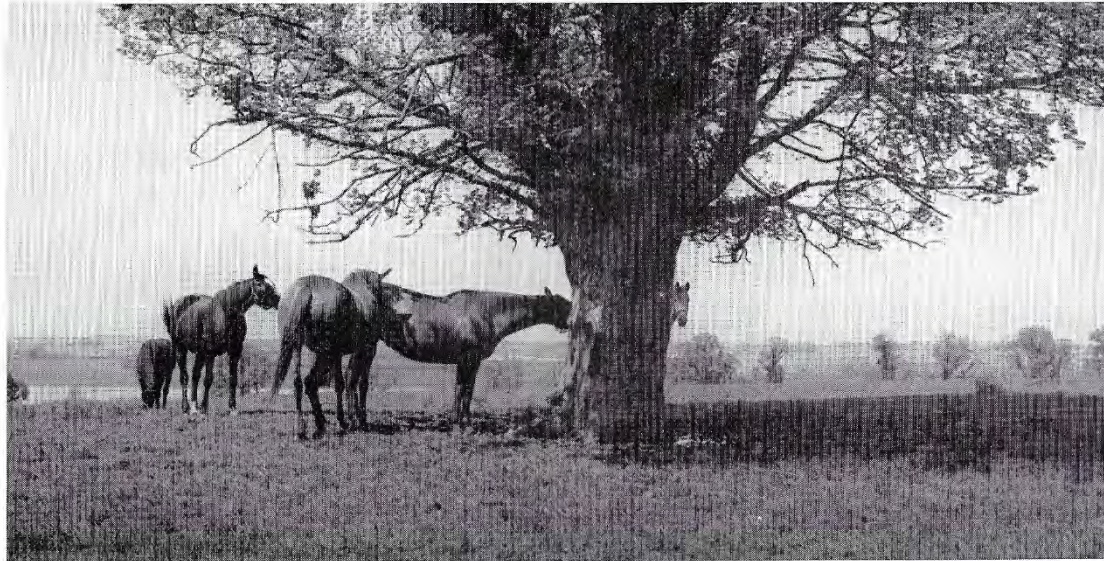
Crafton Stud was founded about 125 years ago by Baron Meyer de Rothschild. The stud very quickly started to breed successful horses which included Favonius and Hannah who between them won the Derby, Thousand Guineas, Oaks and St. Leger in 1871. The two resident stallions at this time were Macaroni and King Tom (whose statue stands in the grounds at Mentmore), sire to St. Simon.

The stud came to the Rosebery family with the marriage of the Fifth Earl to Hannah de Rothschild. The tradition of racing success was continued with three Derby winners, Ladas, Sir Visto and Cicero and many other classic winners. Blood on the stud can still be traced back to these original horses.

In 1914 Mentmore Stud was built to complement Crafton Stud, Crafton being a private stud and Mentmore a public stud. The first two stallions to stand were Cicero and Neil Gow. In 1929 the Sixth Earl inherited the studs, since when many hundreds of winners have been bred. His personal favourites and among the most successful were Blue Peter and Ocean Swell, both of whom stood at Mentmore and whose names he retained above the two stallion boxes.

The properties have been consistently improved over many years and today comprise two excellent studs with the associated railed and watered paddocks. An era ends but the studs remain to create a new history.

A more detailed account of the racing history has been written by Peter Towers-Clark in an article entitled "Mentmore" in the April 1971 edition of *Stud and Stable*.



LOT 4

THE RIDING SCHOOL

(Coloured Yellow on the Sale Plan)

Extending in all to about

22 $\frac{3}{4}$ Acres



Built by the Fifth Earl of Rosebery for his own personal use for carriage horses and their schooling. It is in a delightful position on Mentmore Hill adjacent to the Mansion and its entrance drive.

It was built to very high standards as evidenced by the oak doors, brass fittings, etc. A cobbled courtyard in the centre is surrounded on four sides by the buildings of brick under tile construction.

Although not used as a riding school for many years it could be easily restored to its former glory. The buildings exist to establish the unit that could be one of the most complete schools in the country.

The buildings are entered via a heavy oak door with hand gate to one side. Adjacent to the entrance is:

STABLES COTTAGE (Mr. C. Boothman, Stud Hand), entered via a small porch and oak front door to the centrally heated accommodation which comprises **Hall, Kitchen, Living Room, Sitting Room, Three Double Bedrooms, Bathroom.** Outside is a **Utility Room** and a good sized garden.

Altogether there are 12 useful **LOOSE BOXES AND 3 STALLS** with substantial fittings and serviced from a drained passage with a water supply, etc. On the south side of the square is an archway to an **INDOOR MANEGE**, 40' x 130', at present used for cattle but could quite easily be converted back to its original use. It has a soft chalk floor, is well lit and has a roof topped by a most impressive lantern ventilator which is one of the many attractive features of the school.

Other rooms include an **Office, Mess Room, Workshop, Coach House** (in which the State Coaches were kept during the war), **two Garages** (one occupied by Mr. Blay).

STABLES FLAT is in the western part of the stable. It is entered via stairs from a lobby off the yard and comprises **Kitchen, Bathroom, Two Double Bedrooms, Sitting Room.**

CHURCH COTTAGE (Mr. C. Carpenter, Part-Time Estate Worker and Protected Tenant) is a most attractive cottage in an exceptional position next to the village church. It is in the north west corner of the stable buildings. It comprises **Sitting Room, Dining Room, Kitchen, Bathroom, Three Double Bedrooms.** Outside is a small yard.

THE LAND

Included with the stable buildings is a useful 22 acre paddock for grazing and schooling. At present it is part of a larger field attached to the Mentmore Stud. A purchaser will be responsible for erecting and thereafter maintaining in a stock-proof condition a post and four rail fence to a height of 4' 6" with posts at 6' centres, to be erected within three months of completion along the eastern boundary.

	O.S. No.	Description	Acreage
LOT 4			
		Mentmore Parish	
	Pt. 43	2 Cottages, Flat, Boxes and Manège	0.610
	Pt. 50	Paddock and Access	22.110
		TOTAL LOT 4	<u>22.720</u>

LOT 5

33 THE GREEN

(Coloured Green on the Sale Plan)

A VACANT COTTAGE

One of a pair of cottages built at approximately the same time as Mentmore, for the housing of workers on the Estate. It is of brick construction under tiled roof and stands back from the village road. The accommodation is in reasonable condition and comprises the following:

On the Ground Floor

ENTRANCE PORCH leading to SITTING ROOM, DINING ROOM, KITCHEN and BATHROOM.

On the First Floor

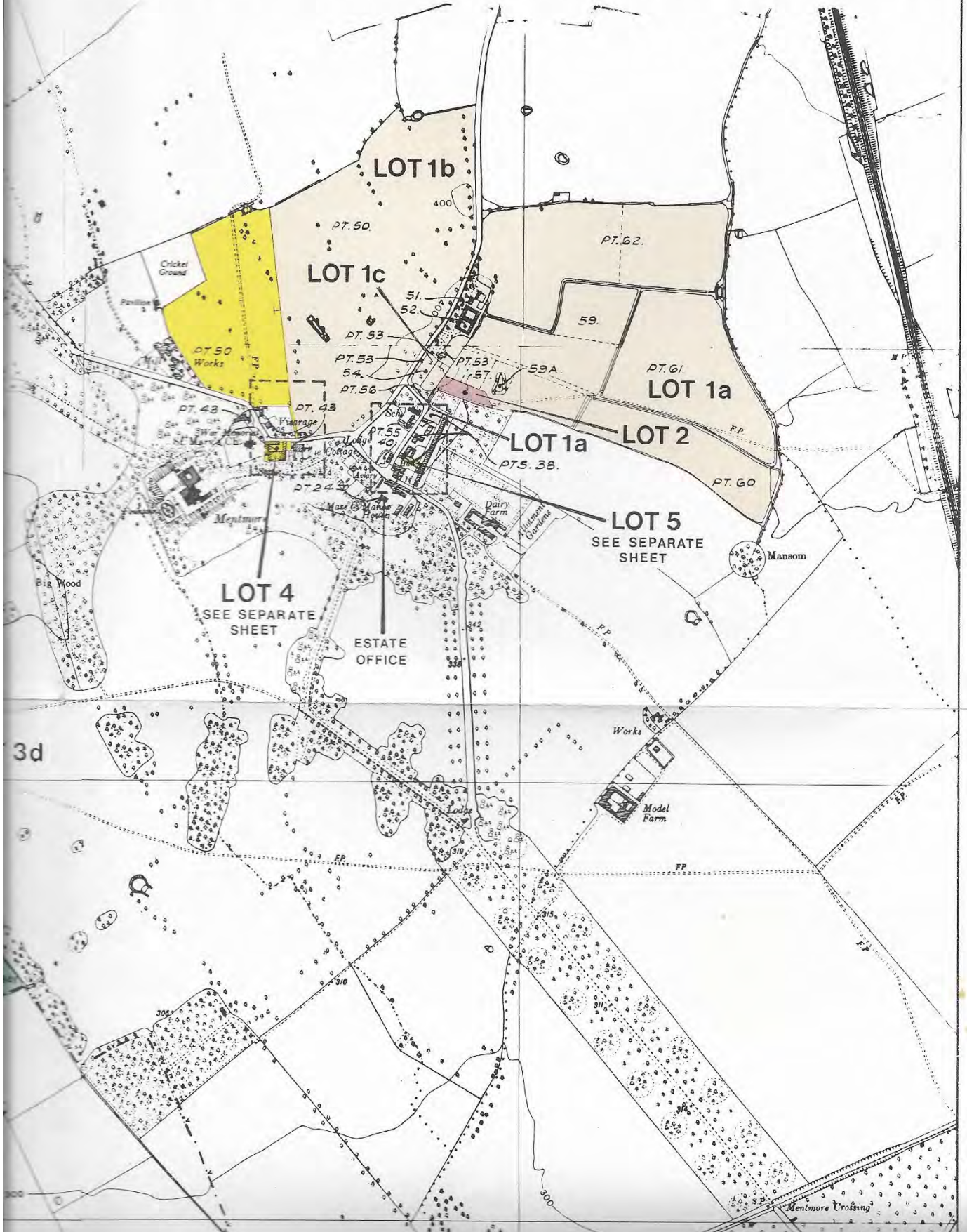
ONE DOUBLE BEDROOM and TWO SINGLE BEDROOMS.

Outside

There is a brick and tile outbuilding together with a wooden garden shed. The garden is of a good size and extends to about 0.120 of an acre.



MENTMORE & CRAFTON STUDS



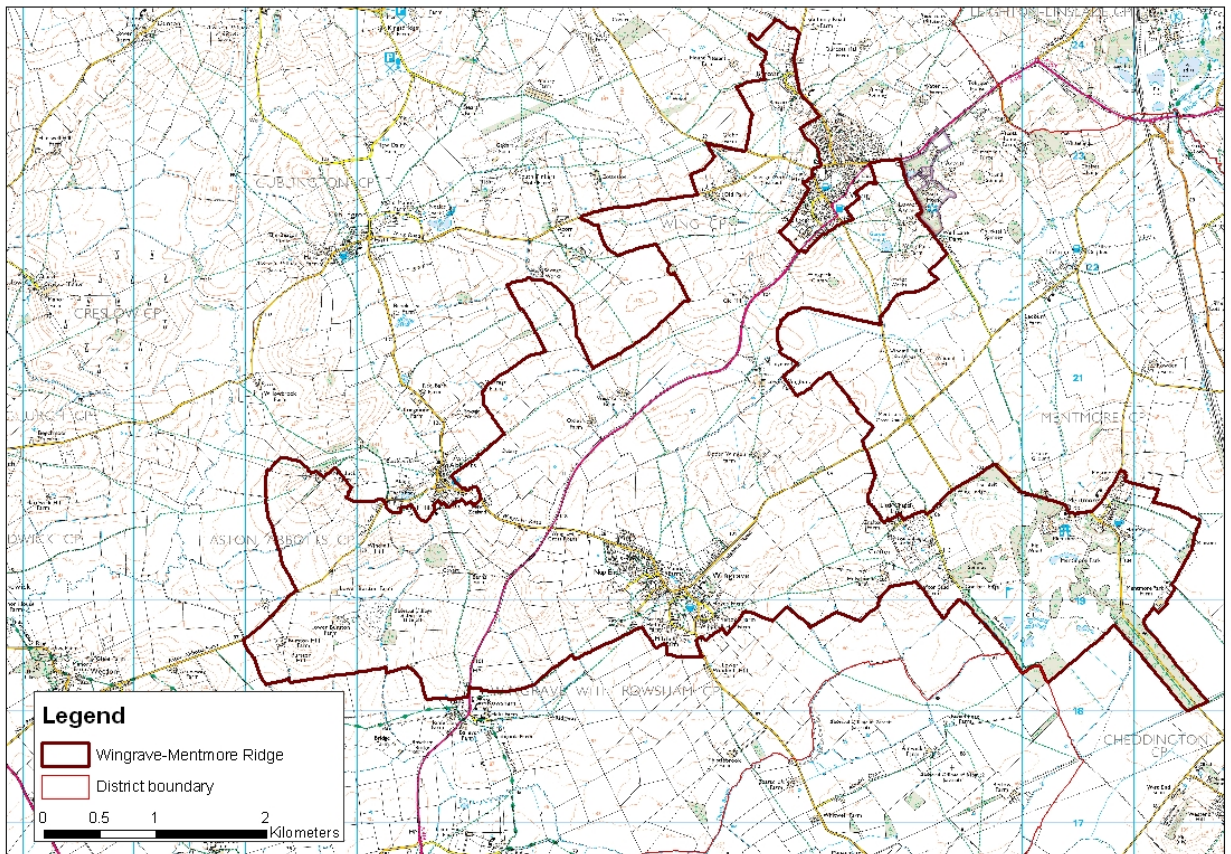
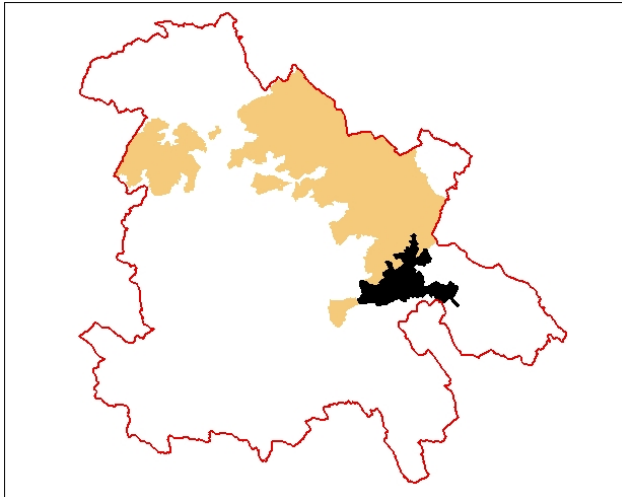


APPENDIX 2

Landscape Character Assessment

LCA 4.14 Wingrave - Mentmore Ridge

Landscape Character Type: LCT 4 Undulating Clay Plateau



LCA 4.14 Wingrave-Mentmore Ridge (LCT 4)

Key Characteristics

- Shallow ridge with settlement
- Wide valley between the ridge and the clay plateau
- Aston Abbots-Wingrave watershed drains into Ouzel and Thame catchments
- Large arable fields in valley bottom
- Smaller paddocks and pastureland on steeper upper slopes
- Long distance views over the Vale and the Ouzel Valley
- Parliamentary and earlier fields

Distinctive Features

- House and parkland at Mentmore
- Historic earthworks
- Incised valley west of Wing-Burcott
- Distinctive circular woodland coverts
- Mature tree cover along highway network between Aston Abbots and Wingrave
- Ornamental highway trees with historic connections
- Rothschild influence
- Low levels of ecological interest

Intrusive Elements

- Traffic on A418
- Pylons
- Golf course at Mentmore

Location To the south of the village of Wing a ridge which runs between the villages of Wingrave to Mentmore. It also extends northward to include the valley to the west of Wing and Burcott.

Landscape character A shallow ridge which extends south from the plateau landscape to the north and is defined by the Vale landscape to the south. The ridge is also defined to the north by a wide local valley. The village of Wingrave sits on the ridge. There are long distance views over the Vale landscape to the south and in particular from the southern edge of Wingrave. Mentmore House and parkland sits on the eastern end of the ridge. At Mentmore there are long distance views towards Ascott House and the southern edge of Wing and eastwards over the Ouzel Valley. Medieval earthworks feature at Crafton.

The local valley to the west of Wing and its associated tributaries have shaped the landform into a rolling landscape of small grazing parcels enclosed by mature hedges. Mature tree cover follows the course of the stream. The incised nature of the landform combined with the mature hedgerows and tree cover introduce a sense of great tranquillity. This contrasts with the more open landscape of arable fields contained by the shallow valley to the north of Wingrave.

Geology An area of transition between the ridge of Gault clay in the south and the southern edge of the glacial till to the north. The eroded edge of the glacial till contains smaller local exposures of Kimmeridge clay. The valley between the two formations and to the west of Wing has been filled with head deposits.

Topography The upper part of the ridge at Wingrave is at a level of over 130m AOD falling to a level of 127m AOD at Mentmore. The valley to the north falls to a range of levels between 90 – 100m AOD rising in the north to a level of approximately 120m AOD at its interface with the clay plateau.

Hydrology Wingrave lies on the watershed between the various streams and ditches to the north which feed the Ouzel catchment and the streams and tributaries which run south to the River Thame. The largest water course is the stream to the west of Wing and Burcott which runs off the clay plateau to the north.

Land use and settlement An area of mixed farmland use. Arable areas are concentrated within the valley bottom with grassland on the steeper slopes especially between Aston Abbots – Wingrave and in the valley west of Wing. Wet meadows are found in the upper valley. There is parkland and a golf course at Mentmore.

Tree cover There is a higher concentration of woodland and tree cover over the ridge landscape to the south. This dissipates into a more open arable landscape in the valley between the ridge and Wing. There are also notable groups of mature hedgerow trees in the valley to the west of Wing and Burcott. The predominant species are oak and ash. There are circular woodland features at Wing Park and at Fox Covert; the latter belies its sporting origins. Extensive mature woodland at Mentmore including the noted avenue along the southern approach.

Biodiversity The habitat mix is predominantly of grassland and arable but broadleaved woodland is also present in small parcels, the highest density of these being in the east within the area of parkland at Mentmore. The

LCA 4.14 Wingrave-Mentmore Ridge (LCT 4)

grassland tends to be clustered at the extremities of the LCA, whilst arable land is in the centre.

Grassland is mostly improved, although small unimproved fields are also present in the east and west. The three CWS all located in the north of the area near Wing, are all grassland sites. Priority habitat types are restricted to the wet woodland at Mentmore associated with the avenue whilst broad habitat types are more widespread relating to the broadleaved woodland, the numerous ponds and lakes and the streams.

Historic environment Deserted and shrunken medieval settlement earthworks are characteristic of this area, most notably at Crafton and Little Burston, and a motte castle on the edge of Wing. Views of and from Wing church are important. There are also prominent earthworks of a Tudor garden at Ascott, the site of the Dormer's Mansion ruined by 1720. There are conservation areas at Crafton, Mentmore and Wingrave. At Mentmore the distinctive feature is the Rothschild influence focused on the mansion designed by Sir Joseph Paxton, the estate village and designed landscape. At Crafton the Rothschild's stud farm occupied the site of an historic village whilst other estate buildings were constructed in Wingrave. Approximately half of the LCA covering the land between Wing, Aston Abbots and Wingrave is parliamentary enclosure land. Three smaller concentrations of pre 18th century enclosures, northeast of Wingrave and around the site of Burston and Crafton deserted medieval villages.

Designations

Conservation Areas - Mentmore, Wingrave (2), and Crafton

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Castle Hill, Medieval Village of Burton, Ascott House Mansion & Formal Gardens

Archaeological Notification Areas – 16 No.

CWS – 3 No.

BNS – 4 No.

LCA 4.14 Wingrave-Mentmore Ridge (LCT 4)



Looking north from Wingrave over rolling farmland.



Looking northwest from Wingrave toward the Cublington to Wingrave Road.
The A418 runs in a shallow valley in the middle distance

LCA 4.14 Wingrave-Mentmore Ridge (LCT 4)

Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

Condition	Very good
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	GoodModerate
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	

Sensitivity	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Guidelines **Conserve and Reinforce**

Condition

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be very good. The pattern of elements is coherent. The area covers the shallow ridge that runs between Wingrave and Mentmore and the wide valley that sits to the north of Wingrave. There are few visual detractors, chief amongst these is the traffic on the A418. Cultural integrity is good due to the Rothschild influences on landscape and buildings at Wingrave and Mentmore, intact historic field patterns and strong archaeological interests. Ecological integrity is moderate due to reasonable connectivity and the areas of designated sites and habitats of District significance. Functional integrity remains strong.

Sensitivity

The area is identified as a distinctive landscape with good historic associations and sense of continuity. There is a moderate sense of place reflected in the intrinsic rural characteristics of the area. The degree of visibility is assessed as moderate and is underpinned by the variety of vistas from the ridge contrasting with the more contained views present in the valleys. Overall the degree of sensitivity remains moderate.



Mentmore Towers seen from the direction of Cheddington Station.

LCA 4.14 Wingrave-Mentmore Ridge (LCT 4)

Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for Wingrave-Mentmore Ridge are as follows:

- Encourage the restoration of the historic hedgerow pattern where it has been lost. To enhance the landscape character and strengthen the ecological diversity. Where necessary use historic maps to identify where hedgerows have been lost.
- Encourage the management of hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.
- Maintain the existing extent and condition of woodland using traditional techniques to create and manage a wide diversity of habitats.
- Maintain the existing extent and condition of unimproved and semi-improved grassland. Encourage good management practices.
- Encourage landowners to improve ecological diversity by establishing and maintaining varied land maintenance regimes to benefit landscape and habitats.
- Promote connectivity of habitats.
- Encourage the conservation and interpretation of the areas rich historic environment.
- Ensure the preservation of archaeological earthworks by maintaining grassland.
- New housing and alterations to existing housing should be designed to reflect the traditional character of the area and use locally traditional materials.
- Promote the retention of the character of minor roads by the management of hedgerows and verges and limiting urbanising elements such as signage and kerbing.
- Consider encouraging the planting of new woodland following historic landscape pattern to reduce visual impact of intrusive elements.
- Encourage the survey, management and conservation of Historic Parks and Gardens.
- Encourage the preservation and enhancement of views from publicly accessible areas and significant historic sites.



Gates to Mentmore Park.

BRIGGS & STONE LIMITED
Incorporated in England & Wales 11328499

Registered Office 84 High Street, Prestwood,
Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire HP16 9ES