CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/05171
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Site Inspection:	
Consultation ends:	07 August 2023
Case officer:	David Cox

Site Address:	The Lodge, Green Sands Stables, Bradley Road, Crockerton, Warminster, Wilts, BA12 7JY
Proposal:	Erection of new storage barn
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

Proposal and Site Description

This is a full planning application for the erection of a new storage barn at The Lodge, Green Sands Stables, Bradley Road, Crockerton, Warminster, Wilts, BA12 7JY.

The applicants supporting statement sets out;

"*Planning permission was recently approved to diversify the use of the equestrian business at the above site (LPA reference: PL/2023/01270), to provide a dog waking/activity area.*

The site's planning history shows that the original stables, manage and tack room/stores were approved by application W/07/03272/FUL. By application 14/12011/FUL a permanent permission for a mobile home, used in connection with the equestrian business was granted, pursuant to the previous temporary grant of permission. The entire landholding was approved for equestrian use in 2014 too, when the on-site accommodation was made permanent. The business was described as a livery enterprise, primarily DIY with some part liveries. At that time those activities were said to be complimented with a stud enterprise and horse rehabilitation, including the re-training of unsuccessful thoroughbred racehorses to use for recreational riding.

The enclosed application is therefore part of the whole site's ongoing management, addressing the need to improve on-site storage. That could include equipment used for dog training, but is primarily for plant and equipment used for land management and for the land's equestrian use, including bedding and fodder etc. The general storage building will be sited east of the existing 'yard', beyond the exercise area and south of the existing on-site accommodation.

It will be constructed from timber clad panels over a timber frame, and below a black coated steel profiled sheeted roof.

The general storage building will improve security and the type of plant and machinery that can be used to manage the site. It is reasonably necessary and modest in size, being restricted to approximately 2.44m at the eaves and 3.7m to the ridge, so that it not materially different from the original stable building on site.

The application site is not within any designated landscape areas, although it is near the boundaries of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It has a rural setting and is very clearly part of an established equestrian operation, where it will be read visually as both commensurate with the site, and in scale and harmony with the established built grouping.

With regard to the principle of development the equestrian business is well established, and its diversification has been recently sanctioned too. The new building is part of the business's ongoing needs, and both improves and augments the existing more ad hoc storage facilities available. It is commensurate with the existing rural business and entirely typical of the natural investment periodically required to provide enhanced and secure storage facilities, and particularly to meet the demanding needs of those horse owners choosing to stable their horses at The Lodge.

In addition to the modest nature of the rural business investment proposed its built form and scale employs an unstained timber finish that will weather a natural and subtle silver over time, being a natural complement to the wider rural setting, and ensuring that it will be satisfactorily subsumed, without harm to the area's landscape qualities. The building will not have a wide zone of visual influence and as such it is
strongly maintained that the character of the open countryside and the setting of the adjacent AONB will be protected."

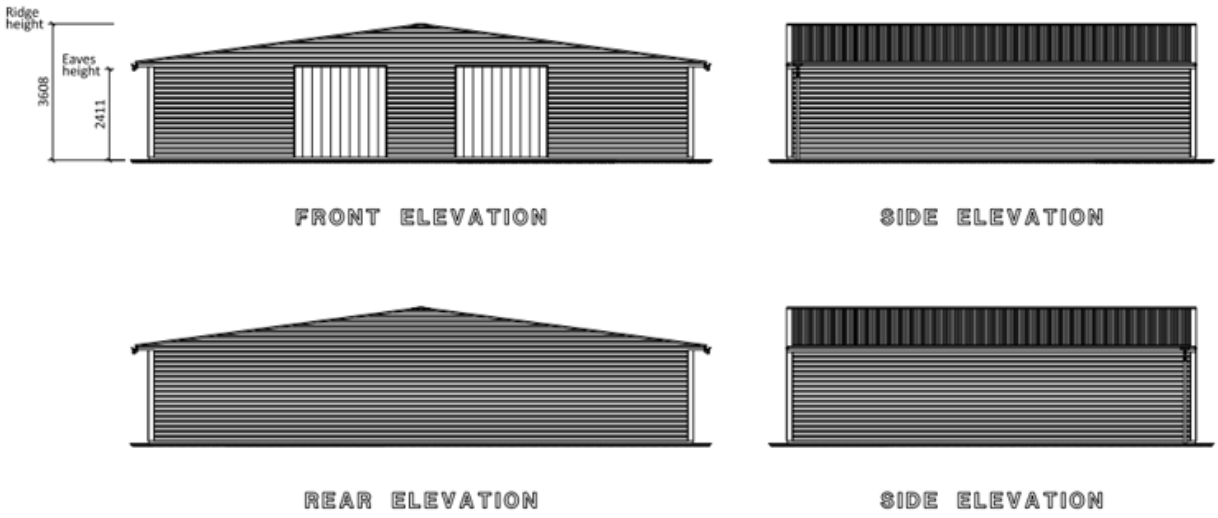
On the case officers site visit, the main stable was visited where it was confirmed to be a stable. The two outbuildings were also confirmed as stables/animal shelters. However, there was another structure, a fairly large timber lean-to building sited adjacent to the stable. This structure has not been shown on the submitted plans, nor on any recent overhead aerial images the council has access to, and due to the appearance of the timber, it looks like a new building. As there is no record of this building, it is therefore unauthorised.



Unauthorised timber building with existing stable behind



Photo of location of proposed storage building



Elevation Plans of proposed storage building

Policies

National Context:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Local Context:

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) adopted 2015 - CP50, CP51, CP57

West Wiltshire District Plan 1st Alteration 2004, Saved Policy E10 - Horse related development

Key Issues
Principle of development
Design and impact on the landscape and adjacent AONB
Impact on neighbouring amenity
Impact on ecology
Impact on Highway safety

Relevant Planning History
W/07/01992/AGD - Steel framed agricultural building for storage of hay/straw - Approved
W/07/03272/FUL - Construction of stables and ménage with tackroom and stores - Approved with conditions
W/12/01117/FUL - Proposed mobile dwelling - Approved with conditions
14/12011/FUL - Permanent permission for mobile home at The Lodge for which temporary permission was granted under reference W/12/01117/FUL - Approved with conditions
PL/2023/01270 - Change of use of land from equestrian to dog walking - Approved with conditions

Consultation Responses
Longbridge Deverill Parish Council - No objection

Wiltshire Council Landscape Officer - No objection

The site sits with the setting of the Cranbourne Chase AONB, however the site is screened from views from the AONB by a substantial existing hedgerow along the adjacent country lane. Whilst as a local authority we have a 'duty of regard' under Section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000 in this case the low profile of the building and its location within an existing equestrian facility will not cause significant harm to the existing character of the landscape or sensitive visual receptors. There are 2 PRoW (LDEV 15 / 16) that run close to the site which might benefit from some screening with a native hedge mix to mitigate the impact still further especially along the western edge. I would also recommend that the applicant ensures their development complies with the AONB's following guidance:

- https://cranbornechase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FactSheet6_Colour_Integration.pdf
- https://cranbornechase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Fact_Sheet_7_Good_Practice_Note_on_Good_External_Lighting.pdf
- https://cranbornechase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FactSheet8_Good_Practice_Note_on_New_Agricultural_Buildings.pdf
- https://cranbornechase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FactSheet_Keeping_horses_swplf_horses.pdf

In particular it should be recognised that the AONB is an International Dark Skies Reserve and development within its setting needs to comply with the guidance as set out in the AONB guidance notes.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Officer (external) - No comments received

Representations
No letters of objection received

Planning Considerations and Assessment
Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Principle of development:
Paragraph 88b of the NPPF states planning decision should enable;

"*the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses*;"

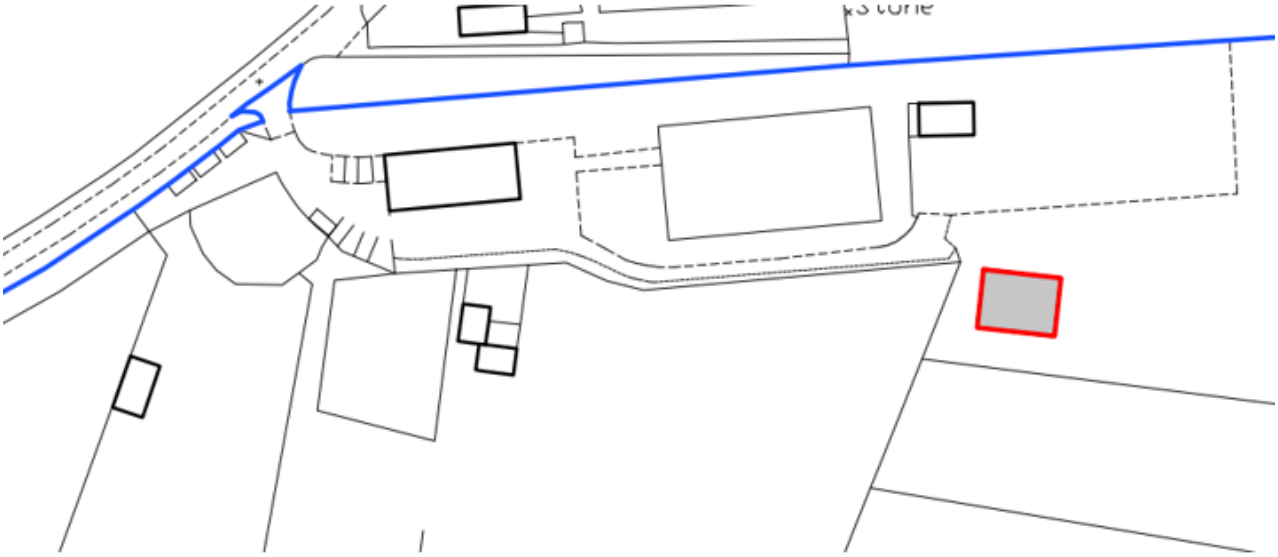
This is an existing equestrian business that has recently diversified to include dog walking facilities. Existing storage is limited to that within the existing stables and therefore the applicant's requirement for dedicated storage facilities is appreciated. Whilst the proposed storage building is fairly large, measuring 14.4mx10.8m, horse related storage and some ancillary dog storage needs could easily be accommodated within the space.

The unauthorised timber building mentioned above does not benefit from planning permission and its use is not known. Therefore, an informative would be imposed to any planning permission granted advising the applicant that the Council will be raising this matter with the planning enforcement team to investigate. Should another planning application be required, it will be judged on its own individual merits.

Design and impact on the landscape and adjacent AONB:
Saved policy E10 states;

"*Proposals for equestrian facilities and changes of use will be required to have regard to minimising their effects on the appearance of the countryside and to highway implications. All such building proposals should have special regard to siting, design materials and construction to ensure they blend in with their surroundings and do not have an adverse impact on the countryside and the natural environment including the water environment*."

Despite the buildings fairly large size, it would have a very low profile only being 3m high sloping to 2.4m at eaves. It is considered that this is a very low height for a footprint of this size. Whilst it would have been preferable to locate the building closer to the existing complex of buildings, the proposed building would still relate well to the existing site and buildings. It would be well located to the existing access and be a legible part of the existing site.



Extract from Site Location Plan

The building would not be readily visible from Bradley Road (to the west of the site) due to the existing hedge line, the buildings distance from the road and due to screening by the existing buildings. The building would be visible from Dry Hill/Crockerton Road to the south due to there being more gaps in the hedgerow and due to the application site being on higher ground than the road into Crockerton. The proposed building would also be approximately 170m from the road, and with its low profile and low height, it would not appear prominent or readily visible from the surrounding roads.

There are also two public rights of way that pass near the site. The first, LDEV16 passes approximately 80m to the north but there is a dense established hedgerow which is also on a slightly raised bank meaning that users would not have obvious or easy views into the site. LDEV15 by contrast runs from Bradley Road (at the main entrance into the site) and then runs parallel adjacent to the dog walking facility fence and down to the south onto Dry Hill/Crockerton Road and into the forest. There would be fairly open views across approximately 150-240m of fields used by the horses. Whilst these views would be clear and obvious, the storage building would still be seen in the context of the existing complex and buildings and given its low roof and low profile would not cause harm to the special landscape character when seen from LDEV15.

The building would not be closer to the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (formerly AONBs) than the existing complex of buildings and officers agree with the Landscape Officer's assessment that no harm would be caused to the setting of the adjacent National Landscape. The roof would be black coated steel profiled sheeting and page 1 of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Fact Sheets and Good Practice Notes, Number 6 guide states;

"*When considering colours to help camouflage structures it is helpful to look at, and learn from, the natural world... Frequently mammals and fish have darker backs and lighter bellies. The effect is that the sunshine (or moonlight) highlighting a dark back and putting the light belly in shadow creates a blend of colours that merges with the most backgrounds*."

This means that the dark roof would assimilate well into the naturally dark landscape background in both daylight and at night and with the timber 'belly' this lighter colour should also merge into the rural backdrop of the sites surroundings, especially those as viewed from the main road.

However, there are no details of external lighting and should any be proposed it would need to be respectful of the adjacent National Landscape and the relevant guidance note. Therefore a planning condition requesting details of any proposed external light would be imposed on any planning permission granted.



National Landscape Boundary (area washed over in green)

Impact on neighbouring amenity:
The only neighbour is 'Ernies Yard' approximately 90m from the site. As a storage barn, the building would largely be passive and non-noise producing, therefore causing very limited to no harm on neighbouring amenity.

Impact on ecology:
The application site is within a phosphorus catchment area of the River Avon, which is subject to stringent controls to residential applications that increase phosphate discharge. However, as a storage building with no WC facilities proposed with reference to the submitted floor plans, there would be no impact on phosphorous levels. The external lighting condition would also have beneficial impacts to limit affects on any bats using the hedgerow lines for foraging and commuting.

Impact on Highway safety:
The proposal would only be used for storage for the existing business rather than increase the number of horses or dogs that can use the existing exercise area. Therefore, there should be no impact on highway safety.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

Conditions: (5)

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Supporting Statement and and Proposed Plans and Elevations - both received 28 June 2023

Site Location Plan (EX 101) and Site Plan (PR 101) - both received 6 July 2023.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3 No external lighting shall be installed on-site until plans showing the type of light appliance, the height and position of fitting, illumination levels and light spillage in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals in their publication “The Reduction of Obtrusive Light” Guidance Note 01/21 (reference GN01/21), have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved lighting shall be installed and shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details and no additional external lighting shall be installed.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of the area, ecology interests, and to minimise unnecessary light spillage above and outside the development site.

4 As set out in the supporting covering letter (reference SWLC.LPC5554, dated 27 June 2023), the timber to be used on the development hereby permitted shall remain unstained from any colour and shall be left to weather naturally to a subtle silver over time and be maintained as such over the lifetime of the development.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity of the landscape and the setting of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

5 The development hereby permitted shall only be used for storage of items in conjunction with the equestrian and dog exercise business.

REASON: In the interests of the visual amenity of the landscape.

Informatives: (1)

6 The applicant is respectfully advised that the timber storage building immediately adjacent to the existing main stable block does not appear to benefit from any planning approval and is likely to be unauthorised. Therefore, an enforcement case would be raised with the Council's enforcement team to investigate.