

# PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Planning application by  
**Mr and Mrs Bridgeman**

**THE OLD GATE, BUCKS HILL, KINGS LANGLEY, WD4 9BR**

**RETENTION OF STABLE BLOCK AND RIDING ARENA, WITH  
ASSOCIATED ACCESS AND HARDSTANDING**



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**RTPI**  
mediation of space · making of place



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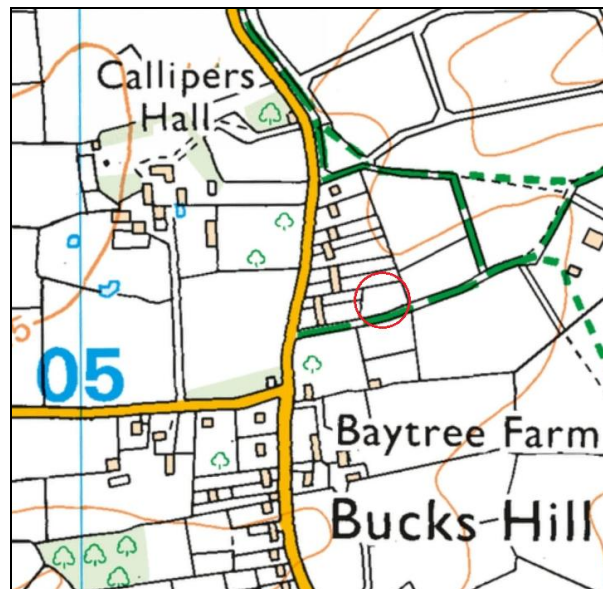
## Executive summary

<p><b>The application</b></p>	<p>The application seeks planning permission for the retention of the stable block, riding arena and hardstanding as constructed. The stables and arena are associated with The Old Gate and accessed via the land to the south of Lane End. The stables and arena lie to the rear of three properties on Bucks Hill; The Old Gate, Friars Cottage and Lane End.</p>
<p><b>Principle of development</b></p>	<p>The site lies within open countryside and designated Green Belt. In the Green Belt, the NPPF 2023 states that the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation can be permitted as an exception to the usual presumption against new buildings which are otherwise considered to be inappropriate development. The proposed stables and arena are for the Applicants' horses, used for recreational purposes. These types of development are recognised as appropriate facilities for Green Belt policy purposes.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p>	<p>The proposed stable building contains necessary facilities for the keeping of the two horses on site and is a traditional single storey timber building. It replaced an earlier range of untidy timber buildings that existed on the site. The arena also replaced a previous riding area. The works are located to the rear of dwellings on an area of land that contained similar facilities.</p> <p>It is considered that the stable building and riding arena do not materially or harmfully affect the openness of the Green Belt.</p> <p>The works relate to a small private yard used by the occupiers of The Old Gate. No separate or business use is proposed.</p> <p>Given that the area of land was previously used for stabling and exercising horses, the works undertaken would have a similar relationship with adjoining properties. The stables building is close to the rear boundaries of Friars Cottage and Lane End, however, the boundary is defined by a close board fence and the stable building is low in height and orientated away from those properties. The muck heap is also located away from the rear boundaries of those adjoining dwellings. It is contended that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the living conditions or privacy of adjoining dwellings.</p>
<p><b>Conclusions</b></p>	<p>The proposal seeks to retain the stable building and riding arena constructed to the rear of dwellings on a site previously occupied by stables/outbuildings and a riding arena. The principle of development complies with Green Belt policy.</p> <p>Given the traditional stable design, including low height and timber materials, the stable building does not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt. Similarly, the surfaced area and fencing does not materially affect the openness of the Green Belt.</p> <p>The relatively low key private use of the facilities does not generate any significant effects on neighbours. The layout and orientation of the site ensures that that would not be an adverse impact on those neighbouring properties through loss of light, aspect, privacy or noise/disturbance.</p> <p>The Applicants welcome discussions with the Council during the course of the application, if required.</p>

# 1 Background and context

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- 1.1 This statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the retention of the stable block, riding arena and hardstanding constructed and located to the rear of properties on Bucks Hill. The application site is owned by the Applicants, Mr and Mrs Bridgeman, and the facilities are used in connection with their two horses.
- 1.2 The Applicants were approached by the Council as part of enforcement investigations and a retrospective application was invited.
- 1.3 The application site lies within Bucks Hill, a rural settlement located within the Green Belt. The identified red edge application site area extends to 0.27 hectares and includes the Applicants property, The Old Gate. The stable building and riding arena are located to the rear of three properties, The Old Gate, Friars Cottage and Lane End.
- 1.4 The stables and associated parking area are accessed via the metalled lane which runs along the southern side of the property Lane End. This lane is a public bridleway and serves Gyfres Farm (Grade II listed building) to the east.



**Image 1: OS location plan showing the general location of the site in relation to Bucks Hill (not to scale)**



**Image 2: The Old Gate – front elevation off Bucks Hill**

**Site planning history**

1.5 The site does not have any recent site planning history (dwelling or land to the rear). However, the Council’s online records show the following older applications. No further detail (decision notices or drawings) are available online.

94/0880/8 Erection of a stable Approved.
01/01595/FUL First floor rear extension. Approved
8/323/86 Erection of dwelling and garage. Refused.
8/687/85 Erection of detached chalet bungalow and garage. Refused.
8/596/86 Erection of replacement dwelling and garage. Refused
8/457/74 Erection of dwelling. Refused

1.6 The site previously accommodated a riding arena and wooden stables (submitted existing site plan refers).



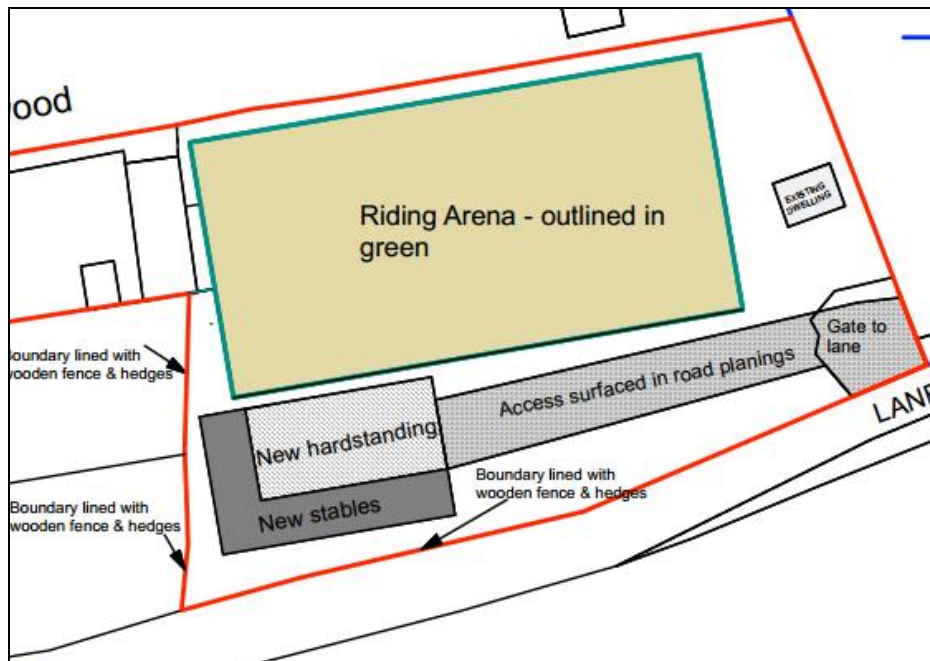
**Image 3: original stable building and riding arena on the site, taken prior to the works being undertaken**

1.7 The locality generally has a rural character, with dwellings on this side of Bucks Hill having a verdant and pleasant layout, form and appearance. In the wider Bucks Hill area, equestrian stables, arenas and buildings are commonplace.

## 2 The planning application

2.1 The application seeks planning permission to retain the following;

- Stable building, which provides three stables, hay store, tack room, feedroom/wc and wash bay.
- Stable building of traditional design and constructed of timber frame and timber cladding. Roof includes 'onduline' sheeting.
- A concrete hardstanding yard area is provided in front of the stables.
- Access track area between stables and the access onto the access lane.
- New riding area measuring 40 x 20 metres and surfaced in sand and flexiride (synthetic and polymer fibres) and fenced with post and rails.



**Image 4: Extract from site layout as constructed (extract from drawing 132/01 AP1) (not to scale)**



**Image 5: View south west across the riding arena towards the stable building**



***Image 6: View south towards the stable building***



***Image 7: View west along the access area***

## 3 Planning policy

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### National Guidance

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (referred to as the NPPF or Framework), sets out the Government's overarching planning policies for England.
- 3.2 Paragraphs 10 and 11 sets out a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development which means approving development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan without delay. The NPPF states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. These roles are mutually dependent and should be sought jointly through the planning system.
- 3.3 Section 13 of the Framework relates to Green Belts and sets out the Government's policy on development in the Green Belt. Paragraph 154 states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate development. Exceptions to this are also set out and include b) the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and 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 Development Plan

- 3.4 The Development Plan for the area comprises the Three Rivers Core Strategy 2011 and the Development Management Policies Local Development Document (2013). There are a number of relevant policies as set out below.

- CP1: overarching policy on sustainable development
- CP9: green infrastructure
- CP10: transport and travel
- CP11: green belt
- CP12: design of development
- DM2: green belt
- DM6: biodiversity, trees, woodland and landscaping
- DM7: landscape character
- DM8: flood risk and water resources
- DM9: contamination and pollution control
- DM13: parking
- Appendix 5 parking standards

### Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.5 The site within Sarratt Parish. There is currently no Neighbourhood Plan either proposed or made at the time of preparing this report.



## 4 The principle of development – Green Belt policy

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- 4.1 Development plan policies CP11 and DM2 set out the Council's policy on development in the Green Belt. However, it does not explicitly refer to equestrian stables and arena type developments.
- 4.2 The NPPF sets out more detailed Green Belt policy, however, also does not explicitly refer to equestrian related developments. It does, however, establish at paragraph 154 that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, subject to a number of exceptions. For the purposes of this application, the relevant exception of paragraph 154 is criterion b) which relates to *'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.'*
- 4.3 With regard to the first part of criterion b), in order to upgrade the site to meet the needs of the Applicants, and to enable the welfare of horses, the provision of stables, hay storage, feed and tack room with a washing area and an open covered area for tacking up is considered to be reasonably necessary for the keeping of their horses. Horse riding is an outdoor sporting or recreational pursuit, it therefore follows that the proposed stable building is falls within the exception set out in paragraph 154 b) of the Framework. However, the effect on the openness and purposes of the Green Belt also has to be considered (the second part of paragraph 154 b).
- 4.4 There are spatial and visual aspects to the assessment of the openness of the Green Belt. The new stable block replaces an earlier outbuilding block, though has a slightly larger size compared to the original one. The original outbuilding range is estimated to have had a GIA of circa 68 sqm, whilst the replacement building has a GIA of 84 sqm. The stable building also has a traditional low height and roof pitch, limiting its height and mass.
- 4.5 In spatial terms, the stable building element of the scheme would provide a slightly larger built development than previously existed on site. The riding arena largely comprises only a surfaced area and replaces a previous riding arena. It does not have a material effect on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 4.6 In regard to the visual aspect of openness, the stable building is located in a similar position to the original stable building, close to the boundaries of the frontage properties and adjacent to existing hedge and fencelines. In terms of the layout, the works relate more closely to the existing built-up element of the locality rather than the open countryside to the east. The visual aspect would be limited due to the stables low level nature and its close proximity to the site boundaries which provide screening from outside the site. Any views would be limited and against the background of the existing development. It is considered that the works undertaken have a negligible effect on the openness of the Green Belt in visual terms.
- 4.7 It is considered that the works undertaken fall within the identified exception to inappropriate development set out in the Framework under paragraph 154 b) and do not have a material impact on the openness of the Green Belt. As such, the principle of the works accord with the general aims and objectives of Green Belt policy set out in the NPPF and Development Plan.

## **5 Design considerations – including amount, layout, scale, appearance, landscaping, access and parking**

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### **Amount**

- 5.1 The submitted plans show how the stable building provides the various elements required in connection with the Applicants' horses. In order to upgrade the site to meet the needs of the Applicants, and to enable the welfare of horses, the provision of stables, hay storage, feed and tack room with a washing area and an open covered area for tacking up is considered to be reasonably necessary for the keeping of their horses.
- 5.2 The riding arena allows the Applicants to exercise their horses in a safe and controlled environment and on a surface which allows for year round riding. Its size meets general equine standards for a riding arena and also broadly reflects the size of the previous riding arena area.
- 5.3 The works undertaken involve an appropriate amount of development, given the Applicants' needs and the area of land involved.

### **Layout**

- 5.4 The layout of the site has changed following the works that have been undertaken. The stable building was originally located to the rear of The Old Gate, but has been moved more towards the rear of Friars Cottage and Lane End, alongside the access track hedgeline. The riding arena is broadly in the same location as the previous arena. The existing gated access off the lane to the south is retained and a formalised access/hardstanding provided.
- 5.5 Whilst the stable building is closer to the garden boundaries to the west, there is a strong visual boundary in the form of the close board fenceline and the stable block is oriented away from those properties. The muck heap is also located to the eastern side of the stables, away from the domestic boundary. The approximate distance between the building and the nearby properties themselves is 40 metres.
- 5.6 It is considered that the layout has an acceptable relationship with adjoining residential dwellings, as required by Policy CP12 of the Development Plan.

### **Scale and appearance**

- 5.7 The stable building is of attractive and traditional timber frame and clad external appearance. Its appearance serves its purpose and is what is generally seen in the local area. Once matured, it will blend in even further into the rural setting. The building has a relatively low pitch and ridge height, limiting its overall bulk. It has been designed to meet the needs of the Applicants and their horses and is not considered to be excessive in scale and of appropriate appearance. Similarly, the riding arena has been designed to be of suitable scale for the exercising of horses at 40 x 20 metres, an accepted size for a riding arena.
- 5.8 Policy CP12: design of development sets out design guidance. It is contended that the scale and appearance of the works undertaken is appropriate and accords with this policy.

## **Landscaping**

- 5.9 The site includes limited landscaping within the main area, but greater levels around the perimeter of the stable and riding arena in the form of tree and hedge planting. This boundary planting creates a good visual screen to the site, as well as providing shelter and privacy for the site. No further landscaping is proposed.

## **Access and parking**

- 5.10 The site includes an access of the lane to the south, which provides access for hay and other deliveries, as well as for horse transport, if required. The main dwelling includes an access off Bucks Hill to a large private drive which is used by the Applicants on a day to day basis.
- 5.11 The proposed access and parking provision layout is considered to be acceptable – and sufficient to meet the needs of the Applicants.

## **6 Other considerations**

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- 6.1 The site lies in Flood Zone 1 (low flood risk), so a flood risk assessment is not required.
- 6.2 A CIL question form has been completed and submitted in connection with the application. The application relates to 'non-residential development' charged at zero rate and is also less than 100 sqm GIA.
- 6.3 As required, a biodiversity checklist has been prepared and submitted with the application. However, given that the application is retrospective, an ecology report has not been submitted. A Biodiversity Net Gain calculation has not been undertaken given the small scale of the proposal; it is understood that small sites are exempt at the current time.