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**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
PROVISION OF ALL-WEATHER OUTDOOR ARENA
BLEAK HALL, BLOOD HILL, SOMERSHAM, IP8 4PT.**

PLANNING STATEMENT

Ref: 3049

February 2024

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INTRODUCTION

1. This statement has been produced in support of a planning application for the construction of an all-weather outdoor arena on a paddock at Bleak Hall, Blood Hill, Somersham.
2. The proposed arena is for use by the applicants' own horses. It is for private use, not a commercial enterprise. The arena will be surfaced with silica sand. The arena will be enclosed by a fence less than 2m in height which therefore will not require planning permission. The arena will not be floodlit.
3. The application comprises this Statement together with the following documents:
 - o Application Form and Certificate;
 - o Location Plan Scale 1:2500;
 - o Layout Plan Scale 1:500; and,
 - o Section drawing.
4. The following Statement is in two parts. The first part deals with the Council's Local Validation Requirements for planning applications and the second part is a Planning Statement which identifies the relevant local and national planning policies and considerations.

LOCAL VALIDATION REQUIREMENTS

BIODIVERSITY

5. The application site is part of an existing paddock already in use for grazing and exercising the applicants' horses. There are no records or any evidence of protected species or habitat at or near the site.

FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

6. The application site is not at risk of flooding. It is located within Flood Zone 1 (FZ1) where all types of development are acceptable.

HERITAGE STATEMENT

7. Bleak Hall is a Grade II listed building.
8. Bleak Hall was listed on the 24th of January 1986. The listing description for the building states "*SOMERSHAM TM 04 NE 6/153 Bleak Hall - - II House, built in 3 stages: C16, c.1600 and C18. 2 storeys. Timber-framed and plastered. Plain tiled roofs. Axial C17 chimney of red brick has a central pilaster strip at front and back faces. At the front are mainly late C20 casements and at the rear mainly C19 small-pane casements. Lean-to C20 front entrance porch with arch-headed framed and boarded door. To left of entrance is a C16 cell of 2 bays with blocked diamond mullioned windows; the walls were raised and a new roof built in C17. To right is a 2-cell extension of c.1600, containing hall and service. Both phases have plain heavy exposed framing. The central chimney has a large lintel led open fireplace in the hall and 2 plastered arched original fireplaces to the parlour and chamber. Known as Cold Hall until C20*".
9. Paragraph 200 of the NPPF states in part that "*local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting*". In this case, it is considered that the listing description of the building is sufficiently detailed to describe its significance.
10. In this, it is clear from the listing description that the significance of the building arises from its age, architecture and method of construction.
11. Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) describes the significance of a listed building as "*The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance*".
12. Annex 2 of the NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as: "*The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.*"

13. Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states in part *“Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss”*.
14. Paragraph 208 of the NPPF states *“Where a development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal”*.
15. In this case, the separation distance and the intervening stable building are such that the proposed arena will not have any material impact whatsoever on the significance of the listed building or how it is experienced. Its effect will be neutral.

LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

16. The application site is not located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or any other area of special landscape designation.
17. The site of the proposed arena is screened by existing trees and hedging along the paddock boundaries. The proposal will have no material impact on the wider landscape setting.

PLANNING STATEMENT

18. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (As amended) requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
19. In this case, the development plan for the area consists of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan. The National Planning Policy Framework is also a material consideration.
20. Policy LP20 of the Local Plan concerns equestrian related development. It is reproduced overleaf.

Policy LP20 –Equestrian or similar other Animal Land-Based Uses

- 1) The use of land for equestrian purposes or other similar animal land-based uses, including the erection of buildings and equipment, may be permitted subject to:**
 - a. Applicants demonstrating that they have prioritised the re-use of existing buildings;**
 - b. Where there are already buildings and structures on site, any new buildings being located close to and/or integrated with the structures to minimise impact on the landscape;**
 - c. The siting, size, scale, design, materials being suitable/appropriate for the proposed use and any proposed building or equipment (including lighting and means of enclosure) not creating a significant adverse impact on the natural and local environment or the appearance of the locality;**
 - d. Demonstrating the noise, odour or other emissions that are likely to give rise to significant adverse impact on amenity can be effectively mitigated;**
 - e. Integrating with existing features and respecting and enhancing the character of the surrounding landscape/area through sensitive integration and where appropriate mitigating the potential impact of permanent structures through good design, layout and siting; and**
 - f. Convincingly demonstrating that there are no suitable alternative sites on lower grade land if the proposal is located on the best and most versatile agricultural land.**

21. In considering the proposal against the criteria of policy LP20, the following points are relevant.

- a. There are no existing buildings on the site suitable for use as an arena.
- b. The proposed arena is to be located adjacent to the existing stables.
- c. The siting, size, scale, design and materials are suitable/appropriate for the proposed use. No lighting is proposed. The arena will not have a significant adverse impact on the natural or local environment or the appearance of the locality.
- d. The proposal will not give rise to noise, odour or other emissions which would harm amenity. The closest dwelling to the arena is approximately 150m to the southeast of the site.

- e. The land is already equestrian in character, being already in use as paddocks. Therefore, the proposal will integrate with its surroundings.
- f. The application site is on land classified as grade III. It is not the best or most versatile agricultural land.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

- 22. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for all types of development. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 23. There are no policies within the NPPF which deal specifically with equine development. However, the NPPF encourages a wide range of development in rural areas and recognises that outdoor recreational facilities have a part to play in sustaining healthy lifestyles.

CONCLUSIONS

- 24. The proposed development is in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and can take place without causing any material adverse impact on any interest of acknowledged importance.

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