

Planning Statement

**Change of Use of an existing equestrian building into a Light Industrial & Storage/ Distribution unit with minor external alterations**

The Coppice Farm, Akeley Wood, Akeley, MK18 5BN

March 2024

Ref: 24018  
Rev: A

[email@plande.uk](mailto:email@plande.uk)

0333 444 3433

[www.plande.uk](http://www.plande.uk)



I. INTRODUCTION

- I.1 Plande has been appointed to submit a supporting statement for the Change of Use of an existing equestrian building into a Light Industrial & Storage/ Distribution unit with minor external alterations at The Coppice Farm, Akeley Wood, Akeley, MK18 5BN.



Figure I: Location Plan

- I.2 This statement, which should be read in conjunction with the supporting information submitted with the application, aims to give an appraisal of the planning issues and merits in context with planning and other policies, guidance, and material considerations.
- I.3 This planning statement seeks to provide an overall summary of the existing site and surroundings; the relevant planning history of the site, and to provide justification for the proposed works, in the context of the local surroundings, in order to support Buckinghamshire Council in the determination of this proposal and demonstrate that the proposed works comply with the policies of relevance within the Development Plan. The report is structured in the following format:
- Section 2: Site & Surroundings
  - Section 3: Planning History
  - Section 4: The Proposal
  - Section 5: Planning Policy Framework
  - Section 6: Scheme Assessment
  - Section 7: Conclusion
- I.4 This statement has been prepared for the exclusive use of the applicant as part of their planning application and in accordance with the agreed scope of the project. The document may not be reproduced in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of Plande. The copyright in this document (including its electronic form) shall remain vested in Plande. Plande will not be liable for the contents or use of this document by any person for any purpose.

## 2. SITE & SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The Coppice Farm is a detached, modern two storey dwelling, constructed in 2012, which benefits from a range of equestrian facilities including an L shaped traditional stable block and a newly constructed stable block with secure storage area / workshop and a mezzanine storage area.
- 2.2 The property is accessed from Akeley Wood Lodge Road, with the dwelling located to the south of this rural road and the equestrian facilities located to the north of the road.



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph courtesy of Agents

- 2.3 The immediate vicinity consists primarily of agricultural land and woodland. Other residential properties are located on Akeley Wood Lodge Road, including Drive Cottage to the south east of the application site, and Foxglove Cottage to the west of the property.
- 2.4 The village of Akeley is approximately 2.5 miles north of the property, offering a primary school, village hall, and other basic amenities. The nearest town, Buckingham, is located roughly 4 miles south, providing a wider range of shops, services, and public facilities.
- 2.5 The flood map illustrates that the application site is in Zone I which is an area with a low probability of flooding. Additionally, the site is not within Green Belt nor a Conservation Area. Furthermore, the building is not a Listed Building or within close proximity to a Listed Building. Lastly, the site has no specific local plan designation.

### ABOUT THE APPLICANT

- 2.6 The applicant is the owner of Taylor RC, a small, passionate team of RC enthusiasts and engine builders who have developed the TAYLOR RC brand of engines. The company supplies radio-controlled model cars and parts through their mail order business.
- 2.7 Currently the business operates from other premises in Oxfordshire, however the applicant wishes to relocate their business to The Coppice Farm, where the owner of the business lives. It is proposed that the company will operate from the large stable block on site.

- 2.8 The current business premises has suffered from three recent break ins and pest damage, therefore the move to premises in close proximity to the owner's residence would significantly upgrade the security of the Applicant's valuable stock and offer increased 24/7 security for the business.
- 2.9 RC-MAX Products Ltd is a growing local business with multiple Buckinghamshire based staff. Their operation is small and fairly simple. They design their products in-house using CAD software, then subcontract the manufacturing to a number of suppliers. Once made they bring in the raw products on average of 1-2 times per week by UPS delivery van, which are then inspected and stored. Later these raw components will be assembled into the final good format and packaged ready for retail via their website. The Applicant has a Courier collection daily to ship out the online orders (strictly no public access - mail order only). As the Applicant already lives opposite the location, a lot of the UPS and DPD deliveries already come to this location so they can be safely signed for by the occupiers.
- 2.10 RC engines are designed by the company but are manufactured off site by local subcontractors. There is a small element of production involved in the assembly of model cars, however the main daily use of the building would be for the storage and distribution of goods. It is proposed that the building will house office accommodation for the company, along with storage space for the company's products, and space for processing, packing and shipping orders.
- 2.11 The business is currently operated by 3 full time staff including the applicant.
- 2.12 The business operates Monday to Friday, between 08.00 and 18.00 hours.

### 3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 A planning history search illustrates the following relevant planning applications for the site:
  - 1. Demolition of existing indoor arena, barns and stables and erection of replacement barn, arena, and stables - Private Use. Reference No: 12/02192/APP | Status: Approved.
  - 2. Submission of detail pursuant to Condition No.7 External Lighting. Reference No: 12/A2192/DIS | Status: Satisfies requirements.

### 4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This application seeks the Change of Use of an existing equestrian building into a Light Industrial & Storage/ Distribution unit with minor external alterations.
- 4.2 The proposals would include making the external shell of the building water tight. The ground floor elevation which is currently open to the stable yard will be clad in materials to match the existing building, to enclose the existing external area in front of the stables.
- 4.3 Other equestrian buildings and facilities located on site would remain unaffected by the proposals. The existing menage, horse walker and lunge ring would remain on site as existing.



## 5. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

5.1 In accordance with S.38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, this application should be determined in accordance with the relevant Development Plan policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of this determination, the Development Plan comprises:

- Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013 – 2033 (September 2021)
- Aylesbury Vale Design SPD

5.2 This section provides the background to the development plan and identifies the relevant policies below.

### S1 Sustainable Development for Aylesbury Vale:

All development must adhere to sustainable development principles outlined in the NPPF and align with the vision and strategic objectives for Aylesbury Vale. It should contribute positively to the area's economic, social, and environmental conditions, while prioritizing mixed-use development, strategic infrastructure, brownfield land reuse, community integration, heritage preservation, and climate change resilience.

### S7 Previously Developed Land:

Development should efficiently utilize land, prioritizing the reuse of brownfield sites in sustainable locations, considering environmental factors, and aligning with other local planning policies.

### E4 Working at Home:

Partial use of a residential property for business use will be permitted where there are no unacceptable impacts on residential amenity and it would not have an adverse effect on the character of an area, whilst making appropriate provision for access, parking and noise attenuation arising from the business activity.

### E5 Development outside Town Centres:

Proposals for main town centre uses outside designated areas should undergo a sequential test to prioritize town centre locations. Consideration is given to accessibility, viability, and impacts on town centre vitality and viability.

### T1 Delivering the Sustainable Transport Vision:

Development should promote modal shift towards sustainable transport modes, ensuring adequate infrastructure and improvements to the transportation network to mitigate impacts and foster healthy communities.

### T6 Vehicle Parking:

Adequate parking provision should align with set standards, considering site accessibility, development type, local car ownership levels, security, and the promotion of sustainable travel modes.

### T8 Electric Vehicle Parking:

Development should include provisions for electric vehicle charging points based on specified requirements, promoting the adoption of electric vehicles and reducing carbon emissions.

### BE2 Design of New Development:

New development should respect site characteristics, local distinctiveness, natural qualities, and public views while adhering to design standards outlined in the Aylesbury Vale Design SPD.

### BE3 Protection of the Amenity of Residents:

Planning permission should not be granted if proposed development unreasonably harms existing or future residents' amenity, with conditions imposed to mitigate potential adverse impacts.

### NE4 Landscape Character and Locally Important Landscape:

Development must recognize and minimize impacts on landscape character areas, considering visual amenity, local character, ecology, and heritage preservation.

**NE5 Pollution, Air Quality, and Contaminated Land:**

Development should minimize noise, light, and air pollution, with assessments and mitigation measures to address potential impacts on health, environment, and land contamination.

**CI Conversion of Rural Buildings:**

Reuse of existing rural buildings should respect their character, demonstrate suitability for the intended use, and minimize adverse impacts on the countryside.

**C2 Equestrian Development:**

Proposals for horse-related development should consider site suitability, environmental impacts, visual intrusion, and integration with existing structures, promoting responsible land use and minimizing adverse effects. The change of use of an existing equestrian commercial site to another use (other than agriculture or forestry) will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that the existing use is not, or cannot be made, viable.

- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2012 and last revised in December 2023. The aim of the NPPF is to ensure there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that positive planning solutions are found to ensure development is brought forward. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions as outlined in Paragraph 2 of the NPPF and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 5.4 Sustainable development is broadly defined in Paragraph 8 of the NPPF as having three overarching objectives which are independent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:
- a) An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - b) A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - c) An environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 5.5 The NPPF sets out Government planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. For decision-taking this means:
- Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
  - Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, grant planning permission unless:
    - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the framework as a whole; or
    - Specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.
- 5.6 Paragraph 38 states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and should work proactively with applicants to secure development that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
- 5.7 Paragraph 47 states that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.8 Paragraph 55 states that local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions.

- 5.9 Paragraph 127 states that local planning authorities should take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs.
- 5.10 Paragraph 135 (f) states that developments should 'create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.
- 5.11 Promoting sustainable development is a key component of the NPPF and a substantial weight is given to encouraging economic growth with planning authorities being required to apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

## 6. SCHEME ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The following section will consider the compliance of the proposal with the Development Plan policies and material considerations for the application. It provides an analysis of the main planning matters related to the principle and a more detailed, policy-orientated assessment of planning considerations.

### PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines specific considerations and policies for supporting a prosperous rural economy, essentially setting the ground for accepting principles of change of use to support an existing rural business under certain circumstances:

1. Sustainable Growth and Expansion:

Planning policies and decisions should facilitate the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas. This includes both the conversion of existing buildings and the development of well-designed new buildings.

2. Diversification of Agricultural and Rural Businesses:

There should be support for the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses, aligning with broader goals for improving productivity across the UK, as outlined in the Government's Industrial Strategy.

3. Sustainable Rural Tourism and Leisure Developments:

Policies should endorse sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that respect the character of the countryside, supporting the rural economy while preserving rural identity.

4. Retention and Development of Local Services and Community Facilities:

The framework emphasizes the importance of retaining and developing accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open spaces, cultural buildings, public houses, and places of worship.

5. Recognition of Site Needs:

It is recognized that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, often in locations that are not well served by public transport. In such cases, it is vital to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not negatively impact local roads, and utilizes any opportunities to make a location more sustainable.

6. Use of Previously Developed Land:

The use of previously developed land and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

These guidelines suggest that changes of use that support the sustainable growth and diversification of rural businesses, contribute to the local community and economy, and are sensitive to the surrounding environment would be acceptable in principle. Emphasis is placed on sustainable development that respects rural character, supports local services and facilities, and acknowledges the distinctive needs of rural businesses and communities.

- 6.2 Considering the NPPF as a whole, it is important to note that the main purpose of the NPPF is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 states that “*Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives)*”.
- 6.3 At Paragraph 7, the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 further states that, at a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



- 6.4 At Paragraph 11, the NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which requires decision takes to approve applications that accord with the Development Plan without delay.
- 6.5 The proposed development complies with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF and aligns with local policies that direct new development towards enhancing rural economies. The conversion of the existing equestrian building into a light industrial and storage/distribution unit contributes to the thriving of rural communities by introducing a sustainable economic use without expanding the developed footprint into the countryside, thus not contravening with policies aimed at limiting development in rural areas.
- 6.6 The principle of development can therefore be considered acceptable in this location.

#### DESIGN, CHARACTER, AND APPEARANCE

- 6.7 The proposed minor external alterations are designed to respect and complement the physical characteristics of the site and its surroundings. The development aims to maintain the vernacular character of the locality through thoughtful architectural detailing, material choices, and scale, ensuring the industrial use is visually harmonious within the rural landscape and does not become visually prominent.

#### AMENITY AND RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

- 6.8 It is not expected that the change of use of the stable building would generate any additional noise, or generate any detrimental overlooking impacts upon nearby residential properties.
- 6.9 The closest neighbouring properties are located some distance away from the stable building. Foxglove Cottage is the closest residential property to the site, however it is suggested that the proposals would not result in any overbearing, loss of light or overlooking of the property.

#### ACCESS AND HIGHWAYS

- 6.10 No changes are proposed to the existing access or highways.
- 6.11 The traffic generation is expected to be minimal. Of the 3 staff employed by the business who would be travelling to the site each day. One-person (the applicant) lives on site at the property, and therefore would not be making any journeys to work. The applicant currently leaves the site on a daily basis to travel to and from work.
- 6.12 In addition to staff travelling to and from the site, the business generally generates a daily visit from a courier either for the collection or delivery of goods.
- 6.13 The existing stable block was approved in 2012 for private use, and its use was not permitted for any business or commercial use. It is understood however that some private lessons were undertaken at the site, which would have generated additional traffic and activity on Akeley Wood Lodge Road. It is therefore suggested that the traffic generated by the change of use would be no worse than that permitted by the existing use.
- 6.14 It is suggested that the access to the property is suitable for horse related transport, including horse-carrying lorries or other large vehicles with limited manoeuvrability, and therefore access to the property would not be problematic for the scale of vehicle used by delivery drivers.
- 6.15 There is adequate parking provision on site for 3no members of staff. It is anticipated that staff and delivery vehicles would park on the existing hardstanding in front of the building.
- 6.16 An electric vehicle charging point will be installed in accordance with policy T8 of the VALP.

## FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

- 6.17 Situated within Flood Zone 1, the site has a low probability of flooding, with no identified local surface water flooding issues. Given the minor scale of external alterations and paved nature of the site, the development is resilient to climate change and flooding.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 6.18 While the proposed use is light industrial, it is suggested that the character and appearance of the area will be unaffected by the change of use. It is suggested that the impact of the proposal on visual amenity will be minimal, and that the proposals respect the character of the local area.

## LOSS OF EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES

- 6.19 Policy C2 states that the change of use of an existing equestrian commercial site will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the existing use is not viable. In this case, the equestrian use of the site is stipulated for private use, and not for any business or commercial equestrian use, therefore it is suggested that the proposed change of use is acceptable.
- 6.20 In accordance with policy C1, the building to be re-used is an existing building of permanent and substantial construction, which is in keeping with the rural surroundings. It is not a temporary field shelter or stable which would be unsuitable for re-use. The building requires minimal conversion works to accommodate the proposals, and the re-use of the building would not generate a need for a future building to fulfil the use of the existing building. The existing building is inherently suitable for the proposed use of the business.

## 7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This application seeks planning permission for the Change of Use of an existing equestrian building into a Light Industrial & Storage/ Distribution unit with minor external alterations at The Coppice Farm, Akeley Wood, Akeley, MK18 5BN.
- 7.2 The local plan policies in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan have been considered, along with the NPPF, and it is suggested that the proposal is in accordance with both local and national policies.
- 7.3 It is suggested that the proposals are deemed acceptable and beneficial, significantly outweighing any identified harm.
- 7.4 It is considered that the proposals would represent sustainable development which is consistent with adopted planning policy, and which should be supported in order to deliver the wider social, environmental and economic benefits.
- 7.5 It is therefore respectfully requested that the application is approved. In the event that Buckinghamshire Council do not agree with this view, the applicant would seek to engage with the authority to secure a solution, in line with the NPPF.