

**APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION  
CASE OFFICER REPORT**

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| <b>APPLICATION REFERENCE:</b>   | PL/2025/08684                                                                                                 |
| <b>APPLICATION TYPE:</b>        | Full planning permission                                                                                      |
| <b>SITE ADDRESS:</b>            | Land to rear of Dark Horse House, 2 Grasshills Lane, Aldbourne, Marlborough, SN8 2EH                          |
| <b>DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:</b> | Change of use of land from agricultural to private equestrian and erection of a single-storey stable building |
| <b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>          | APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS                                                                                       |

## **PROPOSAL**

In discussion with the applicant the LPA changed the description of development to more accurately reflect the development proposed. The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of a field from agricultural to equestrian use for the private enjoyment and keeping of horses on the land, together with the erection of a single-storey stable building. The stable building (measures approx. 7.3m wide, 3.3m deep, and 6m max height) has timber clad walls and a corrugated metal roof. It is understood that the use of land for keeping of horses is sought retrospectively, although there is no evidence before the LPA that the use that has persisted is not consistent with an agricultural use of the land.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site is a field set between rear gardens of houses on Grasshills Lane to east and a bridleway to west. The field is enclosed by hedgerows and foliage and subdivided by an existing fence and gate. Its setting is characterised by its rural edge of settlement location, including significant foliage and bucolic landscape surroundings. It is in open countryside adjacent the settlement boundary of Aldbourne. Relevant designations and constraints include North Wessex Downs AONB and a public bridleway (ALDB29).

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

No planning history has been identified that would affect the consideration of the application.

## **RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE**

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS):

- Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy (CP1)
- Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy (CP2)
- Core Policy 14: Spatial Strategy for the Marlborough Community Area (CP14)
- Core Policy 48: Supporting Rural Life (CP48)
- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity (CP50)
- Core Policy 51: Landscape (CP51)
- Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping (CP57)

Saved policies of the Kennet Local Plan 2011 (KLP)

Aldboune Neighbourhood Development Plan –

- Policy 4: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy 8: High Quality Design
- Policy 15: Landscape
- Policy 16: Views
- Policy 17: Biodiversity
- Policy 20: Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways

Wiltshire Design Guide SPD 2024

North Wessex Downs Management Plan 2019-2024

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Design Guide (NDG)

## **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

The following consultees were invited to comment on the application:

Aldboune Parish Council – No objection (08/01/2026). No objection (05/02/2026).

Wiltshire Council's Public Rights of Way Team – No objection, advising that the public rights are on foot, horseback or bicycle and that use by motorised vehicles would require a private right and they suggested informatives to be added to any decision notice (10/02/2026).

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

Immediate neighbouring dwellings were notified of the application, and a site notice was displayed on 24 March 2026. No letters of representation were made by members of the public.

## **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 be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### Principle of development

The application site is in Aldboune Parish and therefore Core Policy 1, 2 and 14 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy are relevant for setting out the spatial strategy for the area.

The parish of Aldbourne is in the Marlborough Community Area and CP14, which identifies the settlement of Aldbourne as a *large village* for the purposes of the settlement strategy under CP1. Large village designation confers a settlement boundary to define limits of development, within which there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development under CP2, and, other than in circumstances as permitted by other policies within the development plan, development will not be permitted outside defined limits of development.

The application site is a field on the edge of the settlement of Aldbourne, and is outside of its defined settlement boundary, while the proposed development is for the erection of a building and the use of land for keeping of horses for the private enjoyment of the applicant. For the purposes of establishing the principle of development, CP1, CP2 and CP14 are the most relevant policies.

In open countryside outside the defined limits of development, new development is strictly controlled, however, the proposed development is of a nature and character that requires, or that one would reasonably expect to find in, the countryside.

On this basis, the proposal is considered broadly consistent with the aims of CP1, CP2 and CP14, which seek to promote sustainable patterns of development and protect the character and function of Wiltshire's countryside and communities. The development can therefore be considered acceptable in principle, subject to assessment of its related effects, relevant policy considerations, and other material considerations.

#### Design and local character and appearance, including regard to the National Landscape

CP51 and CP57 together seek to ensure all new development, including extensions and alterations to existing buildings, deliver a high standard of design that contributes to the character of Wiltshire by, amongst other things, responding positively to the features of the site itself and its landscape or townscape setting, and the value of the natural environment by relating positively to valued landscapes and their important features, including the special qualities of designated landscapes.

Policy 8 of the Aldbourne Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure the creation of high quality buildings and places that are beautiful and enduring, development proposals should respond positively and distinctively to relevant design statements and take account of their surroundings in their built form, height and materials. Policy 15 seeks to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the area's landscape and scenic beauty.

The site is an agricultural field on the edge of the settlement of Aldbourne, which is located within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (AONB) where there is a duty to seek to further the purpose of conserving or enhancing its natural beauty under S85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended).

The proposed stable building is of a modest size and simple design typical of the building type. Furthermore, it is reasonably well situated in relation to existing built form which limits its visual impact on the verdant openness of the field.

The proposed use of the land to which it relates for equestrian purposes would not be atypical in the countryside nor on the edge of a settlement. Furthermore, and while the use would be expected to cause paraphernalia to incrementally accumulate, the development serves the private enjoyment of its owner and would not therefore be of an intensity that would drastically change the character of the land, its the verdant openness and the contribution this makes to the natural beauty of the AONB.

Subject to relevant conditions, the development would not harm the character or appearance of the area nor the natural beauty of the AONB. Furthermore, it would satisfy the expectations of adopted design guidance and the aims of Policy 8 and 15 of the Aldbourne Neighbourhood Plan and CP51 and CP57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

#### Residential amenity

CP57 (vii) seeks to ensure that the design of new development has regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants and that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself.

The site is adjoined by woodland and fields and residential properties at 1, 3 and 4 Grasshills Lane. No letters of representation were made by members of the public raising matters relevant to amenity.

The development would introduce a building to a corner of the site nearest No.1, but it is modest in size and scale. The building would be used, however, for stabling of horses together with the use of the land for equestrian purposes.

The modest size of the building is such that it may only accommodate a couple of horses, and the use is low intensity in that it would serve the private enjoyment of the owner. The likely noise is unlikely to be significantly adverse. Furthermore, malodours from horse manure are unlikely to be significantly adverse given the low intensity of the use and level of care that would ensue as part of their private enjoyment. Nonetheless, in the worst case scenario, noise and smells could be controlled post-development as a statutory nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

The development would not harm the living conditions afforded to occupants of the site or neighbouring land. Furthermore, it would satisfy the expectations of adopted design guidance and the aims of CP57 (vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

#### Ecological matters, including Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The development would not impact on an area of habitat that exceeds 25 sqm, and therefore an exemption from the requirement to deliver 10% BNG introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021) is claimed as de minimis. The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the development is qualified and accordingly the effect on biodiversity is acceptable, and it would not conflict with Policy 17 of the Aldbourne Neighbourhood Plan or CP50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

### **PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION**

The development would have acceptable effects in respect of matters of acknowledged importance to the public interest, subject to conditions that meet the tests. Furthermore, it would not conflict with the development plan, and other material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. The statutory requirements have therefore been fulfilled, and the application should be supported.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following condition(s):

**Conditions:**

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:

- Location and Block Plan. 2GH.MP03 Rev C. Received 26 January 2026.
- Floor Plan and Elevations. 2GH.MP04 Rev A. Received 26 January 2026.

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

3. The development hereby permitted shall be used solely for the private enjoyment of equestrian activities, the stabling of horses and the storage of associated equipment and feed and shall at no time be used for any commercial purpose, including for livery, or in connection with equestrian tuition or leisure rides.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of the area and occupants of adjoining land, and in exercise of the duty to seek to further the purpose of conserving or enhancing the natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

**Informatives to the applicant:**

1. The applicant should note that in order to access the site with a mechanically propelled vehicle (MPV), they will require a private right of vehicular access. Without this private right they would be committing an offence under Section 34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. The granting of planning permission does not give the applicant or householder a vehicular right of access over the bridleway. The applicant is advised to take legal advice to ensure they have a right of access.

The applicant should note that no construction / demolition vehicle access may be taken along ALDB29 without prior consultation with the Rights of way Countryside Access

Officer (CAO). Where appropriate any safety/mitigation/reinstatement measures must be approved by the CAO. It is an offence under section 131A of the Highways Act 1980 to disturb the surface of a public right of way without lawful authority to do so. The Highway Authority have the power to take enforcement action as necessary.