

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Proposed Stables and Change of Use of Land from Agricultural to Equestrian

Full Application

Land off Holbrook Lane, Holbrook Common, Wick, South
Gloucestershire, BS30 5NF

On behalf of Mr S Hill

Dexter Building Design Ltd

January 2024



Introduction

This report has been commissioned by the applicant, Mr Hill, in support of a full planning application for a new stable building and change of use of agricultural land to the north of Holbrook Lane (herein 'The application site').

The proposed building will be built in the north-east corner of the application site, close to an existing hedgerow, clear of any existing trees. The stables are intended for personal use of the applicant for their own horses.

The applicant requires stables large enough to house two horses. The proposed stables will be single storey in height to ensure they are of an appropriate scale. The building will be finished with timber cladding and a shallow pitch profile sheet roof to ensure it blends-in visually with its semi-rural surroundings.

This report will describe the site and its surroundings, explain the development proposals, provide an overview of the site's planning history, review the pertinent planning policy, provide a planning analysis, and draw some conclusions.

Location and Surrounding Area

The application concerns the construction of a stable building and change of use of agricultural land off Holbrook Lane. The application site has a total area of circa 0.8Ha and comprises an agricultural field at the edge of a small cluster of dwellings to the south-east.

An aerial map showing the site is included at **Figure 1**.



Figure 1 – Historic Google Earth Aerial Image of the application site [source: Google Maps].

And a perspective view of the application site viewed towards the east appears at **Figure 2**.



Figure 2 – Perspective Aerial View of the application site viewed in an easterly direction [source: Google Maps]

The site is in the Green Belt and is not affected by any heritage assets. It is outside a defined settlement boundary. It is not within a Conservation Area, nor in the AONB. It is in Flood Zone 1, so poses no adverse risk of flooding (**Figure 3**).

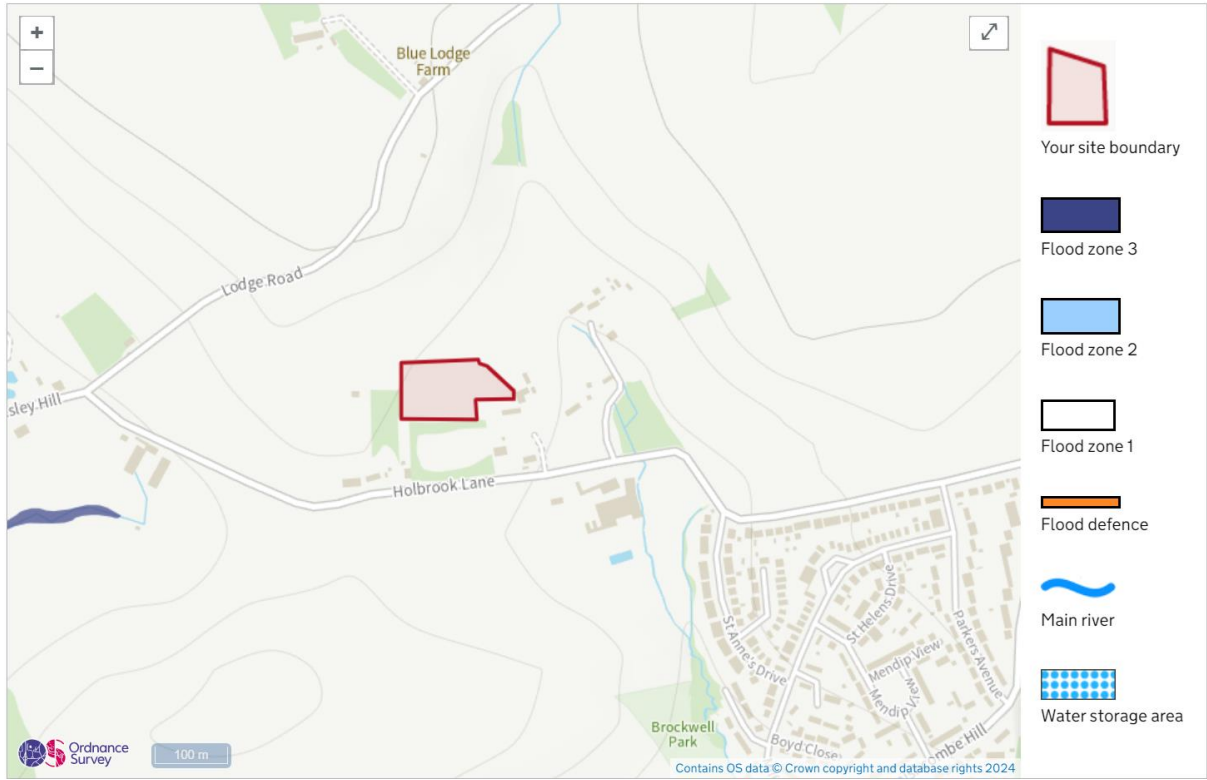


Figure 3 - EA Flood Map Showing site edged red.

Planning History

There is no planning history for the site available on the Council's website.

The Proposals

This application proposes development comprising a stable building and change of use of agricultural land to equestrian use.

The proposed stable is to be to the minimum size required to accommodate the applicant's two horses, and include two individual stables, a feed and hay store, and a tack room.

A canopy is proposed across the full width of the front elevation of the stable, and a narrow strip of concrete will provide all weather hardstand to assist access to the building.

The barn would be finished with timber clad walls and a profile sheet roof. An extract of the proposed plans is included at **Figure 4**.

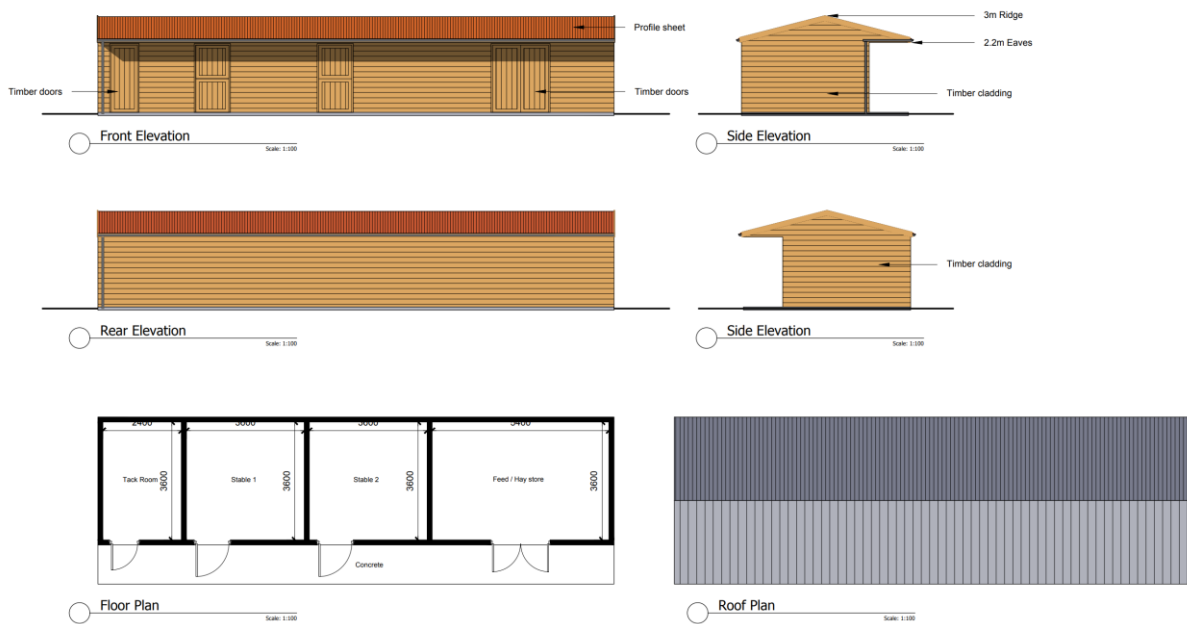


Figure 4 - Proposed Stable Plan Extract [NTS]

Vehicular access would be made from the lane via an existing entrance.

Policy Review

Planning Policy

This planning policy review sets out local and national policy and legislation relevant to the proposals.

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that applications must be in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in the preparation of Local Plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

LOCAL POLICY

The South Gloucestershire Development Plan comprises:

- Core Strategy 2006-2027 (Adopted 11 December 2013)
- Policies Sites and Places Plans (Adopted November 2017)

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are not part of the Development Plan but are material considerations in decision making. The SPD pertinent to this development is:

- Development in the Green Belt (June 2007)

Core Strategy 2006-2027 (Adopted 11 December 2013)

Policy CS1 – High Quality Design

Policy CS1 states *‘Development will only be permitted where the highest possible standard of design and site planning are achieved. Information submitted with an application should be proportionate to the scale, significance and impact of the proposals.’*

It goes onto to state that *‘development proposals will need to state that:*

- 1. Siting, form, scale, height, massing, detailing, colour and materials, are informed by, respect and enhance the character, distinctiveness and amenity of both the site and its context;’*

Policy CS5 – Location of Development

With regard to development in the Green Belt, Policy CS5 states that:

- c) Other proposals for development in the Green Belt will need to comply with the provisions of the NPPF or relevant local plan policies in the Core Strategy.’*

Policy CS34 - Rural Areas

Policy CS34 states that development proposals in rural areas should;

4. *'protect the designated Green Belt and the Cotswold AONB from inappropriate development.'*

Policies Sites and Places Plan (Adopted November 2017)

Policy PSP1 – Local Distinctiveness

Policy PSP1 states that *'Development proposal(s) will be acceptable where the proposals demonstrate an understanding of, and respond constructively to the buildings and characteristics that make a particularly positive contribution to the distinctiveness of the area / locality.'*

Innovative architectural responses will be favourably considered, where this would result in a high quality design that would in itself contribute positively to the distinctiveness of a place.'

Policy PSP2 - Landscape

Policy PSP2 states that *'Development proposals will be acceptable where they conserve and where appropriate enhance the quality, amenity, distinctiveness and special character of the landscape (defined by the Landscape Character Assessment). This includes, but is not limited to:*

- landscape attributes which define the inherent character of an area, such as: landscape patterns arising from roads, paths, hedges, waterways and buildings; designed and natural landscapes, which include elements of natural beauty, historical or cultural importance and ecological features;*
- the tranquillity of a landscape, sense of place and setting;*
- landscape features, such as trees, hedgerows, woodlands, views, banks, walls, ponds and waterways;*
- distinctive or characteristic topography and landforms.'*

Policy PSP7 – Development in the Green Belt.

Policy PSP7 states that *'Inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and will not be acceptable unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated that clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm.'*

Policy PSP30 – Horse Related Development

Policy PSP30 states: *Development proposal(s) for horse related development outside the defined urban areas and rural settlement boundaries will be acceptable providing that:*

- 1) new buildings, shelters or arenas are located, where possible, near to existing farmsteads or groups of buildings; and*
- 2) there are no existing suitable underused buildings available or capable of conversion, located near to existing farmsteads or groups of buildings; and*
- 3) the design of buildings, and the size of the site and the number of horses to be accommodated, has proper regard to the safety and comfort of horses and to the preservation and enhancement of the landscape; and*

4) where necessary, safe and convenient access to bridleways and riding routes are available to riders; and

5) adequate provision is made for vehicular access, parking and manoeuvring and the development would not give rise to traffic conditions to the detriment of highway safety; and

6) any temporary structures, and vehicles associated with the proposed development, are located in appropriately designed storage on site, to avoid any harm or degradation to open countryside and rural landscapes.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Development in the Green Belt (SPD) – June 2007

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) outlines the purpose, importance and characteristics of the Green Belt and explains the limited development that is permitted in the Green Belt. This SPD supplements the policies of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan and will be used when assessing development proposals in the Green Belt for:

- Infill development
- Additions to existing dwellings
- Replacement of existing dwellings
- Changes of use

With regards to agricultural buildings, the SPD confirms that *'New buildings will only be constructed in the Green Belt if they are for:*

- *Agriculture and forestry*
- *Essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation or cemeteries*
- *Limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings*
- *Limited residential infilling*
- *Limited affordable housing for identified local community needs (subject to thorough and comprehensive testing of alternatives sites and their impact in accordance with PPS3, PPG13 and Local Plan policies).*
- *Park and Ride (subject to thorough and comprehensive testing of alternatives sites and their impact in accord with PPS3, PPG13 and Local Plan policies).*

Developments that fall within the above list will also be required to comply with other related policies in the Local Plan before planning permission will be granted.'

NATIONAL POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.

Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that *'Planning policies and decisions should enable:*

(b) the development and diversification of agricultural land...'

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that: *'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;*
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- e) limited infilling in villages;*
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.'*

Planning Analysis

This section highlights why the proposed development at the application site should be supported by the Council when assessed against the NPPF and the relevant local Development Plan policies.

The key planning issues are set out below:

1. The principle of establishing a stable at the site;
2. Whether the development is appropriate development in the Green Belt;
3. Whether the design of the proposed building is appropriate within its context;
4. An assessment of the proposal against other relevant material planning considerations.

1. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The field within which the stable is proposed has an agricultural use. It is intended to erect the proposed agricultural building to accommodate the applicant's horses and use the application site for grazing.

Policy PSP30 states new agricultural buildings '*will be acceptable providing that in the case of new buildings:*

- 1) new buildings, shelters or arenas are located, where possible, near to existing farmsteads or groups of buildings; and*
- 2) there are no existing suitable underused buildings available or capable of conversion, located near to existing farmsteads or groups of buildings; and*
- 3) the design of buildings, and the size of the site and the number of horses to be accommodated, has proper regard to the safety and comfort of horses and to the preservation and enhancement of the landscape; and*
- 4) where necessary, safe and convenient access to bridleways and riding routes are available to riders; and*
- 5) adequate provision is made for vehicular access, parking and manoeuvring and the development would not give rise to traffic conditions to the detriment of highway safety; and*
- 6) any temporary structures, and vehicles associated with the proposed development, are located in appropriately designed storage on site, to avoid any harm or degradation to open countryside and rural landscapes.*

The proposed development will be assessed against each of these policy objectives below.

1) new buildings, shelters or arenas are located, where possible, near to existing farmsteads or groups of buildings; and

Applicant Comment: The proposed stable is located at the edge of the field, close to existing dwellings and outbuildings, so it will not appear isolated nor incongruous. The stables are proposed in a position that is a sufficient distance from residential amenity so as not to create any adverse impacts.

2) there are no existing suitable underused buildings available or capable of conversion, located near to existing farmsteads or groups of buildings; and

Applicant Comment: There are no existing buildings located within the field (the application site).

3) the design of buildings, and the size of the site and the number of horses to be accommodated, has proper regard to the safety and comfort of horses and to the preservation and enhancement of the landscape; and

Applicant Comment: The proposed stable will be purpose built to provide safe, comfortable accommodation to the two horses it will house. Two separate stable compartments will be provided, including a separate feed store and separate tack room.

Moreover, the site is circa 0.8ha in area, which complies with The British Horse Society guidance, who recommend a ratio of 0.4ha per horse for permanent grazing.

4) where necessary, safe and convenient access to bridleways and riding routes are available to riders; and

Applicant Comment: The stables would have access to PROWs, and bridleways are also available in the area.

5) adequate provision is made for vehicular access, parking and manoeuvring and the development would not give rise to traffic conditions to the detriment of highway safety; and

Applicant Comment: The existing vehicular access to the site would be used to access the proposed stables off an existing lane that connects to Holbrook Lane. The access onto Holbrook Lane offers safe visibility in either direction along the highway.

6) any temporary structures, and vehicles associated with the proposed development, are located in appropriately designed storage on site, to avoid any harm or degradation to open countryside and rural landscapes.

Applicant Comment: Any temporary structures and vehicles required during the build would be removed from site and any damage caused to the landscape restored afterwards.

The proposed development therefore passes the policy tests presented by Policy PSPS30 and is acceptable in principle.

2. IS THE PROPOSAL APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT?

The relevant development plan policies refer the test for inappropriate development to NPPF policy. The list of development that is considered inappropriate in the NPPF is also replicated in the 'Development in the Green Belt' SPD.

Para 154 NPPF confirms that LPA's should consider the construction of new buildings inappropriate in the Green Belt, except where "...the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection

with existing use of land or a change of use) for...outdoor recreation,...as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it,...”.

The Green Belt SPD echoes the NPPF policy and states with regard to horse related development, including the change of use of land and the erection of stables, that it can fall within the definition of appropriate development in the Green Belt, provided they are small in scale.

The stables are single storey, small in scale, and designed to be as small as possible while still carrying out the function of providing safe, comfortable accommodation to the applicant’s two horses. The stable building will be sensitively located on site near existing hedgerows to screen and reduce its visual impact. Furthermore, its timber clad facades and sheet metal roof will provide it with a rural building aesthetic that means it will not become an incongruous feature within the landscape and where buildings of this nature (stables) are expected in semi-rural locations.

The proposed stable building will therefore be of an appropriate appearance and have an appropriate location and scale so as not to create an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt, and therefore passes the policy tests of Policies CS5, CS34, PSP7 and the relevant SPD and the NPPF in this regard.

3. IS THE BUILDING’S DESIGN AND IMPACT ON SURROUNDING AMENITY ACCEPTABLE?

For the reasons stated in the above section regarding the design and appearance of the proposed stable building, it is submitted that it will not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of this semi-rural area and as such, the building would adhere to policies CS1, PSP1, PSP2, PSP30 and the NPPF regarding its design.

4. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The new stables will not attract an adverse amount of traffic to the site. The vehicular access will be safe to use and therefore not have an adverse effect on the local highway network.

The proposed building would have no adverse effect on the site’s biodiversity and be will located far enough away from existing trees not to risk their health, and there are no flood risk issues to consider.

Furthermore, the development would not affect any designated or non-designated heritage assets.

Conclusion

The proposed development is considered acceptable because of its design and proposed use of appropriate materials that complement its surroundings.

The small scale of the proposed stable building ensures it will not adversely harm 'openness', and because the development will facilitate outdoor recreation it is not therefore considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The development would not affect highways safety, and it would not be exposed to or create any flooding issues.

Consequently, the proposed development should be approved, and no material considerations suggest otherwise.