

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/09455
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Ivy Farm, West Yatton, Yatton Keynell, SN14 7EW
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Formation of new outdoor equestrian arena with associated fencing for private use
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

Ivy Farm is located to the immediate north of the A420 at Giddeahall / West Yatton, with that highway forming the southern boundary of the farm holding. The western boundary is formed by 'Yatton Keynell Road' (referenced in some media as 'Upper Castle Coombe Road'), from which access to the principal dwelling of Ivy Farm is taken via a triangulated junction; that rural road then continues on towards Yatton Keynell / Upper Castle Combe.

The parcel of the wider land-holding proposed for the equestrian arena is set close to the junction of these two highways, in the southern corner of the farm holding, with those roads thus forming the southern and western boundaries to the site. To the immediate north of the site is 'Oak Lodge', a recently refurbished and extended tied dwelling within the holding; 'Tall Poppy Cottage' is set to the immediate north of Oak Lodge and is a dwelling on the same eastern side of Yatton Keynell Road but does not form part of the holding. To the east is paddock land and open agricultural land. There is a slight drop in levels across the site from north to south. Also included within the red-line boundary is a separate parcel of land located to the north of the holding, some 350m north of the 'main' parcel of land for the proposed arena. It is shown on the submitted Site Location Plan that this area is to accommodate the mandatory biodiversity net gain.

Planning permission has relatively recently been granted (PL/2023/11106, 10/05/2024) for a new access drive running across agricultural / paddock land to the south-east of the dwelling (north and east of this particular application site) to directly meet the A420.

The application site is located within the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB) and the property of Ivy Farm ('Ivy Farmhouse') itself is listed (Grade II), and the barn located to the immediate east of the dwelling (by some 10m) is also listed in its own right (Grade II). The site is located within the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC). There are no Public Rights of Way crossing or adjacent to this particular parcel of land [(PRoW YKEY18) runs away from the A420 in a north-easterly direction some 150m to the east of this site].

PROPOSAL

The application relates to the erection of an equestrian arena, on a parcel of some 0.425ha, measuring 85m by 50m. It will be defined by post and rail fence and shows a raised groundline for the arena: with the slight drop in levels across the site, for comparison the proposed FFL

of the arena is shown as being set at 125.475 (with ground level at the gates being shown as 125.15), compared to a FFL for the dwelling Oak Lodge to the immediate north of 125.80. The construction is proposed to be of clean graded hardstone beneath open graded tarmac, drainage channels are shown as being introduced beneath the hardstone.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
PL/2023/11106 – Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 10/5/2024 – Formation of new vehicle access drive for Ivy Farm from the A420 and associated landscape works
PL/2023/04919 – Full planning permission Decision - Refused Date: 05/09/2023 – Formation of new vehicle access drive for Ivy Farm from the A420 and associated landscape works

Other relevant applications across the wider holding include:

- **PL/2024/00772:** Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement rural workers' dwelling with associated landscaping, access works, air-source heat pump and solar array. – Approved with Conditions – 06/06/2024
- **17/01182/FUL:** Part change of use from agricultural to equestrian and works associated with Reorganisation of Equestrian and Agricultural uses within the Eastern Portion of Ivy Farm (including relocation of 6 stable boxes, reconstruction of western barn and small stables, and creation of machine accessible hay store and tack room) – Approved with Conditions – 06/04/2017

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Legislation:

- The Town and Country Planning Act 1990

National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- National Design Guide

Development Plan:

The development plan for Wiltshire comprises the *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)* (adopted January 2015) and any made neighbourhood plans, which remains the principal statutory planning document guiding development across the county. In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Though the development plan is considered as a whole, those parts deemed to be particularly relevant to this application are listed below:

The adopted *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)*, with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy;
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy;
- Core Policy 10 Spatial Strategy for the Chippenham Community Area
- Core Policy 48 Supporting Rural Life
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 52 Green Infrastructure
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment;
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 62 Development Impacts on the Transport Network;
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk;

North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 (NWLP2011, Saved Policies)

- NE14: Trees, site features and control of new development

Neighbourhood Plan: N/A

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- A Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire: Wiltshire's Natural Environment Plan 2022-2030

ISSUES

The main issues that need to be addressed in this case include:

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle (CP 1 and 2)
- Whether the scheme constitutes high quality design (CP 57) and would have an acceptable landscape impact (CP 51)
- Whether the scheme would preserve or enhance the historic environment (CP 58)
- Whether the scheme would lead to any unacceptable amenity impacts (CP 57)
- Whether there would be any harmful impacts upon protected species or priority habitats (CP 50)
- Other matters: drainage and highways

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Conservation: No objection

WC Ecology: No objection subject to conditions

Yatton Keynell Parish Council: No objection

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the application was publicised by way of:

- Neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties.

These methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted.

Only material planning considerations have been taken into account in the assessment of this application. Non-material issues, such as property values or private legal disputes, cannot be considered in the determination process. No representations were received in respect of this application.

ASSESSMENT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

In accordance with this statutory requirement, this application has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans. Consideration has also been given to the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a material consideration in the assessment.

Principle of Development

Policy Context

Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy of the WCS establishes a hierarchy of settlements to guide where development should be focused. The policy prioritises growth in: Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres, Large and Small Villages; outside the defined settlements development is strictly controlled and generally not supported unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy of the WCS sets out how development will be distributed and delivered across Wiltshire. The policy emphasises:

- Sustainable patterns of growth, reducing the need to travel and supporting local services.
- Development should be plan-led, aligning with the settlement strategy and supported by infrastructure.
- Windfall development (not allocated in plans) must still comply with the principles of sustainable development.
- Development outside settlement boundaries is generally not permitted, unless it meets specific policy exceptions (as set out in paragraph 4.25 of the WCS).

Together, CP1 and CP2 ensure that new development is strategically located, sustainable, and supports the character and function of Wiltshire's communities.

Assessment and Conclusion

The principle of the carrying out of agricultural development on agricultural land is generally acceptable within countryside locations. Similarly, equestrian use and activity – when it is for personal use – is generally not unacceptable in principle within countryside locations. The personal use is clearly defined in scope by the Description of Development and can also be secured by way of Condition. Within this context, the proposed equestrian arena is not considered unacceptable in principle, subject to consideration of other relevant technical issues and impacts.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area, including Landscape and Visual Impact

Policy Context

Core Policy 57 of the WCS requires high-quality design that:

- Enhances local character.
- Responds to the natural, historic, and built environment.
- Retains important features (e.g., trees, hedges).
- Supports sustainable construction and compatibility with surrounding uses.
- Creates safe, legible, and accessible spaces.

Section 12 of the NPPF emphasises design that is:

- Visually attractive.
- Functionally effective.
- Contributes to the quality of the built environment.

In terms of landscape and visual impact, Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to:

- Protect, conserve, and enhance landscape character and quality.
- Respect local distinctiveness, key views, and visual receptors.
- Give particular weight to impacts on National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) and locally valued landscapes.

The NPPF emphasises the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes, particularly those with scenic, historic, or ecological significance. Planning decisions should:

- Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
- Safeguard key views, local distinctiveness, and landscape settings.
- Ensure development is well-integrated into its surroundings and avoids visual intrusion, especially in sensitive or designated areas.

The Wiltshire Design Guide encourages sensitivity to local character, materials, and architectural styles and supports modern living standards while maintaining aesthetic and functional quality. It also promotes a context-led approach, encouraging integration with natural features and settlement patterns while avoiding visual intrusion.

The Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030) supports landscape protection through green infrastructure, habitat connectivity, and nature-based solutions.

Landscape impact must be considered alongside biodiversity, heritage, and green infrastructure objectives, with mitigation measures encouraged where harm cannot be avoided.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

Under Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, LPAs and other relevant authorities must now “seek to further” the statutory purposes of National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), replacing the previous duty to merely “have regard to” them. This is an active duty, requiring authorities to take reasonable and proportionate steps to support the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, special qualities, and key characteristics of these designated areas when exercising any function that affects them.

Assessment

The proposed arena is a large feature within a rural landscape which, being set within the Cotswolds National Landscape (‘CNL’), has a high degree of sensitivity. As noted above in the Principle section, such a feature is not necessarily incongruous in a rural setting, depending on the detailed design and associated visual impact. The proposed fencing is post-and-rail which is of typical rural appearance and does not present any overbearing visual impact.

With regard to the sensitivity of landscape, this application is supported by a Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment which provides an assessment of the site, the visual receptors and the impacts.

The LVIA notes that:

“Overall, the landscape effects will be very limited relating to the relatively small scale (and potentially reversible) change associated with the proposed arena surfacing and fencing, within a well enclosed and contained landscape... There will be no other effects to the landscape and no material adverse effects to the special qualities of the CNL, or its wider landscape character.” (8.6).

Conclusion

With the low form of the proposal and its appropriateness of design and appearance, it is not considered that any conflict with Core Policy 57 (WCS) arises. This, coupled with its reversible nature, there is similarly not considered to be any conflict with Core Policy 51 (WCS) arising, and the scheme does not compromise the requirement to ‘further the purposes’ of the land within the CNL, with there being no material harm to the landscape setting.

Impact on Heritage Assets

Policy Context

From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66 requires that special regard be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

The NPPF outlines government policy for planning. Chapter 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. In particular:

Paragraph 208 requires LPAs should “avoid or minimise any conflict” between the heritage asset’s conservation (which includes achieving its optimum viable use) and any aspect of a proposal.

Paragraphs 212 requires “great weight” to be given to an asset’s conservation “irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.” Paragraph 213 advises that harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require “clear and convincing justification”. Paragraphs 213-215(214-216) require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved.

The Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

The Council’s Core Strategy Policy CP58 ‘Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment’ requires that designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance and encourages proposals which improve the condition of heritage assets at risk.

The Council’s Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. The policy requires applicants to “demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) responding to the value of the natural and historic environment and being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and landscapes. Development is required to respond positively to the existing in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

Assessment and Conclusion

The proposed arena is set some 150m to the south of the designated heritage assets, with intervening landscaping restricting visual inter-visibility. The Conservation Officer has been consulted on the application, with a response of no objection. Given the distance of the proposed facility from the designated heritage asset, and the lack of any visual inter-connectedness between the site and those assets, there is not considered to be any heritage harm arising such as to lead to any conflict with Core Policy 58 (WCS) or Section 16 of the NPPF.

Amenity

Policy Context

Core Policy 57 (Point vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to respect the amenity of existing occupants and ensure appropriate amenity levels for future residents. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 135, reinforces the need for development to provide a high standard of amenity for both existing and future users.

Assessment and Conclusion

For this application proposal, any amenity impacts arising are very likely to be limited to the occupants of Oak Lodge to the immediate north of the site and proposed arena. As this dwelling is part of the holding and is a tied dwelling, the amenity impacts will be limited to farm workers associated with the holding and no third parties will be impacted. That notwithstanding, the amenity impacts are likely to be limited to noise and general disturbance, and as no external lighting is proposed (and suitably controlled by way of Condition) the use – and thus any impacts arising – will be generally limited to daylight hours.

Overall, the proposal is not considered to result in any unacceptable amenity impacts which would warrant refusal of the application against Core Policy 57 (WCS) or Section 12 of the NPPF.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Policy Context

The ecological impact of development is a key planning consideration, especially for larger schemes. Proposals must assess and address potential effects on:

- Protected species
- Priority habitats
- Ecological networks
- Green and blue infrastructure

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to:

- Avoid harm to ecological assets.
- Deliver measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), in line with the Environment Act 2021.
- Support habitat restoration and connectivity.
- Integrate biodiversity into site design.

The Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030) promotes nature recovery, ecosystem services, and habitat connectivity through development.

Unless exempt, National policy requires a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for major developments, demonstrated via:

- Biodiversity Metric calculations
- Ecological assessments (e.g. PEAs, Phase 1 surveys, protected species surveys)

Assessment

The site is located within the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) but is not known to be subject to any other particular ecology constraints. The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and the Ecology Officer has been consulted on the application. Their response raises no objections, but does recommend that a number of Conditions are necessary, relating to: lighting, ecological enhancement, and compliance with the submitted documents and details (with the PEA cross-referencing Construction Phase mitigations).

In terms of **Biodiversity Net Gain**, a baseline metric has been provided and a site, shown within a separate parcel of land on the holding to the north of the 'main' site and included within a separate red-line area (of 0.445ha).

Conclusion

With the relevant Conditions being attached to ensure the development is appropriately carried out, alongside the capture of biodiversity net gain through the mandatory condition, the application does not give rise to any conflict with Core Policy 50 (WCS) or Section 15 of the NPPF.

Other Issues

The site falls entirely within flood zone 1 and is not shown to be at any risk of flood risk from other sources. The application has been supported with a **Drainage Strategy**, although the Drainage Officer has confirmed that the scale and scope of this application – less than 1ha and at low flood risk – would not warrant a specific consultation response from them. However, they did confirm that, with the arena being of granular surface, and good infiltration rate shown, the proposal would be unlikely to lead to any increase in flood risk elsewhere.

In terms of **highways** impacts, in this instance the proposal is clearly defined in scope by the Description of Development to be for solely personal use. As such, any increase in vehicle movements would not be considered to be significant; this can also be secured by way of Condition should the application be acceptable in all other regards. The scale of works required during the construction phase are not considered to warrant any specific construction traffic management plan.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

At the heart of the NPPF there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development requiring local planning authorities to approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; and where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless (taken from paragraph 11d of the NPPF):

- The application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole;

Given the nature of the scheme, as being for equestrian related development, the principle of development is considered generally acceptable.

The site is situated within the sensitive rural setting of the Cotswold National Landscape and due consideration has been given to the design of the scheme along with any landscape and visual impact. With the low form of the proposal and its appropriateness of design and appearance, there is no material harm caused to the landscape setting it is not considered that any conflict with Core Policies 51 or 57 (WCS) arises.

Suitable ecological mitigation and enhancement can be secured by way of Condition, such that no conflict with Core Policy 50 (WCS) arises. There is not considered to be any heritage harm arising from the proposal, there are no adverse highway or flood risk / drainage issues arising, and any amenity impacts would be limited to residents of the farm site.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms and in accordance with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework, and all other relevant material considerations. The application is recommended for approval accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions:

1. The works for which Planning Permission is hereby granted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, 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:

218 EX00: Site Location Plan

218 EX20: Existing Site Plan

218 PL20/C: Proposed Site Plan

218PL23/A: Fencing and Floor Build-Up Details

218PL22: Proposed Riding Arena Elevations, Sections & Gate Details

Planning, Design and Access Statement (AZ2518, 25.11.25)

Drainage Strategy (Meridian, October 2025)

(all received 02/12/2025 unless otherwise specified)

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

3. Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the number, design and locations of opportunities for bats and birds (e.g. bat and bird boxes) shall be submitted to the local authority for approval. The approved details shall be implemented before occupation of the final works.

REASON: To provide mitigation /enhancement for biodiversity.

4. The development will be carried out in strict accordance with the following documents:
 - Sections 6 and 7, Figures 2, 3,4 and 5 and Appendix A of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment. 20 November 2025. Noctua Ecology. Report Ref. P138-1r. Version. 1.3;
 - The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. 07 November 2025.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity.

5. No external light fixture or fitting will be installed within the application site unless details of existing and proposed new lighting have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The submitted details will demonstrate how the proposed lighting will impact on bat habitat compared to the existing situation.

The plans will be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Notes on the Avoidance of Obtrusive Light (GN 01/2021) and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

REASON: To avoid illumination of habitat used by bats.

6. The development hereby permitted shall be used solely for the private enjoyment of the residents of Ivy Far, West Yatton and not for any commercial purposes whatsoever.

REASON: To ensure the development is only used for private and domestic purposes for those residents living at the site.

INFORMATIVES:

The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) it is an offence to disturb or harm any protected species including for example, breeding birds and reptiles. The protection offered to some species such as bats, extends beyond the individual animals to the places they use for shelter or resting. Please note that this consent does not override the statutory protection afforded to any such species. In the event that your proposals could potentially affect a protected species you should seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and consider the need for a licence from Natural England prior to commencing works. Please see Natural England's website for further information on protected species.

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Wiltshire Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. For further information on exempt developments please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.

Irreplaceable habitat

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must include, in addition to information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on the habitat, information on arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat.

The planning authority can only approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if satisfied that the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat is minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for the purpose of compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits.

The applicant(s) is advised that all relevant drainage consents are required prior to commencement.

The applicant is requested to note that this permission does not affect any private property rights and therefore does not authorise the carrying out of any work on land outside their control. If such works are required it will be necessary for the applicant to obtain the landowners consent before such works commence.

If you intend carrying out works in the vicinity of the site boundary, you are also advised that it may be expedient to seek your own advice with regard to the requirements of the Party Wall Act 1996.

Any alterations to the approved plans, brought about by compliance with Building Regulations or any other reason must first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before commencement of work.

The applicant should note that the grant of planning permission does not include any separate permission which may be needed to erect a structure in the vicinity of a public sewer. Such permission should be sought direct from Thames Water Utilities Ltd / Wessex Water Services Ltd. Buildings are not normally allowed within 3.0 metres of a Public Sewer although this may vary depending on the size, depth, strategic importance, available access and the ground conditions appertaining to the sewer in question.