

PLANNING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Application Site: Pitton Hill Farm, White Hill, Pitton, SP5 1DY

Applicant: Hilltop Equestrian Ltd

Application: Material change of use on land for retention of an equestrian worker's caravan (retrospective)

Date: 27 April 2026

Prepared by:



51-61 Castle Street

Salisbury, SP1 3SU

01722 424515

www.w-w.co.uk

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies a retrospective full planning application for the change of use on land for retention of an equestrian worker's caravan at Pitton Hill Farm.

Application

This application seeks to regularise the use of this site and continued presence of a caravan which has been installed to support the operational needs of the established equestrian use.

Hilltop Equestrian Ltd provides a range of livery services to horse owners, including full livery (with or without exercise), schooling livery, rehabilitation livery, and other bespoke care packages. All services are delivered to a high standard, with a strong emphasis on horse welfare and attentive day to day management. The facilities can accommodate up to 25 horses all of which require consistent daily care. Typically, the site is staffed by at least one full time member of staff, supported by two part time staff members.

Given the continuous care requirements associated with the operation, the Applicant installed the caravan onsite in 2022 during a period of significant staffing and operational pressures following the COVID-19 pandemic. The caravan has remained in situ since its installation, as it continues to provide clear operational benefits. It allows staff to stay overnight when required, ensuring immediate attendance in the event of medical emergencies outside normal working hours, and contributes to the overall security of the site. Currently, a part time groom occupies the caravan for occasional overnight stays, as his permanent residence is in Devon. Without access to onsite accommodation, the daily travel requirements would render his employment unviable. Accordingly, the accommodation is functionally and operationally linked to the equestrian use of the land and is not intended for independent or general residential occupation.

Internally, the caravan comprises an open plan kitchen and dining area, two bedrooms, a WC, and a shower. Externally, the structure measures approximately 36ft long and 12ft wide. It is mounted on a steel chassis, with prefabricated panels and white uPVC external cladding. A decking area is attached to the northern elevation, forming part of the entrance, and measures approximately 1.07 metres wide and 4.40 metres long.

Application Site

The Application Site forms part of an established equestrian facility at Pitton Hill Farm which comprises some 30.54 acres of grazing, 56.93 acres of land used to make hay, a large indoor riding school, horse walker and stables. The built yard area amounts to approximately 3,736 sq.m. with the caravan currently sited in the northeastern corner of the yard as shown on the accompanying Block Plan.

Visual Impact

The structure is a standard single storey caravan of modest scale and height. Its appearance is typical of such units, featuring neutral external finishes that help to minimise its visual impact.

Although the caravan does not have permanent foundations and remains capable of being moved, its setting has been enhanced through additional landscaping measures. These include a timber skirt to the base of the unit, a timber built decking area, and a boundary fence with the adjoining horse paddock. The current siting has been carefully selected to reduce visual impact, provide a degree of privacy for the occupier, and to ensure the unit remains within the existing developed yard area, close to established buildings, thereby avoiding unnecessary sprawl. The unit remains within sight and sound of the livery yard for the purposes of animal safety and security.

The caravan is well screened from both private and public viewpoints. Surrounding land under the Applicant's control, together with a mature hedgerow along the southeastern boundary provides effective visual containment. The nearest public right of way (Footpath PIFA13) lies approximately 45 metres to the south and is separated from the site by a large tree affording natural screening. A further footpath (PIFA16), located northeast of the site also offers only very limited views of the caravan.

Photographs taken from both nearby footpaths are provided below, with orange arrows indicating the position of the caravan subject to this application.

Photograph from PIFA13.



Photograph from PIFA16.



Access

Access to the Application Site is taken from an existing gravelled track located approximately 215 metres east of White Hill Road. This track is shared with neighbouring landowners and is routinely used by vehicles and agricultural machinery to access surrounding land. From the track, the caravan is reached via the main yard gates and positioned adjacent to the riding school.

The presence of the caravan does not give rise to any additional traffic movements. Its occupants are present solely in connection with the equestrian business and would otherwise need to travel to and from the site on a daily basis if onsite accommodation were not available. As such, the provision of the caravan results in a modest reduction in overall vehicle movements associated with the site.

Biodiversity Net Gain

This is a retrospective application and thus is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

Other considerations

The Application Site is located within Flood Zone 1 (an area with a low probability of flooding) according to the Environment Agency flood maps for planning applications.

There are no apparent contamination risks or concerns on the Application Site.

The Application Site is not located within any of the following designations: National Landscape, National Park, a Scheduled Monument, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the nearest Listed Building is located over 200 m northwest of the Application Site.

Planning Assessment

The assessment of this application has been undertaken with reference to the Development Plan (Wiltshire Core Strategy), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and Planning Practice Guidance. In accordance 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.

Core Policy 48 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out the approach to supporting rural life. The policy confirms that residential development in the countryside will not normally be permitted unless justified by specific circumstances, including where it is necessary to support rural employment. Equestrian uses are explicitly referenced as an example where onsite accommodation may be required. Paragraph 84(a) of the NPPF sets out that policies should support isolated dwellings in the countryside where there is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work. Further guidance is provided by Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 010, Reference ID: 67-010-20190722), which expands on the NPPF and identifies relevant considerations. These include the need for clear evidence demonstrating the necessity for a rural worker to reside at their place of work, and whether the enterprise will remain viable for the foreseeable future.

The caravan has been in situ for almost four years and provides a direct operational benefit to a long established, commercially viable equestrian business. The ability to offer onsite accommodation enhances the attractiveness of employment opportunities and supports the efficient functioning of the enterprise.

Core Policy 34 is also relevant, setting out criteria for the retention and expansion of existing businesses within or adjacent to defined settlements, including Large and Small Villages such as Pitton. Outside these areas, development may still be supported where it facilitates the growth of rural based businesses, provided it meets sustainable development objectives, is appropriate in scale and location, supports local economic and social needs, does not undermine strategic employment allocations, and is supported by adequate infrastructure.

This application is considered to accord with these objectives. The caravan is modest in scale and located within the established curtilage of the yard, ensuring it is well related to the existing use. The equestrian business provides a valuable local service with many clients drawn from nearby villages due to its reputation for maintaining high standards of animal welfare. The retention of this caravan will continue to support the businesses operations. Approval of this application will not undermine wider strategic employment provision. Furthermore, the site benefits from existing infrastructure, including water and electricity connections.

Paragraph 85 of the NPPF sets out that planning decisions should allow businesses to invest, expand and adapt with significant weight placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. Paragraph 88 reinforces this by encouraging the sustainable growth and development of all types of rural businesses. While the caravan was originally installed in response to exceptional operational pressures, it has since demonstrated clear and ongoing benefits in terms of staffing, as well as the safety and security of the horses and wider yard.

Paragraph 56 of the NPPF confirms that Local Planning Authorities may impose planning conditions to make development acceptable. In this instance, should it be deemed necessary, the Applicant is willing to accept a condition restricting occupation of the caravan to persons solely employed by the equestrian business, Hilltop Equestrian Ltd, thereby ensuring its continued functional link to the enterprise.

Conclusion

Hilltop Equestrian is a long established rural equestrian enterprise and the presence of an onsite groom helps to support high standards of animal welfare, site security, and its day to day operational efficiency, particularly given the demands of equestrian care which often extend beyond conventional working hours. The caravan provides functional accommodation that is directly tied to the use of the land and does not give rise to any unacceptable impacts in terms of visual amenity or local environs. It is therefore considered that this application is in line with both local and national planning policies and we respectfully request that it is approved.