



**Design Statement**  
**Proposed new racing pigeon lofts**

**Southview, A15, London Road**  
**Silk Willoughby, Sleaford,**  
**Lincolnshire PE34 8RU**

**Mr and Mrs J Swift**  
**Royal Racing Pigeon Association (RPRA)**

**Ronald Shirley Chartered Architects**  
**Church House, Long Street,**  
**Wotton under Edge, Glos GL12 7ES**  
**TEL / FAX 01 453 843180**

Construction of pigeon lofts  
Southview Farm  
London Road  
Silk Willoughby  
Sleaford  
Lincs NG34 8RU

Royal Pigeon Racing Association

Date 27.11.23

## 1.0 Background

This application is being made by Mr and Mrs Swift and the Royal Racing Pigeon Association (RPRA) for the erection of racing pigeon lofts at Southview, Silk Willoughby.

Mr and Mrs Swift are owners of the site, which includes stables, and an indoor riding school. Mr Swift has kept racing pigeons all his working life, and will manage the lofts on behalf of the RPRA.

The Association is a national organisation and has some 20,000 members who keep and race pigeons as a hobby. Membership of the Association consists of both young and older members, some of whom will have kept racing pigeons since childhood.

Younger members are encouraged into the sport with free lofts kept within school grounds and offers of assistance with husbandry and welfare of the birds.

The RPRA has sponsored a national "One Loft Race" for the last 18 years where pigeons are entered into a series of races at a single loft location. This ensures publicity for the Association, and also raises money for charitable purposes.

Fanciers entering the event pay for every pigeon entered into the competition and prize monies of up to £20,000 are awarded annually.

Up until 2023 the race has been to a single location in Birdsmorton, Gloucestershire, but the lease has not been renewed and as a result of this a new location at South Willoughby has been selected.

## 2.0 Planning History / Description of site

The site at Southview is within a group of former farm buildings. Previously Planning consent has been granted for the following:

16/1092/FUL Granted consent - erection of 5 bay steel building for use as an indoor riding school (permission granted retrospectively)

### 3.0 Description of existing buildings

The site contains various buildings . including a red brick farmhouse , erected in the 1920s. Together a separate red brick bungalow was erected in the 1980s and is occupied by Mr and Mrs Swift .

The site is used as a riding school, with separate stables/ livery offered at the premise . Stables are generally of timber construction . The indoor riding school consists of a modern steel framed building clad in metal cladding , with corrugated roof sheeting .

### 4.0 Drawings

The following drawings are included with the application :

Drawing No 1470/1 - suggested layout of lofts scale 1 : 100, 1 : 50, 1 : 20

Drawing No 1470/2 extract from OS map of site scale 1 : 1250

### 2.0 Photographs

Photographs are attached at Appendix 1 taken November 2023

### 3.0 Description of site , surroundings

Southview consists of a series of buildings which include the following –

The original farmhouse erected in the 1920s , a bungalow erected in the 1980s, various farm buildings , 35 stables in 5 blocks . together with an indoor covered riding school erected in 2016/17.

The holding consists of some 49 acres of land - and is registered with DEFRA as a farm holding .

### 4.0 Description of proposals

The applicants wish to erect 2 racing pigeon lofts within the grounds of the farm holding . The lofts have previously been erected at Birdsmorton and are to be re erected at the application site.

The lofts are of a conventional design consisting of 2 large lofts - .28 M and 22M long x 3M deep. The lofts are divided into equal sections, with external racing traps every 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> bay in the buildings.

Construction of the lofts are in timber boarding with a stained finish. The structures of both lofts will be dismantled, overhauled and made good with new external stained finishes. Roofing finishes are of interlocking tiles which again will be removed from Birdsmorton and reused.

## 5.0 Race programme

Every year a race programme for young birds is organised by the RPRA. In 2023 5 young bird races were flown from Ashbourne, Worksop, Bubwith, Richmond and Alnwick. (North Road programme)

Young birds are bred early in the racing season, and then entered into the one loft programme by pigeon fanciers / clubs where pigeons are registered to the RPRA, but the day to day management of the birds is the responsibility of the loft manager – in this case the owner of the site Mr and Mrs Swift.

The reason for birds being transferred to the RPRA is in the event of losses, where pigeons are either reported lost or found by members of the public. As the RPRA are responsible for the races, they also accept responsibility for collection and return of strays to the one loft.

## 6.0 Design criteria - Planning Policy

The construction of buildings in open countryside is covered by Policy SP5 of the adopted Local Plan (now superseded by the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan) - Part G is applicable to the application site.

The former Kesteven District Council Local Plan includes the following:

Development in open countryside will be limited to that which has an essential need to be located outside of the existing built form of settlement. In such instances the following types of development will be supported:

- a. Agriculture, forestry or equine development
- b. Rural diversification projects
- c. Replacement dwellings for a one on one basis
- d. Conversion of buildings providing that the existing building(s) contributes to the character or appearance of the local area by virtue of their historic, traditional or vernacular form; and
- e. Are in sound structural condition, and
- f. Are suitable for conversion without substantial alteration, extension or rebuilding and that the works undertaken, do not detract from the character of the building (s) or their setting.



The former Kesteven District Local Plan is superseded by Part G of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan a copy of which is included at Appendix 1.

**Comments - the keeping of pigeons cannot be classified as an agricultural activity (a) in that pigeons are not destined for the food chain . As such the keeping of pigeons is a hobby enjoyed by pigeon fanciers / clubs .**

**The proposals do however offer farm diversification and also generates income for the farm holding. This would satisfy condition (b) . It is also suggested that the siting for the new one lofts is largely concealed from view , and will have limited impact of the openness of the countryside.**

#### **7.0 Materials used on existing / proposed buildings**

Materials used on the existing indoor riding school are conventional cement sheeting for roofing and coloured steel side wall sheeting .

The new lofts will be constructed using timber cladding with a stained finish , and conventional interlocking roof tiles . In this case it is suggested that external walls of the lofts be painted a more appropriate colour ( to be agreed ) .

#### **8.0 Access / vehicular activity**

The existing vehicular access will be used to service the new development .

Normally any increase in vehicular activity would be associated with the receipt of young pigeons from say late February to early May each year. Generally up to 1500 young birds are entered into the One loft Race programme and are received daily over a period of some 8- 9 weeks .

During the training programme arranged by the site manager pigeons are exercised twice daily after their initial settling in period . Young birds can be expected to be exercised in small batches , up to 100 each time, once in the early morning and then late afternoon /evening . Training also takes place weekly where the young birds are taken up to 30 miles away and released for return to the lofts .

#### **9.0 Good husbandry / site management**

As a condition of consent to run the one loft race , site managers become Members of the RPRA and are responsible for the welfare and good management of the site . This includes vaccination of young birds , once received , and also the day to day feeding , cleaning and training of pigeons . This in itself provides employment for at least 1 if not 2 full time members of staff and some part time employees .

## 10.0 Cleaning / feeding / storage of pigeons feed / welfare

With the keeping of up to 1500 young pigeons welfare is of great importance . Normally the pigeon lofts are raised off the ground , so that pigeons walk on a grid type floor with a void below so that pigeon waste is contained , and then can be removed weekly / monthly by the site race manager . In this case pigeon waste will be removed and then stored for later return to the land / small holding .

Storage pigeon feed / medicines – these will be held in a separate vermin proof storage area within the layout for the lofts .

## Appendix 1

Photographs taken November 2023  
of existing Lofts to be resited

Extract from OS Map showing site area

Aerial photograph of application site

Extract from Kesteven Local Plan Policy SP5 (now superceded)  
by Central Lincolnshire Local Plan adopted 13.4.23  
Policy Part G

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- b. Rural diversification projects
- c. Replacement dwellings for a one on one basis
- d. Conversion of buildings providing that the existing building(s) contributes to the character or appearance of the local area by virtue of their historic, traditional or vernacular form; and
- e. Are in sound structural condition, and
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Photographs of existing 2 lofts at current "One Loft location" in Gloucestershire



# YOUNG BIRDS



The annual RPRAs Young Birds One Loft Race is made up of a training race, four hot spot races and one final race, all back to the loft at Birtsmorton, near Tewkesbury, which is run by Loft Manager Jeremy Davies.

Select the appropriate tabs from the menu on the right for the news and results from the current season. Those from previous years may be seen under the [Archive](#) tab.

## YOUNG BIRDS

- [Young Birds 2023 Loft News](#)
- [Young Birds 2023 Loft Entrants](#)
- [Young Birds Current Loft List](#)
- [Young Birds Gallery](#)
- [Young Birds Training Results](#)
- [Young Birds Hot Spot Races ▾](#)
- [Young Birds 2023 Final Race](#)
- [Young Birds 2023 Ace Pigeon](#)
- [Archive](#)

## LEAD SPONSORS



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Aerial View Southview, London Road , South Willoughby



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the total number of market dwellings must not exceed the number of affordable homes needed and should be supported by the submission of a robust viability assessment which demonstrates that the scheme only promotes the minimum number of market houses required to make the scheme viable (viability assessment will be independently verified and the applicant will be expected to meet the cost of this assessment)

\* the term 'demonstration of clear local community support' means that at the point of submitting a planning application to the local planning authority, there should be clear evidence of local community support for the scheme, with such support generated via a thorough, but proportionate, pre-application consultation exercise, where demonstratable evidence of local community support or objection cannot be determined, then there will be a requirement for support from the applicable Parish or Town Council or Neighbourhood Plan Group. If an application is in doubt as to what would constitute a 'thorough but proportionate', preapplication consultation exercise, then the applicant should contact the applicable local planning authority.

#### SP5: Development in the Open Countryside

Development in the open countryside will be limited to that which has an essential need to be located outside of the existing built form of a settlement. In such instances, the following types of development will be supported:

- a. agriculture, forestry or equine development;
- b. rural diversification projects;
- c. replacement dwellings (on a one for one basis) or;
- d. conversion of buildings provided that the existing building(s) contributes to the character or appearance of the local area by virtue of their historic, traditional or vernacular form; and
- e. are in sound structural condition; and
- f. are suitable for conversion without substantial alteration, extension or rebuilding, and that the works to be undertaken do not detract from the character of the building(s) or their setting.

**Part G: Agricultural, forestry, horticultural or other rural land-based development**

Proposals which will help farms modernise and/or adapt to funding changes or climate change will be supported in principle and any such proposals will be considered against relevant design, landscape and natural environment policies in this plan.

Where permission is required, development proposals for buildings required for agriculture or other rural land based development purposes will be supported where:

- a) It is demonstrated that there is a functional need for the building which cannot be met by an existing, or recently disposed of, building;
- b) the building is of a scale that is proportionate to the proposed functional need;
- c) the building is designed specifically to meet the functional need identified;
- d) the site is well related to existing buildings in terms of both physical and functional location, design and does not introduce isolated structures away from existing buildings; and
- e) significant earthworks are not required, and there will be no harm to natural drainage and will not result in pollution of soils, water or air.