

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Land on the west side of Blackwall Lane, Magor, Monmouthshire (“the Site”)

Construction of wooden stable block and wooden field shelter (“the Proposed Development”)

1. Background

The Proposed Development comprises the construction of a new wooden stable block and new timber field shelter.

The Applicant purchased the site in December 2020 with the intention of continuing its existing use for equestrian purposes. Planning enforcement action is being taken against the Applicant as planning permission was not obtained for several structures that were placed on the Site to enable the Applicant to use it for equestrian purposes. As part of resolving the enforcement action, it has been agreed with Monmouthshire County Council (“the Council”) that the Applicant will submit a planning application to regularise his use of the Site. In conjunction with the Proposed Development, the Applicant is also working with the Council to clear the Site of all other existing structures and vehicles. The clearance of the Site is not the subject of this Application, however the Council can, if minded, condition that as part of any planning permission.

The situation the Applicant has found himself in is regrettable and he is keen to work with the Council to ensure he can continue to use the Site for the purpose for which he purchased it and to regularise the planning position.

2. Description of proposal

The stable block will comprise 3 individual bays, 1 tack room and 1 hay store. Each bay will be lined to 1.2m high for insulation purposes. The tack room will have open studwork internally and will be lined with breather membrane between the studwork and the exterior cladding to help keep moisture out. The hay store will be unlined internally.

The field shelter and stable block will be constructed from high quality and sustainably sourced softwood framing. The timber is pressure-treated, meaning that it should not require ongoing treatment once on site.

The stable block will be situated on a concrete base. This is required to raise the block from the ground in order to prevent it from rotting, to provide a flat surface on which the stable block can be constructed and to ensure bedding is kept dry for the welfare of the horses. A small area of hardcore in the northern part of the Site will be retained on which the concrete base will be constructed to ensure minimal interference with the land. A small extent of hardcore will also be retained around the front and sides of the stable block to prevent severe poaching of the land in this area. The remainder of the existing hardcore will be removed.

No groundworks will be required for the field shelter, therefore there will be minimal (if any) interference with the land.

3. Site analysis

The Site is mostly flat and comprises approximately 2.32 acres. It is located within the Redwick and Llandeenny Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). To the east and south, the Site is bounded by a rean. Field ditches run along the northern and western boundaries.

The Site is currently used for equestrian purposes (keeping and grazing of horses), a use which has been in place since at least 1992. Other land close to the Site (and within the SSSI) is also used for equestrian purposes and similar development proposals have been approved at these locations (most notably at Black Wall Stud, which lies approximately 0.5 miles from the Site).

The Proposed Development would minimise the impact of the Applicant’s use of the Site on the environment by significantly scaling back the number of structures present on the Site and replacing the current livestock accommodation with less intrusive structures more in keeping with the local environment.

Please see separate Green Infrastructure Statement that accompanies this Application for details of how the Applicant proposes to protect and enhance the natural features of the Site.

4. Compliance with Local Planning Policies

Great care has been taken to ensure the Proposed Development complies with national and local planning policies. The relevant local planning policies include the following:

Strategic Planning Policy	Corresponding Local Development Management Policy
S10: Rural enterprise	RE4: New agricultural and forestry buildings
S12: Efficient resource use and flood risk	SD3: Flood risk
S13: Landscape, green infrastructure and the natural environment	LC1: New built development in the open countryside
	NE1: Nature conservation and development
	EP1: Amenity and environmental protection
	LC5: Protection and enhancement of landscape character
S16: ‘Transport’	
S17: ‘Place making and design’	DES1: General design considerations

4.1 Rural enterprise

Whilst the Applicant’s use of the Site is strictly private, Policy S10 has been considered due to the relevance of the corresponding local development management policy (RE4). In further compliance with Policy RE4, it is considered that the Proposed Development complies with Policy LC1 (please see paragraph 4.3 below).

It is considered that the provision of a new wooden stable block and wooden field shelter are reasonably required to enable the Applicant to continue his use of the Site whilst ensuring there is minimal impact on the local environment.

Provision will be made for the disposal of surface water and any animal waste without risk to features. Rainwater will be collected in water butts and animal waste will be stored in the centre of the Site (away from the reens and field ditches) for a short period of time before being disposed of safely away from the Site. There will be no foul water at the Site, so no drainage provision is required in this regard.

4.2 Efficient resource use and flood risk

Whilst it is acknowledged that the Site is within a category C1 Flood Zone, the Proposed Development will not have an adverse impact on nature habitats through flood risk. The application form and pre-application advice refer to TAN 15: 'Development and flood risk' (July 2004), however it is noted that this is now out of date and has been superseded by TAN 15: 'Development, flooding and coastal erosion' (December 2021) ("the Current TAN 15"). Therefore, the Current TAN 15 has been considered in the preparation of the Application. The Current TAN 15 categorises types of development by vulnerability to flooding (Figure 3 at page 13). Those categories are:

1. Highly vulnerable development;
2. Less vulnerable development;
3. Water compatible development.

The Proposed Development does not fall within any of those categories and, whilst the list at Figure 3 is not exhaustive, it is not considered that the Proposed Development is inappropriate in relation to the nature of the Site as a flood zone and is therefore not contrary to national or local planning policy pertaining to flood risk. The nature and use of the Site will remain as it has been for at least 30 years – equestrian. There is no proposed change of use. Most of the surrounding area is in agricultural or equestrian use, which is not incompatible with flood risk associated with the area. Furthermore, the density of existing development at the Site will be dramatically reduced (due to Site being cleared and the Proposed Development being significantly smaller). Please also note that the Site is served by significant infrastructure, including flood defences.

The Proposed Development, consisting of stabling and shelter for livestock and storage for fodder and equipment, will not interfere with the ability of the Environment Agency or other body to carry out flood control or maintenance works.

The timber used to construct the stable block and wooden field shelter is sourced from FSC-certified suppliers, ensuring that sustainable materials are used throughout the process. The onduline roof on both structures is made from recycled fibres.

Rainwater will be collected in water butts connected to the guttering on the stable block, where it will be stored for the horses' use.

The Proposed Development will be sympathetically assimilated into the environment. The outcome will be a much scaled-back equestrian development and will be indicative of other equestrian development for which consent has been granted by the Council in the surrounding area (and also within the SSSI). The fact that the proposed structures are constructed from timber will ensure that a natural feel is given to the Proposed Development. The stable block includes a tack room and hay store to ensure the development will be as compact as possible, avoiding the need to have separate facilities on the Site.

The stable block will be situated near the northern boundary of the Site, leaving at least a 7m gap from the field ditch which runs along that boundary. The field shelter will be situated within the existing paddock.

Existing trees and hedges line the boundaries of the Site, providing efficient screening of the Proposed Development. Further screening could be dealt with by way of a planning condition if deemed necessary.

4.3 Landscape, green infrastructure and the natural environment

The Proposed Development will have no adverse impact on the character and quality of the landscape.

It is acknowledged that there is a presumption against new built development in the open countryside, however, there is justification for the Proposed Development under policy RE4 (please see paragraph 4.1 above).

Furthermore, the Proposed Development complies with policy LC5 (as discussed at paragraph 4.5 below), it is of a modest scale that will not intrude upon the character of the surrounding countryside and is as concise as possible to ensure the minimum amount of structures are brought onto the Site. In addition, the proposed stable block is both low in terms of its profile within the surrounding landscape and will also be located within a discrete corner of the Site. There will be no significant visual intrusion on the locality as the Proposed Development will integrate sensitively into the topography of the landscape.

The Applicant proposes effective avoidance measures to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the Site, as referenced in the Green Infrastructure Statement which accompanies this Application.

There will be no impact on the privacy, amenity or health of occupiers of neighbouring properties.

4.4 Transport and movement to, from and within the development

No adverse effects will be experienced from parking as the Applicant proposes to park at the entrance to the Site. There will be no amendments to the access to the Site.

4.5 Place making and design

The design of the Proposed Development respects the distinctiveness of the local area and the character of the Site. The structures will be of a high quality sustainable design which will respect the distinctiveness of Monmouthshire's built, historic and natural environment.

The amount of development is compatible with the existing use of the Site. As previously mentioned, the existing structures on the Site will be removed and replaced by a wooden stable block and field shelter, which will result in a much scaled-back development in keeping with existing equestrian development in the locality and the reasonable requirements for the continued use of the Site as an equestrian holding.

5 Community safety

The Site is for private equestrian use only, so there will be no impact on community safety.