



Development Management
Wallfields
Pegs Lane
Hertford
Herts
SG13 8EQ

Date: 16.10.2023

Dear DM Team,

**Land to the rear of The Cabin, Birch Farm, White Stubbs Lane, Bayford EN10 7QA –
Demolition of existing garage, store and workshop building; removal of concrete
hardstanding and container, and the erection of replacement garage/store and workshop
building with 2 attached stables and a tack room/feed store.**

Please find enclosed a planning application for the above development. This covering letter comprises the Planning Statement for the application.

The application site and surroundings

The application site comprises a field of approximately 0.9 hectares to the south of the existing dwelling known as The Cabin, Birch Farm Place. The land is outside the immediate residential 'curtilage' of the house but is within the same ownership and has been used in association with the dwelling for well over 11 years for various recreational pursuits/dog walking/training and domestic storage. It also contains the borehole that supplies water to the property and a private sewerage plant.

There is a single large building on the site, measuring 10.4m x 9.6m, which sits on a concrete base that extends to the south of the structure. On that hardstanding, to the rear of the barn, is a shipping container. The barn itself is finished externally in corrugated metal sheeting and is used for domestic storage purposes, including the storage of the applicants' cars and an associated workshop area. The hardstanding to the rear of the barn and the shipping container are also both used for storage purposes.

The area surrounding the site is rural in character, with residential properties immediately to the north. These are well screened by existing laurel hedging along the rear garden of number 4 Birch Farm Place and, of course, the garden of The Cabin which is also largely screened by laurel hedging. The site lies within the Green Belt.

Relevant Planning History

The existing building and concrete hardstanding (on which the shipping container sits) was erected in 2011 and has been used continuously since that time for domestic storage purposes (including cars, mowers, a domestic workshop and furniture/household items).

This fact was established conclusively in July 2017 by the grant of a Certificate of Lawfulness under ref: 3/17/1247/CLE. It has continued to be used as such to the present day.

The Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing garage/store and workshop building and its replacement with a new building for the same purposes, but with the addition of 2 attached stables and a tack room/feed store. The new building is to be sited slightly to the west of the current building and would be of a simple, functional design, finished externally in timber weatherboarding above a brick plinth.

The application is accompanied by the following plans/documents:

Location Plan

Plans and Elevations of Existing Barn	3828-23A1-01
Plans and Elevations of Proposed Barn	3828-23A1-02 rev A
Site Plans – Existing and Proposed	3828-23A1-03 rev A
Biodiversity Questionnaire	

Relevant Planning Policy

The Development Plan for the District of East Hertfordshire comprises the Hertfordshire County Council's Minerals Local Plan 2007, Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD 2012; Waste Site Allocations Document 2014; the adopted East Herts District Plan 2018 and various Neighbourhood Plans none of which are relevant to this proposal.

National Planning Policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

The application site lies within the Green Belt wherein policy GBR1 of the District Plan states that planning applications will be considered in line with the provisions of the NPPF. Other relevant DP policies in this case include:

DES2/3	Landscape Character
DES4	Design
CFLR6	Equine Development

As regards the NPPF, sections 12 and 13 are relevant to the application.

Paragraph 149 b) of the Framework states that the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation are not inappropriate development as long as the facilities preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

Paragraph 149 d) also states that the replacement of a building in the Green Belt is not 'inappropriate development' provided that the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

Planning Assessment

In this case, the proposed replacement building will be in the same use as the existing building (i.e. for domestic storage purposes) and it is not 'materially larger' than the existing building. The proposed store within the building is, in fact, the same size as the existing structure and the



limited additional floorspace (which represents a 34% increase in the size of the existing building) is to provide appropriate facilities for horses that will be kept on the field.

Whilst the local planning authority has not sought to define what is meant by 'materially larger' in any policy or guidance document, it is clear that it has adopted a 'rule of thumb' that, in principle, allows increases of up to 50% of the original building as being appropriate in the Green Belt. A 34% increase is well within that adopted figure and the proposal is therefore an 'appropriate' form of development in the Green Belt.

This is particularly the case in this situation where the limited increase is, in any event, to provide facilities for outdoor sport and recreation (itself an appropriate form of development that would generally be permitted in the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 149 of the NPPF). That element of the proposal is also clearly 'appropriate development' and, furthermore, is supported by policy CFLR6 of the adopted District Plan. There are no other buildings on the site that can be used for stabling, and the siting, scale and design of the new building is in keeping with the character of the area. The height of the building would also be the same as the existing building (a maximum of 4.1m) and, overall, the proposal would preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

Given that the replacement store is an appropriate form of development under paragraph 149 c) of the NPPF, and the stabling element is appropriate under paragraph 149 b), it is not necessary for the applicants to show any 'very special circumstances' in order to justify the development. Nevertheless, the proposal does result in substantial benefits as described below (and these would be sufficient to 'clearly outweigh' any harm to the Green Belt if that test were applicable).

In terms of design, the proposal has substantial benefits over the existing building which is of somewhat poor appearance and materials of construction and, as a result, has a detrimental impact on the visual quality of the area. Furthermore, it will replace the area of hardstanding to the rear (south) of the existing barn that has been used for outdoor storage and also for the siting of the existing shipping container. That, again, will enable an overall improvement to the visual appearance of the site.

The proposed new building would be of a significantly enhanced design and appearance that would respect the rural character of the area and provide suitable replacement storage and new stabling in a high quality and attractive building that is of an appropriate scale, height, massing, and materials of construction. As such, the proposal complies with policies DES4 and CFLR6 of the adopted District Plan.

There is adequate pasture on the site to support the keeping of 2 horses¹ and the third equestrian room would comprise the necessary tack and feed store.

The revised siting of the proposed building is to avoid the depression in the field where the existing building is sited. This has frequently resulted in surface water flooding of the barn and consequential damage to stored goods and vehicles inside the building. An alternative location is, therefore, needed to keep items of storage safe and dry. In addition, the current location would be unsuitable for horse welfare given the likelihood of water ingress.

¹ British Horse Society minimum recommended land requirement is one horse per 0.4 hectares.



The proposed new siting will also have the advantage of making better use of the existing paddock and to reduce the visual impact of the building when viewed from the access road in Birch Farm Place. As such, the proposal complies with policy DES4 of the adopted District Plan.

In terms of ecology, the field is regularly close mown and has been for many years. It is, therefore, of limited ecological value and the proposed new building will not have any adverse impact on any protected species or habitats. The proposal does not result in the loss of any trees or hedging, and the area of the existing building will be returned to grass. The character, appearance and biodiversity interest of the site will therefore be maintained.

As regards landscaping, the site is very well screened to the south and west boundaries by mature tree and hedge planting. To the north is laurel hedging whilst to the east the site adjoins open land but, again, with mature tree and hedge planting. As a result, the proposed building will not have any significant or detrimental impact on the landscape character of the area. The photograph below shows that, from the south of the site the existing storage building and shipping container can be seen, but the siting of the new building will be less visible and, given its enhanced design will appear as a more traditional barn that one might expect to see in the countryside.



To the south of the site is an additional area of open land (outside the ownership of the applicant) and beyond that, Footpath 22, although this appears to be partially closed. The new building will not, in any event, be visible from any part of the footpath due to the heavy tree and hedge screening and the topography of the land.

Given the limited visibility of the site in the surrounding area and its mature boundary landscaping, no additional landscaping is considered necessary or appropriate to support the proposed development. However, should the local planning authority not agree with that assessment, then it has the ability to impose a condition requiring an appropriate landscaping scheme to be agreed. The proposal would thereby comply with policies DES2/3 of the District Plan.



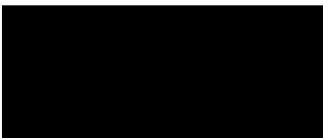
As regards the sustainability of the construction of the replacement building, the external walls, roof, floor, windows and doors will be well insulated and weather tight in order to protect items stored in the building and, of course, to provide the appropriate welfare conditions for the horses.

Materials of construction and building contractors will be locally sourced wherever possible, and this will reduce the need for long delivery or work trips and thereby reduce CO₂ emissions and air pollution in transportation. Electricity will be provided by the solar panels recently approved on the replacement dwelling at The Cabin and low energy lighting will be used inside the building and there are no proposals for significant elements of external lighting. Any access or security lighting will be low level, directional and via time to reduce both energy use and light pollution. The proposal will therefore accord with policies CC1, CC2 and CC3 of the adopted District Plan.

Water for the horses will be sourced from the private borehole on the site and the proposal will not, therefore, result in any additional demand on mains water. The proposal thereby complies with policy WAT4 of the adopted District Plan.

In conclusion, the proposal represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development in the Green Belt that complies with the policies of the development plan taken as a whole and national planning policy set out in the NPPF. It also has significant benefits that weigh in its favour. In accordance with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, therefore, it is respectfully requested that the application be supported.

Yours sincerely,



Alison Young
Director

