



RCC TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANCY



Site: Mill Farm, Blacklands, Calne SN11 8PR

Proposal: Erection of American Barn and associated works

On behalf of: Mr and Mrs J Raven

Date of Issue: November 2025



RCC TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANCY

PLANNING STATEMENT

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1.0 BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicants to support their planning application for an American Barn and associated works. The statement will examine how the proposed development relates to the site and its context, as well as provide an explanation and justification for the scheme having regard to as national and local plan policy and guidance.
- 1.2 The applicants own just under 100 acres of land at Mill Farm used primarily for hay production and livestock and equestrian grazing. The land has been in this use since the 1930's. This full planning application concerns the erection of a new equestrian building in the form of an American barn for stabling and equestrian storage to be located close to the existing outdoor equestrian arena and lunge ring at Mill Farm.
- 1.3 The applicants have owned and operated the existing equestrian yard at Mill Farm since 2013. Whilst there are 14 stables in the yard, they only use 10 to 12 stables at any one time, let out on a DIY basis. The number of stables used is restricted to this level as the farm has increased the number of sheep kept on the holding resulting in less fields being available for horses.
- 1.4 At present as well as the stables, there is a communal turnout area, secure tack room, rug and feed room and ancillary storage space. The equestrian yard also has a large fenced 27m x 47m outdoor arena and lunge ring.
- 1.5 Alongside, the agricultural and equestrian businesses that utilise the land at Mill farm, the applicants operate luxury holiday accommodation from Blacklands Mill House, with six luxury double bedrooms and associated accommodation. There is also a separate beauty treatment room located in a detached building within the garden.
- 1.6 The applicants have decided to relocate the equestrian stabling for several reasons. Firstly, the new location to the east of the site will mean that horses can be stabled closer to the grazing land and to the outdoor school. This will make the stabling more convenient and attractive for clients. Secondly, the horses currently have to be taken through the agricultural yard to get to the outdoor arena and to the grazing land. This has led to conflict between horses and large agricultural plant and machinery moving around in the yard. Finally, the existing stables are located next to the existing residential use, luxury holiday accommodation and beauty salon. This has resulted in issues with flies during the summer and noise disturbance with the horses kicking in the stables in close proximity to those uses. Moving the stables to the new site will help resolve all of these issues.
- 1.7 The new stables are also proposed to provide a step up in terms of the quality of equestrian accommodation with dry space internally for clients to groom and tack up their horses. As this is a DIY livery use, it is important that the facilities are of the highest quality to attract prospective clients and retain existing ones.
- 1.8 In terms of planning history, in 2024, a prior notification application for an agricultural storage building was submitted to the Council at Mill Farm



(PL/2024/07609). This site is located c120m to the north of the current application site. It was determined that prior approval was not required, and the building has now been erected. The new building measures 36.57m by 12.9m and is 4.26m to the eaves and 5.26m to the ridge. The building is of steel portal frame agricultural construction with olive green corrugated roof cladding with roof lights and olive-green corrugated elevations. As this was a prior determination application, the scheme did not include any landscaping or BNG provision.



2.0 SITE CONTEXT

2.1 The application site is located in the open countryside in planning terms, outside of the limits of development of Calne. The surrounding land is characterised by agricultural pasture used generally for hay production and livestock and equestrian grazing. There are several other large scale farm buildings and another outdoor arena in the immediate locality, see figure 1 below.



Figure 1 – Site context with other nearby farm buildings and equestrian yard

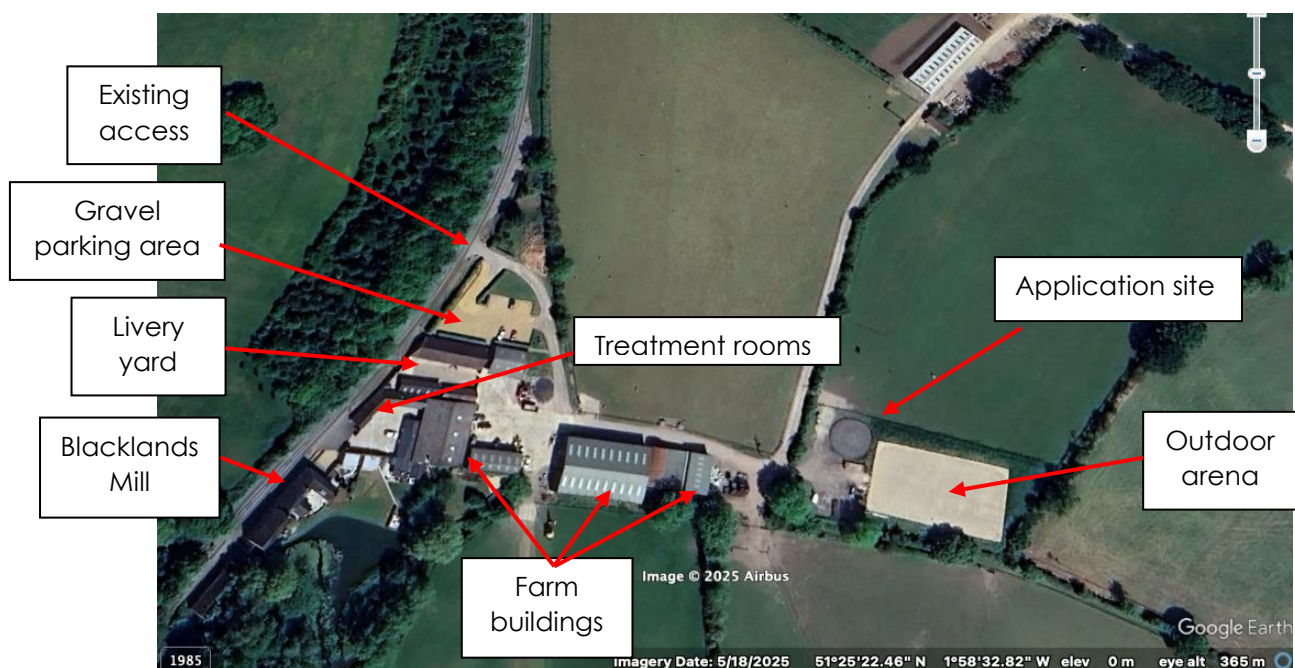


Figure 2 – Application site and existing farm and livery yards

- 2.2 As set out in section 1 above, Mill Farm includes the DIY equestrian livery yard and agricultural business, together with luxury self-catering accommodation in the main Blacklands Mill and a beauty salon in the grounds. Figure 2 above is an aerial view showing the layout of the property.
- 2.3 Vehicular access to the site is via an established access point located to the north of the existing stables and main dwelling, see figure 3 below. There is a large hardsurfaced gravel parking area close to the access point.



Figure 3 – Existing access to the property

- 2.4 To the east of the existing livery yard there are a number of large-scale farm buildings within the farmyard and running along the southern side of the farm track, see figures 4 below and 5 over.



Figure 4 – Range of farm buildings and farm track



Figure 5 – Farm buildings with concrete apron and farm machinery

- 2.5 The farm track shown in figure 4 above allows for the movement of the horses and riders between the livery stables and the outdoor arena. Figure 5 below shows a view of the existing arena and lunge ring located to the east of the farm buildings.



Figure 5 – Outdoor arena and lunge ring

- 2.6 The proposed American barn is to be located within the field to the north of the lunge ring and tucked close to the hedge that demarcates the western boundary of the field, see figure 6 over.



Figure 6 – Site for American Barn

- 2.7 The application site lies outside of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and with respect of flooding, the land falls within Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk).
- 2.8 There is a public footpath (CHER34B) crossing the existing yard and a public bridleway (CHER34A) from the access, running in front of the existing agricultural barns and behind the hedge along the southern boundary of the site.
- 2.9 The closest residential property is Blacklands Mill House, owned by the applicants.
- 2.10 Blacklands Mill and the outbuilding to the south of Blackland Mill are grade II listed buildings, see figure 7 over. The list description for Blacklands Mill states:

"Corn mill and mill-house, c1800-10, red brick with stone windows, slate roof, and coped gables. Mill is 2-storey-and-attic, 4-window range with original iron water-wheel by Maundrell of Calne under slate roof at south end. Brick dentilled eaves. Casement windows in unmoulded flush stone surrounds. West side has first floor two 2-lights, loading-door with cambered brick head and 2-light. Ground floor 2-light, door with cambered brick head, blocked 2-light and 2-light. South end wall has attic 2-light with cambered head. Complete working original machinery inside. L-plan mill-house to north has lower roof but similar details. West side, 5 upper 2-light windows, those each end blank, 5 ground floor openings, altered in C20 or blank. North end has C20 door and hood and various casements. Roof is hipped at north-west angle, east end stack. Probably built for J. Merewether, of Blackland Park."

- 2.11 The list description for the outbuilding to the south of Blackland Mill states:

"Outbuilding, c1810, red brick with slate roof. First floor square openings each end of west front, ground floor double doors, larger double doors, door with cambered head and window to right Interior has remarkable patent fireproof

roof of wrought-iron strip or 'hoop iron' as used in cooperage. Closely spaced grid of vertical and horizontal strips to roof slopes, the strips notched together and secured by patent metal clips. Densely spaced trussing of similar strips, the tie pieces rising to pendant strips hanging from ridge, the tie pieces overlaid longitudinally with notched strips. The system was the invention of Mr. Pearsall of Willsbridge, near Bristol, and trade particulars of 1812 issued in connection with a large roof erected in the East India Docks, London, mention five roofs already erected in the Bristol region, of which this is the only apparent survivor. An exceptional example of early use of iron in roof construction."



Figure 7 – View of Blackland's Mill and Outbuilding

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1 The planning policy framework relevant to this proposal is the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS).
- 3.2 The second Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan (CCNP) covers the period 2023 to 2038 and was made in March 2025.
- 3.3 Material considerations comprise the following:
- National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)
 - National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- 3.4 The relevant policies and guidance are set out in the associated tables:

WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY

Policy	Title
CP50	Biodiversity and Geodiversity
CP51	Landscape
CP57	Ensuring high quality design and place shaping
CP58	Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Policy	Title
NE2	Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity
NE4	Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
NE5	Setting of Calne and Calne Without
WS2	Supporting Local Agriculture and Farm Diversification

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Policy	Title
5	Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
9	Promoting sustainable transport
11	Making an effective use of land
12	Landscape
15	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
16	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

4.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

4.1 The main planning issues to be discussed are:

- Principle of proposal
- Impact on character and appearance of the area
- Highway safety and parking
- Ecology
- Impact on residential amenities
- Impact on PROW
- Heritage issues

Principle of Development

- 4.2 The proposed development is to improve and expand an existing equestrian business that is typical of and requires a rural location in the open countryside. Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas should be supported. This is reflected in the broad principle of the WCS and more specifically in Policy WS2 of the CCNP which supports proposals for schemes that would diversify and/or support existing rural-based business, subject to a number of criteria.
- 4.3 The CCNP recognises that the importance of the vitality of the rural and farming economy in Calne Without, advising that it *"is a key factor in providing rural employment opportunities as well as providing stewardship and nurturing of the rural landscape and biodiversity."*
- 4.4 The proposed use and development lies close to the applicant's existing equestrian buildings and adjacent to the outdoor arena. It is also adjacent to the farm yard and associated buildings. As set out in section 1 above, the intention of the application is to improve the existing equestrian facilities. Equestrian uses are a common feature in rural locations such as this, and as such the proposal would not conflict with any of the policies contained within the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- 4.5 Consequently, the principle of the improvement of an existing commercial equestrian use is generally acceptable subject to consideration of site-specific matters and provided that the proposal is in accordance with CP51 and CP57 of the WCS. The site-specific matters and the criteria set out in policy WS2 of the CCNP will be discussed in the following sections.

Impact on character and appearance of the area

- 4.6 Policy CP57 of the WCS recognises that good design in new developments can help development respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape in terms of building layout, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, design, materials and streetscape. In terms of the wider landscape impact, policy CP51 seeks to protect, conserve and enhance Wiltshire's distinctive landscape character.



- 4.7 Policy NE5 of the CCNP recognises the importance of the rural landscape setting of Calne and Calne Without and seeks to ensure that proposals for new development respect this rural setting with mitigation where appropriate.
- 4.8 With regard to environmental impacts, it is noted that the application site is not covered by any nationally designated special landscape or heritage designations. It is not of high ecological importance, nor is it located within an area prone to flood risk.
- 4.9 Whilst the proposed building has been designed specifically to provide equestrian facilities, it's appearance is very similar to a typical modern agricultural building. It is to be constructed with a steel portal frame with green insulated panel walls and a grey insulated panel roof with translucent roof panels to provide light into the building. The building is to be c32m long and c14m wide, with a ridge height of c7.2m and eaves at c2.8m. The building will have 10 stalls, a wash bay, tack room and hay store.
- 4.10 Equestrian uses and equestrian buildings, together with modern large scale farm buildings are common features in rural locations. Therefore, whilst the proposed building would be large, it would not constitute a prominent or incongruous feature. There are other large scale farm buildings in the immediate vicinity and an existing outdoor arena and lunge ring close by.
- 4.11 Indeed in considering the recent prior determination application for the nearby agricultural building, the officer's report concludes that:

"The design, scale and materials of the proposed are typical of other agricultural buildings within the rural landscape. The building is positioned so that there would be no unacceptable or significant adverse impact on residential amenities or the character and appearance of the area."

- 4.12 Similarly, the design, scale and appearance of the new American barn is appropriate to its rural context and is indeed a design that is akin to the countryside. The appropriate choice of materials and colouration will help the building assimilate into its environs to an acceptable level.
- 4.13 The submitted scheme includes a 3m wide maintained grassland strip and a 5m wide mixed native scrub with individual mixed native broadleaf trees along the eastern side of the new building. The proposed planting will help to screen and provide a setting for the new building.
- 4.14 Users of the nearby public right of way, will view the building within the existing setting of the adjoining modern farm buildings in the yard (figures 5 and 6) and the new farm building located to the north. Longer range views are limited by the existing buildings and trees but where there are glimpses, the new building will be seen against the backdrop of these features and the rising land in the distance.
- 4.15 Therefore, given the existing buildings and landscaping that is present on the site, the fact that these types of buildings are not uncommon structures in the countryside, the visual impact on the surrounding area would be acceptable.

- 4.16 It can therefore be concluded from this assessment that the erection of the proposed building will deliver an appropriate development that relates effectively to the locality and wider character of the area. The scheme is therefore considered to comply with policies CP51 and CP57 of the WCS and policy NE5 of the CCNP.
- 4.17 The development will also accord with Section 12 of the NPPF, which highlights the significance of good design to the principles of sustainability and paragraph 127, which requires that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

Highway safety and parking

- 4.18 Turning to matters of highway safety, policies CP60 and CP64 aim to ensure developments adequately address matters of access arrangements and road safety alongside adequate parking provision.
- 4.19 There are no changes proposed to the access or parking arrangements resulting from the proposed development. The existing gravel parking area will be used in connection with the new stabling with access via the established entrance. This access is already used in connection with the agricultural use of the site by large slow moving farm traffic, by equestrian clients visiting the existing livery yard, by guests staying in the luxury holiday accommodation and clients accessing the beauty treatment room. It is unlikely that there will be any significant increase in use of the access generated by the new American Barn as this is to replace the existing livery stables.
- 4.20 Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that:

"Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios"

- 4.21 The scheme is considered to comply with the requirements of CP60 and CP64 having regard to highway safety and parking provision and for the reasons set out above, it is submitted that the proposal would not have a severe impact on the road network and instead that it includes and provides adequate parking and suitable access to the site and therefore refusal on these grounds cannot be warranted.

Impact on Public Rights of Way

- 4.22 There is a public footpath (CHER34B) crossing the existing yard and a public bridleway (CHER34A) from the access, running in front of the existing agricultural barns and behind the hedge along the southern boundary of the site.

- 4.23 The scheme does not propose any changes to the rights of way. The route of the public footpath will remain open and accessible for use. Whilst the American barn will be visible from the adjacent right of way, as stated above, buildings of this style, size and design are commonplace in the local area and equestrian activities are uses that are commonplace in the countryside.

Ecology

- 4.24 Policy CP50 of the WCS recognises that Wiltshire's natural environment is one of its greatest assets and requires that development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation. The policy also advises that development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity.
- 4.25 Similarly, policy NE2 of the CCNP seeks to protect wildlife habitats and enhance biodiversity, whilst policy NE4 recognises the importance to trees, woodlands and hedgerows in the local area and seeks to ensure that, wherever practicable they are retained. The policy also encourages replacement planting and new planting.
- 4.26 Chapter 15 of the NPPF provides further guidance on conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 4.27 The scheme has been carefully considered to ensure that the existing hedgerow along the western boundary of the field is protected and retained and that the development includes additional planting to provide a setting for the development and to enhance biodiversity.
- 4.28 The application submission also includes a Biodiversity Net Gain Report (BNG) prepared by Malford Environmental Consulting. This provides the results of the baseline habitat surveys and details of the ecological enhancements that have been included in the scheme to provide an overall net biodiversity gain. Full details of the proposed planting are set out in the BNG report, which will deliver a greater than 10% BNG via on-site habitat creation.
- 4.29 As a result, it can be concluded that the residual ecological effect of the proposal is considered to be positive in the local context and therefore meets the requirements of policy CP50 of the WCS, policies NE2 and NE4 of the CCNP and the guidance contained in section 15 of the NPPF.

Impact on residential amenities

- 4.30 Policy CP57 (vii) requires development to have regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and the impact on amenities of existing neighbouring occupants. In this case the closest neighbouring property is owned by the applicants. The new American Barn is located further from the residential property than the existing livery yard. As such it is not considered that the proposal would cause a level of harm sufficient to refuse the application on grounds of noise or disturbance.



Heritage Issues

- 4.31 The NPPF outlines government policy towards the historic environment. Section 16 "Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment" sets out the overall approach to heritage assets. At a local level, policy CP58 of the WCS relates to the conservation of the historic environment.
- 4.32 In terms of impact on heritage assets, it is noted that Blacklands Mill and the outbuilding to the south of Blacklands Mill are grade II listed buildings.
- 4.33 The distance from the proposed building to the two listed buildings and the intervening large scale farm buildings and landscaping are considered sufficient to avoid any harm to the setting of those listed buildings sufficient to impact upon their heritage significance.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 In conclusion, we submit that the proposed American Barn does not result in any material harm and instead will support the existing successful rural business. It complies with both local planning policies and national planning guidance and represents a sustainable form of development. The Council is therefore requested to approve the planning application.

