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## **Planning Statement**

**Planning application for the change of use of an equestrian building (indoor riding arena) to commercial storage use at**

**Ley Farm, Winslow Road, Granborough,  
Buckinghamshire, MK18 3NJ**

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**Prepared on behalf of:  
Elmtree Agricultural**

**Mike Robinson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

January 2024

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## 1.0 Introduction

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- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application seeking the permission for the conversion of an equestrian building to commercial storage use (Class B8) at Ley Farm, Granborough in Buckinghamshire. The Statement has been prepared by Oxford & Country Planning on behalf of Elmtree Agricultural, the applicant and owner of the site.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Statement is to provide justification for the development through an appraisal of relevant local and national planning policy and an assessment of the planning issues raised by the proposal.
- 1.3 The following details have been submitted in support of the application:
- Planning Application Form;
  - This Planning Statement;
  - Location Plan – Drawing No. 007 Rev 1;
  - Existing Site Plan – Drawing No. 005 Rev 1;
  - Existing Floor Plan – Drawing No. 001 Rev 1;
  - Existing Elevations – Drawing No. 002 Rev 1;
  - Proposed Site Plan – Drawing No. 006 Rev 1; and
  - Proposed Elevations – Drawing No. 004 Rev 1.

## 2.0 Site and Proposal

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- 2.1 Ley Farm is located just outside the village of Granborough in Buckinghamshire, about two miles south of Winslow. It is accessed via a private farm track from the Winslow Road on the north eastern edge of the village. Ley Farm includes a farmhouse, various agricultural buildings and equestrian facilities including stabling, an indoor riding arena and an outdoor menage. The wider agricultural holding extends to over 100 acres.
- 2.2 The indoor riding arena, the subject of this application, is a large rectangular portal frame building. It measures 20m wide by 48m long with an eaves height of 4m and 6.8m to ridge. The building has a fibre cement roof and colour coated profile metal sheeting and timber boarded walls. As well as the arena, the building contains a stables at the northern end.
- 2.3 The building is bounded by substantial trees and hedgerows to the south and east.



- 2.4 The farm provides equestrian facilities for a number of local horse owners comprising of a managed livery service and riding tuition.
- 2.5 However, the indoor riding arena has not proved to be financially viable. As such the applicant wishes to generate additional income by securing an alternative use for the building.
- 2.6 It is proposed to convert the indoor riding arena into a series of storage units to local businesses and private clients. Storage uses envisaged would include for the keeping of classic cars, building supplies and landscaping equipment. Occupiers would simply access the facility and depart. There would be no workshops or businesses operating from building.
- 2.7 The arena would be subdivided into seven units (each at 6m wide) with the end stable bay being retained. The building would convert readily without any major new structural work with alterations largely limited to new roller shutter doors for each storage unit, a new floor and internal partitions .

## 3.0 Planning Policy

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- 3.1 The starting point for decision-making is the Development Plan which in this instance is the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013 – 2033 and the Granborough Neighbourhood Plan 2020 -2035.
- 3.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that determination must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies and is also an important material consideration in planning decisions.
- 3.4 It is considered that the planning policies relevant to this proposal are:

### **VALP (Adopted Sept 2021)**

- Policy BE2 – Design of new development
- Policy BE3 – Protection of the amenity of residents
- Policy NE1 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy NE4 – Landscape character and local important landscape
- Policy S7 – Previously developed land
- Policy D6 – Provision of employment land
- Policy C1 – Conversion of rural buildings
- Policy T5 – Delivering transport in new development
- Policy T6 – Vehicle parking

### **Granborough Neighbourhood Plan (Made Nov 2022)**

- Policy RC2: Protecting the Landscape
- Policy RC3: High Quality Design
- Policy B1: Nature Conservation
- Policy HSAT1: Highway Safety and Access

- 3.5 Of the policies listed above, it is considered that Policy C1 of the VALP is the most relevant to this application.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023)**

- 3.6 Section 6 of the NPPF refers to supporting a prosperous rural economy, with paragraph 88 stating that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings.

## 4.0 Planning Assessment

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- 4.1 This section of the Statement seeks to address the key planning issues associated with the proposal and demonstrates its compliance with relevant planning policy.

### **Principle**

- 4.2 The VALP states that stimulating economic growth and supporting the recovery of the local economy is one of the council's corporate priorities. In support of this priority and in the context of the NPPF, Policy C1 encourages the re-use of existing rural buildings for a variety of uses.

- 4.3 Policy C1 (Conversion of rural buildings) states that the re-use of an existing building that is of permanent and substantial construction and generally in keeping with the rural surroundings in the countryside will be permitted provided that a series of assessment criteria met. Addressing each of these in turn:

*a. Conversion works should not involve major reconstruction or significant extensions and should respect the character of the building and its setting, except in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that dereliction was the result of severe accidental damage or accidental destruction in the past two years.*

No structural surveys of the building have been submitted with the application as the building is modern (being just over 10 years old) and is clearly of substantial construction. It is perfectly suitable to accommodate the commercial uses applied for. The application is for a change of use of an existing building and very few external alterations are proposed.

*b. Where the building is suitable for modern agricultural practice it would not give rise to a future need for another building to fulfil the function of the building being re-used.*

The building subject of this application sits within a larger established equestrian use and is not in agricultural use. Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of the indoor



arena, the outdoor arena would be retained and so the exercising of horses can still be accommodated on the wider site.

*c. The long-term retention of a building that is by reason of its location, size, condition and appearance is harmful to the character of the countryside is not encouraged.*

With regard to the external appearance of the main building, it is a purpose built building for the riding and stabling of horses. Whilst the building is relatively utilitarian in appearance, its location, size, condition and appearance are considered to be entirely in keeping with its rural surroundings.

*d. The redundant or disused status of the building has been demonstrated and the re-use of the building would enhance the immediate setting.*

The arena has proved not to be financially viable for the existing business operation. The re-use of the building would not detract from the immediate setting.

*e. The existing building is inherently suitable, in terms of its size, design and construction for the intended re-use, and the proposed scheme enables the intended re-use to be achieved without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction.*

The building is entirely suitable for the proposed use and the conversion into seven storage units via internal partitions would not require substantial reconstruction.

*f. The existing building is not located well away from existing settlements and is not located where utilities are not available.*

The site is located just outside the village of Granborough. Utilities are available and used by the existing farm and equestrian operation.

*g. The existing building is not damaging to the surrounding character by virtue of a utilitarian appearance or cladding in unattractive materials.*

Although the building has a utilitarian appearance, it is not considered that this is damaging to the surrounding character forming part of a wider and long established agricultural and equestrian complex. The building is reasonably well screened by existing landscaping.

*h. The proposed re-use is of a scale that would not have an adverse impact on its surroundings or the viability of existing facilities or services in nearby settlements.*

The proposed B8 use is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the surroundings and will help in supporting local business and individuals.

*i. Any extension to the existing building included in the proposed scheme is modest in scale, ancillary in nature, subordinate to the main building and necessary to meet the essential functional requirements of the intended re-use.*

*j. Any extension to the existing barn conversion is modest in scale, ancillary in nature, subordinate to the main building, in keeping with the rural character, designed with sensitivity to the host building and will enhance the character and appearance of its immediate surroundings*

No extensions have been carried out and none are proposed as part of the conversion.

*k. Where the existing building is of designated or non-designated heritage assets or contributes to local character, the proposed scheme would retain significant historical features and not adversely affect the character and appearance of the building or its setting.*

This is not applicable as the building is of modern construction and is not a designated or non-designated heritage asset or in a conservation area.

*l. Where any curtilage is required it should not be excessive in size and should relate well to the existing building and landscape*

The curtilage of the building will not alter as a result of the proposal and currently relates well to the existing adjoining buildings and landscape.

*m. The proposed scheme would not give rise to ancillary uses that could not be accommodated within the site and does not include, or would not give rise to, ancillary uses within the site, such as open storage, that would be visually intrusive, and*

The proposed storage uses will be entirely located within the existing building.

*n. Conversion works should not adversely impact upon wildlife using the structure. If impacts to nesting sites are unavoidable mitigation will be required (see Policy NE1).*

The modern construction and materials of the building means that it is not considered a suitable habitat for protected species.

- 4.4 Therefore, the proposal to convert the building for commercial storage use is in accordance with both national and local policy which allows for the re-use of buildings for such purpose.

### **Design**

- 4.5 Policy BE2 of the VALP sets out various design considerations for new developments. These include ensuring that proposals respect and complement the physical characteristics of the site and its surroundings including the scale and context of the site and its setting.
- 4.6 The proposed conversion would result in very little change to the external appearance of a modern building which is located within an established agricultural and equestrian complex. Therefore it is considered the proposal accords with Policy BE2.

### **Transport and highways impacts**

- 4.7 The equestrian building is currently accessed along a private farm track from the public highway which serves Ley Farm. The existing access already accommodates agricultural and private traffic associated with the livery on a frequent basis.
- 4.8 The table at the top of the following page provides an indication of weekly traffic movements. It is expected that this development will result in the removal of some existing trips associated with the DIY livery. The expected small net-reduction in weekly traffic movements is shown in the table at the bottom of the following page.
- 4.9 Sufficient parking provision and vehicle turning space already exists in the yard area adjacent to the building.
- 4.10 It is considered that given there will be a slight fall in traffic levels between the existing and proposed uses, highway safety will not be jeopardised and that transport and highways considerations have been satisfactorily addressed. Therefore the proposal accords with Policies T5 and T6.

### **Landscape and ecology**

- 4.11 The proposal would see the conversion of an existing building without significant external alterations and so the proposal does not raise any concerns over the proposed development being intrusive within the countryside or the landscape.
- 4.12 The utilitarian nature of the building means that there is not a reasonable likelihood of protected species or priority habitats being affected by the development.
- 4.13 Therefore the proposal accords with Policies NE1 and NE4.

| <b>Current Traffic Volume</b> |                |                           |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Visitor                       | Frequency Week | Vehicle                   |
| Livery 1                      | 10             | Passenger Car             |
| Livery 1 Groom 1              | 10             | Passenger Car             |
| Livery 1 Groom 2              | 10             | Passenger Car             |
| Livery 1 Clients              | 5              | Passenger Car             |
| Livery 2                      | 25             | Passenger Car             |
| Livery 3                      | 30             | Passenger Car             |
| Livery 4                      | 8              | Passenger Car             |
| Farriers                      | 5              | Commercial Vehicle        |
| Vets                          | 2              | Commercial Vehicle        |
| Hay and Feed Deliveries       | 1              | Commercial Vehicle        |
| Lessons                       | 10             | Horse Box / Passenger Car |
| Pony Club Meetings            | 2.5            | Horse Box                 |
|                               | 118.5          |                           |

| <b>Estimated Traffic Volume</b> |                |                           |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Visitor                         | Frequency Week | Vehicle                   |
| Livery 1                        | 10             | Passenger Car             |
| Livery 1 Groom 1                | 10             | Passenger Car             |
| Livery 1 Groom 2                | 10             | Passenger Car             |
| Livery 1 Clients                | 5              | Passenger Car             |
| Livery 2                        | 25             | Passenger Car             |
| Livery 3                        | 30             | Passenger Car             |
| Livery 4                        | 8              | Passenger Car             |
| Farriers                        | 1              | Commercial Vehicle        |
| Vets                            | 0.5            | Commercial Vehicle        |
| Hay and Feed Deliveries         | 1              | Commercial Vehicle        |
| Lessons                         | 3              | Horse Box / Passenger Car |
| Unit 1                          | 1              | Passenger Car             |
| Unit 2                          | 1              | Passenger Car             |
| Unit 3                          | 1              | Passenger Car             |
| Unit 4                          | 1              | Passenger Car             |
| Unit 5                          | 1              | Passenger Car             |
| Unit 6                          | 1              | Passenger Car             |
| Unit 7                          | 1              | Passenger Car             |
| Larger Vehicles                 | 2              | Commercial Vehicle        |
|                                 | 112.5          |                           |

## 5.0 Conclusion

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- 5.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application seeking the permission for the conversion of an equestrian building (an indoor riding arena) to commercial storage use (Class B8) at Ley Farm, Granborough, Buckinghamshire. The Statement has been prepared by Oxford & Country Planning on behalf of the applicant Elmtree Agricultural.
- 5.2 The principle of the proposed development accords with the relevant policies of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan as well as the NPPF which supports the sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses.
- 5.3 The existing building is of solid and permanent construction and would convert readily without new major works. Therefore would be no adverse impacts on the local landscape or ecological habitats. The assessment of traffic demand demonstrates that the site is likely to generate fewer vehicle movements than the current permitted activity on the site. As a result of this, it can be concluded that the potential for highway safety issues is lowered by the proposal.
- 5.4 Therefore it is concluded that the proposed development is in accordance with the development plan and other material considerations and, in this context, it is considered that full planning permission should be granted.