

**RETROSPECTIVE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR RETENTION OF EXISTING  
FENCING AND HAY STORAGE LEAN-TO**

**AT**

**RINGLESTONE GATE HOUSE, WARBURY LANE, KNAPHILL, WOKING,  
GU21 2TX**

**SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT**

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## 1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 This report is in support of a retrospective planning application submitted to Woking Borough Council for the retention of an existing hay storage lean-to, which has been in situ since 2020, located at Ringlestone Gate House, Warbury Lane, Knaphill, Woking, GU21 2TX . Additionally, this full planning application also seeks planning consent to retain existing fencing on site which would normally be ‘permitted development’ but requires planning permission by virtue of condition 5 of planning permission PLAN/2011/0184.
- 1.2 A full description of the proposal is set out in section 3 of this report.
- 1.3 This supporting planning statement sets out why the proposed development is acceptable having regard to the policies of the Woking Local Plan, in addition to national planning policy and guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

## 2. Site Description and review of planning history

- 2.1 The site to which this retrospective planning application relates is Ringlestone Gate House, Warbury Lane, Knaphill, Woking, GU21 2TX, located on the Southern Side of Warbury Lane.
- 2.2 On the south-eastern side of the land is a recent residential bungalow belonging to Ringlestone Farm. In addition to this, the site hosts several agricultural structures and outbuildings including the hay storage lean to subject to this retrospective planning application.
- 2.3 The site is bordered by grazing land and woodland areas. A sand school is positioned centrally within the application site and a collection of stable buildings and outbuildings. There is a prefabricated building positioned within the southeast application site, close to the vehicular crossover with Warbury Lane.
- 2.4 Having regard to the Local Plan's policies map, the site is not within a designated Conservation Area nor an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but it does lie within the Green Belt.
- 2.4 There is extensive planning history from recent years on the site which covers a broad number of matters including replacement dwellings and the installation of polytunnels. The following planning history applies to this particular site.
- 2.5 In June 2023, an application for a proposed single-storey side extension was lodged against the site's existing property, receiving planning approval in August 2023 with the officer report stating:
- The proposal is considered an appropriate development in the Green Belt which would preserve the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal is considered visually acceptable and is considered to have an acceptable impact on the character of the host dwelling and surrounding area and on the amenities of neighbours. The proposal therefore accords with the Development Plan and is recommended for approval subject to conditions.*
- 2.6 In June 2022 planning permission was granted for the Demolition of polytunnels and conversion of existing building into a residential dwelling, external alterations and formation of garden amenity area, subject to s106 and legal agreements.

- 2.7 In December an application was refused for the following proposed development:  
Conversion of an existing gymnasium room / games room / storage tack room / stables and garage outbuildings into a 3 bedroom residential dwelling. Part demolition of existing games room outbuilding to create an additional courtyard garden amenity area, insertion of rooflights and external alterations.
- 2.8 Further applications were made against the site in 2020 and 2021 including a submission of details pursuant to conditions (ref COND/2021/0161) and PLAN/2021/0223 for a replacement dwelling which was granted permission in May 2021.

### 3. Description of development

- 3.1 The proposed development to which this application relates is for the retention of an existing hay storage lean-to which has been in situ at the site from April 2020 and in regular use for agricultural operations in conjunction with the sites existing context. Additionally, consent is requested for the retention of existing fencing which would normally benefit from planning permission by virtue of 'The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015'. However, such PD rights are restricted at the site due to a historic planning condition, namely, condition 5 of planning permission PLAN/2011/0184.
- 3.2 Although the site resides within the council's greenbelt, the scale and design of the existing hay storage lean-to is considered to be compliant from the perspective of national and local planning policy as the structure does not result in any detrimental impact on the existing openness of the greenbelt. The reasoning for this is thanks to existing screening measures provided by natural and manufactured aspects of the built environment.
- 3.3 Regarding the existing site boundary treatments, although it is recognized that no PD rights are intact to retain this feature under Class A – Minor Operations of the General Permitted Development Order, its minimalistic scale and design should still be taken as a material consideration as if the site had PD rights intact through a variation of condition/discharge application then planning consent would not be required to retain this development.
- 3.4 As such, although planning consent is required in its current state, the existing status of the boundary development is not out of place against the area's existing landscape character and is not contrary to National Planning Policy, particularly in relation to national green belt policy which seems to prevent harm to the openness of the green belt.
- 3.5 The site has an existing established equestrian use which accepted by the LPA as being wholly compatible with a Green Belt location. The development subject to this application is therefore required in connection with this use, namely the storage of hay for the horses and enclosures for the keeping and safety of the horses.
- 3.4 The developments in accordance with National and Local Planning Policy will be explored in the following section which will present an introduction to relevant planning policy frameworks relevant to the proposal.

## 4. Summary of relevant planning policies

- 4.1 When considering the merits of development that requires a planning application the Council, in its function as the local planning authority, has a requirement to determine that application in accordance with the policies of its Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise<sup>1</sup>.
- 4.2 Therefore, in preparing this planning statement consideration has been had to relevant policies of Woking Local Development Plan (LDP) as set out below. The following local and national policies are relevant to this proposed development.

### Woking Borough Council

#### **Woking Local Development Document: Woking Core Strategy 2012**

- 4.3 The following policies from the : Woking Core Strategy are considered relevant to this proposal:

CS6 – Green Belt.

CS21 – Design.

CS24 – Woking’s Landscape and townscape.

The appropriate section of each policies are quoted below:

#### ***CS6 – Green Belt:***

- 4.4 This policy states that to ensure the Green Belt continues to serve its fundamental aim and purpose, and maintains its essential characteristics, it will be protected from harmful development. Within its boundaries, strict control will continue to apply over inappropriate development, as defined by Government policy currently outlined in the NPPF.

**CS21 – Design:**

## 4.5 Proposals for new development should meet the criteria below:

- *Create buildings and places that are attractive with their own distinct identity; they should respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area in which they are situated, paying due regard to the scale, height, proportions, building lines, layout, materials and other characteristics of adjoining buildings and land. Tall Buildings could be supported in Woking Town Centre, if well designed and can be justified within the context. The impacts of any proposal will be fully assessed and an Area Action Plan will be prepared to set out details of how it will be managed.*
- *Achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjoining properties avoiding significant harmful impact in terms of loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight, or an overbearing effect due to bulk, proximity or outlook;*
- *Be designed in an inclusive way to be accessible to all members of the community, regardless of any disability and to encourage sustainable means of travel;*
- *Incorporate landscaping to enhance the setting of the development, including the retention of any trees of amenity value, and other significant landscape features of merit, and provide for suitable boundary treatment/s;*
- *Ensure provision of well designed Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace, (SANG) where necessary;*
- *Ensure schemes provide appropriate levels of private and public amenity space;*
- *Create a safe and secure environment, where the opportunities for crime are minimised;*
- *Incorporate measures to minimise energy consumption, conserve water resources, use the principles of sustainable construction and provide for renewable energy generation in accordance with policy CS22 Sustainable Construction and CS23 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation;*
- *Incorporate provision for the storage of waste and recyclable materials, and make provision for sustainable drainage systems.*
- *Ensure the building is adaptable to allow scope for changes to be made to meet the needs of the occupier (life time homes and modern business needs);*
- *Be designed to avoid significant harm to the environment and general amenity, resulting from noise, dust, vibrations, light or other releases.*



**CS24 – Woking’s Landscape and townscape:**

4.6 All development proposals will provide a positive benefit in terms of landscape and townscape character, and local distinctiveness and will have regard to landscape character areas. To protect local landscape and townscape character, development will be expected to:

- *conserve, and where possible enhance existing character, especially key landscapes such as heathlands, escarpments and the canal/river network and settlement characteristics; maintain locally valued features, and enhance or restore deteriorating features;*
- *respect the setting of, and relationship between, settlements and individual buildings in the landscape;*
- *conserve, and where possible, enhance townscape character, including structure and land form, landscape features, views and landmarks, and appropriate building styles and materials;*
- *support land management practices that have no adverse impact on characteristic landscape patterns and local biodiversity.*
- *Protect and encourage the planting of new trees where it is relevant to do so.*

National Planning Policy

4.7 The Government’s national planning policies are set out in the ‘National Planning Policy Framework’ (NPPF). The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

4.8 Paragraph 7 establishes the overriding principle that the planning system is to contribute towards sustainable development. Paragraph 8 explains that there are 3 strands to sustainable development - economic, social and environmental.

4.9 Paragraph 11 identifies the importance of the concept of ‘sustainable development’ and that in terms of decision making this means, inter alia:

*“...approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay...”*

- 4.10 In relation to applications for planning permission, paragraph 47 refers to these being determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.11 The NPPF contains a series of policies relating to Green Belt land. Of particular relevance is para. 149 which lists buildings which might be considered appropriate:

*149. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*

*a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;*

*b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*

## 5. Acceptability of development proposed

- 5.1 Having regard to the Council's planning policies, the principles of the NPPF and the recent decision letter from the Planning Inspector with respect to the Enforcement Notice, it is considered that the main planning consideration in relation to this proposed development are:
- Principle of development in the Green Belt
  - Impact on character of the area
  - Design and appearance
- 5.2 Furthermore, it is considered that the development does not bare any detrimental impacts on the existing openness of the Green Belt as the structure benefits from sufficient screening measures through existing natural landscape components such as trees and other vegetation in addition to existing features of the built environment such as outbuildings and other ancillary structures.

### Principle of development in the Green Belt

- 5.3 The proposal seeks to retain an existing hay storage lean-to which has been in situ at the site since April 2020 with the structure not leading to any disruption on the existing environment during that time. Although the site is situated within the Green Belt, the structure has demonstrated no harm to the openness of the existing landscape as the structure benefits from suitable screening provisions.
- 5.4 The structure would be connected to the existing use of the land for equestrian purposes, a use that has been accepted by the LPA as being appropriate to and compatible with a Green Belt location. As such the development preserves the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 5.5 Furthermore, the existing fence on site is not out of character of what is normally seen within rural areas. It is also noted that the GPDO does not restrict development of this scale in the Green Belt. Therefore, it can be concluded the Government accepts such a form of development is appropriate in a Green Belt location. For these reasons its retention will not result in any detrimental visual impact to the areas existing landscape character nor will it impose any harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

- 5.6 It is therefore considered that the proposed development complies with both national and local Green Belt policies.

#### Impact on character of the area

- 5.7 The site's existing landscape character has not undergone any significant change following the erection of hay storage structure as the site's existing landscape character is rural and agricultural by nature which ensures that the structure is not visually upsetting nor out of place.
- 5.8 The existing presence of the structure is further mitigated by existing screening opportunities provided by natural and built features of the surrounding environment such as trees and hedges along with various buildings.
- 5.9 Retention of the fence at the site is considered to result in a negligible impact on the character of this area since it is of a scale and design respectful of the area's existing landscape character.
- 5.10 It is therefore considered that the proposal would be consistent with the identified Landscape Character of the area and make a positive contribution to the landscape.

#### Design and appearance

- 5.11 The design and appearance of the structure are of high quality and, it is considered, that its retention will contribute positively to the existing landscape character of this area. Furthermore, the structure will be a practical addition to the site and entirely compatible with the rural environment within which they sit.
- 5.12 The existing fence is also not considered to be out of character against the surrounding landscape as it is not out of scale against typical Permitted Development Parameters which should carry weight despite historic planning conditions removing any permitted development entitlement in this regard. The existing fencing will also not defer away from the existing openness of the greenbelt as the enclosure is not visually dominant from any major viewpoints throughout this area.
- 5.13 The development is therefore in accordance with local plan policy CS21 and national policy.

## 6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposed development subject to this application is considered to be in accordance with policies of the Council's development plan as well as national policy as set out in the NPPF. This is by virtue of the fact the development:
- Is in connection with an established equestrian use in the Green Belt.
  - Is required for functional reasons, i.e. storage of hay and the enclosure of horses, in connection with a use that is appropriate and compatible with a Green Belt location.
- 6.2 As such, the proposals are complementary to its rural Green Belt location and is sustainable development in accordance with national policy and guidance and complies with policies in the Development Plan.
- 6.3 Therefore, in the absence of any other material considerations to justify otherwise it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted for the proposed development.