

**The provision of a Trainer's House (to replace an extant planning approval for same)
at Manton Park, Manton, Marlborough
(revised application following PL/2024/03249)**



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Introduction

- 1.1 The application to which this report accompanies relates to is a site at Manton Park near Marlborough. It is proposed that the site, which is within an area surrounded by trees on three sides, is used to accommodate a house for a trainer working within the equestrian business at Manton Park. The design and siting rationale for the house, together with details about how the proposal relates to previous planning consents at Manton Park, is set out within this statement.
- 1.2 As detailed within this submission, this application is unusual in that there is a longstanding extant planning approval for equestrian workers accommodation on a neighbouring site: including two cottages, a trainer's house and, until recently, a large residential hostel for equestrian workers. As demonstrated within this application, the proposal is that the planning approval for the trainer's house effectively be moved from the existing, more exposed, site and replaced on a new parcel of land where it would better integrate within the landscape.
- 1.3 The application follows a submission made in 2024 for a similar form of development (reference PL/2024/03249). This application was refused for reasons relating to landscape impact and ecology. The refusal also related to the lack of a legal agreement to effectively 'swap' the extant permission for a trainers house to the new site. This agreement would have followed had the Council agreed to the previous submission as an alternative location for the house.
- 1.4 Advice from the Council's landscape officer on application PL/2024/03249 was not published at the time of that submission, however has since been made available to the applicant. This advice has been the subject of discussion with Mrs Guest, the senior development manager for the area.
- 1.5 This report describes the site and the development proposal within the context of the extant planning consent, the more recent refusal and also planning policy for the area. The design and access statement sets out details of the layout and design of the proposal and considers this against the approved development nearby and describes the landscape benefits of the trainer's house being provided as now proposed.
- 1.6 The application is also accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Statement prepared by WH Landscape, and this examines in more detail the landscape benefits of moving the position of the trainer's house as proposed within this submission. An ecology and BNG report prepared by Icon Ecology is also submitted in support of the proposal.

The Site – land at Manton Park

- 2.1 The site to which this application relates is an area of land just to the east of Manton Farmhouse. Surrounded on three sides by mature trees, the site is at the southern-most part of a long belt of trees that run roughly north/south from the Marlborough to Rockley Road. Currently grassed, the land slopes gradually down from north to south.
- 2.2 The site is open on the west facing side and it's from this aspect that vehicular and pedestrian access would be provided. There is already a track running alongside the site and a driveway would be taken off this as shown on the submitted drawings.
- 2.3 The site is within the much wider rural area covered by the equestrian business at Manton. This is characterised by large open fields, small woodlands, gallops, equestrian and farm buildings and houses for the owner and staff working at Manton Park. The site and its context is illustrated in more detail with the accompanying landscape report.

The Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal to which the application relates is for the provision of a house to accommodate a horse trainer who would work at Manton Park. The Estate employs a large number of staff who train and care for the racehorses at Manton. In order to attract and retain high quality staff it's essential that a good standard of accommodation is provided as part of a package of employment. In this case, the proposal is for a house suitable for a trainer who would live and work at Manton Park.
- 3.2 Such a house needs to be a property suitable to accommodate a trainer and their family and be of a scale and design appropriate to attract the right calibre of employee. It also needs to be near to where the horses are trained, although not necessarily within sight and sound of the stables as the trainer would not be responsible for the day to day care of particular horses.
- 3.3 The extant permission for a trainers house shows a bland dwelling which does not reflect the built vernacular of the area. Figure 1 illustrates the west facing elevation of the house as proposed within this application; a design which is considered to be far more appropriate for this rural location.



Figure 1: The proposed west elevation of the trainer's house

- 3.4 Although this accommodation is proposed for an equestrian employee, the planning application is not accompanied by a justification statement setting out the need for the new house. As detailed within the planning history, permission already exists for a mix of equestrian accommodation on a neighbouring site and it is proposed that this provision be in place of the extant consent for a trainer's house to the west of Barton Yard.
- 3.5 The proposed house would utilise the screening provided by the existing tree belt around the site, which would be supplemented by further planting to assist the screening the current trees provide.

Planning History

- 4.1 There is one application relating to the site itself, as referred to within section 4.11. Of relevance to this submission is a neighbouring site to the west of Barton Yard, where there is an extant planning approval for various forms of residential housing for equestrian workers. This was included within a wider planning permission as detailed below.

K/36070/O

- 4.2 Planning permission was granted for a large scale equestrian development at the Manton House Estate. This outline consent was for the construction of an all weather gallop and internal access roads, 37 dwellings, 100 stables and associated feed store barns and covered rides plus 2 residential hostels.

K/045156/R

- 4.3 Reserved matters approved relating to outline approval K/36070/O. Of particular relevance, on land neighbouring Barton Yard the reserved matters approval included the following:

- 2 x three bed semi-detached cottages
- 3 x groups of 5 terraced houses
- A Trainer's house
- 1 x 12 bed hostel
- 1 x 40 American Barn of stables
- Access Road
- All weather gallop

13/03279/VAR

- 4.4 A planning application was submitted in 2013 in order to give greater flexibility to who can occupy particular of the houses approved under K/36070/O and subsequent reserved matters K/045156/R. The nature of this application is explained within the officer's report for 13/03279/VAR which is appended to this report as document 1.
- 4.5 The report relating to 13/03279/VAR provides an assessment to confirm that development permitted under K/36070/O and following reserved matters was lawfully implemented and therefore extant. The report states, inter alia:

'it appears that the latest permissions were only lawfully implemented in part (the access to the latest permission for 37 dwellings, 2 x 12 bed hostel accommodation), meaning that there remains extant consent for these additional units.'

- 4.6 It is on the basis that this consent was lawfully implemented and remained (and thus remains) extant that planning permission was granted to amend the wording of the occupancy restriction relating to the approved houses. As part of this consent, it was agreed via a S106 agreement that permission be relinquished for a significant number of the houses approved under K/36070/O and K/045156/R. The S106 Agreement signed on 21st August 2014 allows for the retention of planning permission at Barton Yard for residential development in the form of:

- 1 x Trainer's house
- 1 x 12 bed hostel
- 2 x semi-detached cottages

- 4.7 The arrangement on the ground for the extant houses listed above is shown on the site layout plan included as figure 2.

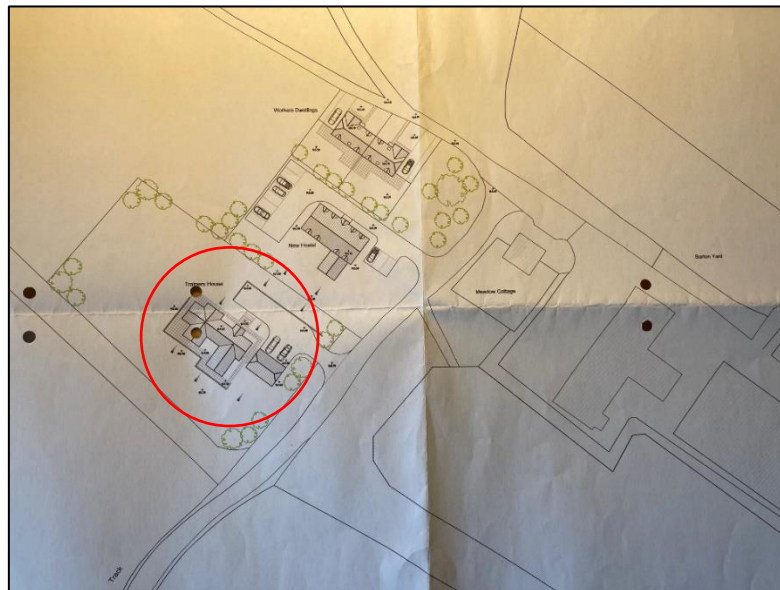


Figure 2: Layout of houses and hostel within extant planning consent
Approved location for a trainer's house circled

- 4.8 Planning permission has recently been approved to develop a group of three equestrian worker's cottages (reference PL/2022/09317) on a site immediately to the east of where they were originally granted planning permission. This was in place of the approved hostel building, with the extant planning permission for this being revoked through a S106 Agreement.
- 4.9 The land where the three houses and the hostel have planning approval is shown on picture 1. By way of context, the application site is just to the north of this and surrounded on three sides by trees. As detailed within this report, it is proposed that the trainer's house be agreed

in exchange for the extant planning approval for the same form of development as approved under K/36070/O and K/045156/R and confirmed as extant.



Picture 1: Site with extant consent for housing and hostel

- 4.10 In time, it's proposed that the other accommodation within the extant consent also be relocated to sites more suitable to the equestrian operations at Manton Park, meaning that this area of exposed land would remain clear of housing.
- 4.11 The site itself has one relevant planning decision, with the Council refusing a previous planning application for a similar form of development in 2024 (PL/2024/03249). The application was refused on design and landscape grounds. The Council also refused the application in respect of ecology and the lack of a legal agreement to address the 'swap' of the extant planning permission for a trainer's house to the new site (this would have followed a decision to allow development to take place).
- 4.12 This decision was subsequently discussed with officers at the Council. At this stage guidance from the Council's landscape officer in respect of his views on application PL/2024/03249 was provided. This states:

I have not visited site, as unfortunately due to workload I am unable to attend all sites assigned to me, and was not involved in the originally approved scheme. I undertook an extensive desk based assessment of the scheme and stated that in my opinion a scheme could be constructed on the site proposed by the applicant provided its massing was reduced from 2 storey to 1.5 storey in order to allow the scale of the built form to be adequately hidden behind the existing trees and so that its built form did not visually 'compete' with Dean House to the West, but instead felt more of a estate cottage style.

If this was felt unacceptable by the applicant then I recommended that the house as proposed should remain on the approved site closer to Barton Yard at a significantly lower elevation

(5m) where there would not be the risk of the roof and chimneys 'skylining' and the mass of the development would be set further away from Dean House and instead read in the landscape as part of the Barton Yard 'Farmstead' which I believe was the point that the Parish Council were making in their submission.

The original location as noted in K/36070/O is within the yellow lines contained in the google earth image that Paul has sent through. Since this site has already received planning approval for a trainers house (although I haven't fully reviewed the previously approved elevations) it is unlikely that I would go against a revised application on the previously approved site location. My concern with the current application that whilst screened on three sides with existing trees, that screening is comparatively thin on two sides and the remaining open side is directly adjacent to the nearest PRow and faces onto Dean House. Being in the National Landscape and the site being on a partially exposed ridge as noted in my response, Local Authorities have additional duties of regard under the LUR Act 2023 (para245) when it comes to conserving and enhancing National Landscapes and the 'open' aspect of the Open Downland Landscape Character Area.

I have stated to Jemma that I am happy to attend a site visit if it is felt this would help clarify points, but I will leave this to Jemma to decide how to take this forward.

Kind regards

Paul Robertson

Paul Robertson BA(Hons) DipLA MSc CMLI

Senior Landscape Officer (Woodland GAPS Team Manager)

Archaeology, Landscape & Design Team

Climate and Environment Service

- 4.13 This advice from the landscape officer was not made available during the course of the previous planning application – which is unfortunate. What this advice provides is confirmation that the current application site is not one that is *necessarily* unacceptable as an alternative location for the trainer's house, but that the design for the building has to be one that's of an appropriate vernacular and effectively screened by the existing trees (with additional planting also proposed within this application).

Planning Policy

- 5.1 The application site is in the countryside so far as planning policy is concerned. As such, relevant policy provision relates to housing in rural areas for essential workers and those relating to design and the safeguarding of protected landscapes.
- 5.2 Core Policy CP48 'supporting rural life' provides guidance relating to the provision of residential accommodation for rural workers. The policy allows for such housing to be provided where it meets the accommodation needs of workers who need to live in the immediate vicinity of their place of work. In respect of this application, there is a requirement for an equestrian worker to live at Manton Park, however this submission is that the housing

be built in place of residential accommodation which already benefits from planning permission.

- 5.3 Core policy 51 'landscape' requires that development protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character. Within AONB's the policy states that 'great weight will be afforded to conserving and enhancing landscapes and scenic beauty'.
- 5.4 Also relevant is Core Policy 57 'ensuring high quality design and place shaping'. This policy requires a high standard of design in all forms of development which creates a sense of place through drawing on local context.

Design and Access Statement

Use of the site

- 6.1 This proposal for the trainer's house is somewhat unusual in that there is already an extant planning approval for a similar form of development on a neighbouring site. This submission is that the applicant (who owns the wider Manton Park Estate to include the site with the extant consent) exchange the planning approval for the trainer's house to the west of Barton Yard for that to which this application relates.
- 6.2 The accommodation is needed within the wider Manton Park Estate to provide a house appropriate for a racehorse trainer. Although there are a number of equestrian houses at Manton, there are none currently suitable for a trainer and their family and this proposal is to allow for this residential provision.
- 6.3 In considering the use of the application site as an alternative to the land where there is extant planning approval it is submitted that, in landscape terms, the currently proposed site is preferable. When planning permission was originally granted on the land to the south of the application site, the house adjoining Barton Yard was still in situ so this was the closest location to the buildings. With the house now gone the paddock (shown in picture 1) looks isolated and not a logical location for new housing. In contrast, the site now proposed for the trainer's house is more discreetly located and better integrated within the landscape because of the trees that are on three sides of the land.
- 6.4 Accompanying this planning submission is a Landscape and Visual Assessment which considers the landscape impact of the proposed trainer's house in more detail. This report also considers the merit of the proposed site relative to that where there is currently consent for a trainer's house to be built. The report concludes that the site where the trainer's house is now proposed is more appropriate than the consented one in terms of how it would assimilate within the rural landscape at Manton.

The Amount of Development

- 6.5 The proposal is for a single residential unit on the site. Having regard to the extant permission on the neighbouring land to the south, the amount of development proposed is essentially the same as previously approved.

The Layout of Development

- 6.6 The house as proposed would be arranged running approximately north/south across the site. In this position the house would take advantage of the natural screening provided by the belt of trees wrapping around the north, east and southern side of the site, whilst having its principal aspect looking out along the Downs. This screening is proposed to be enhanced through new planting to supplement the existing tree belt and new planting to the south to enhance this and enhance biodiversity.
- 6.7 The layout also allows for a driveway, parking and turning area. A private garden area would be provided to the east of the house.

The Scale of Development

- 6.8 It is submitted that the scale of the proposed development is appropriate to the accommodation being proposed. The house would be of an appropriate size for a trainer working on the Manton Estate and, as proposed, would be similar in scale to the extant trainer's house.
- 6.9 Within the previous advice from the landscape officer it was suggested that the site was one where a new house could be located, but that consideration should be given to this being one and half storey in height – so that it would be entirely screened by the surrounding trees. The house proposed within this submission is a traditional two storey design, however it's submitted this should be acceptable for the following reasons.
- 6.10 The approved house on the neighbouring site is a two storey design, but of a vernacular less sympathetic to this rural area and in a more exposed location. The house as now proposed is of a design that is appropriate to this rural part of Wiltshire and, importantly, is of a scale that would sit below the height of the adjoining tree belt – see the accompanying landscape report. It is also the case that a one and a half storey building is not a traditional scale of for a house of this scale. The proposal is not for a small cottage where rooms in the roof might look appropriate.

The Landscaping of the Development

- 6.11 The development takes advantage of the natural landscaping around the site. As illustrated within the accompanying landscape report, the location for the proposed house is at the southern end of a block of trees and specifically within an area enclosed by existing planting which creates a naturally screened location for the proposed house (which is not the case with the extant permission).
- 6.12 The application also proposes additional planting that would enhance the existing tree belt, meaning that it would continue to provide screening for the house as proposed in the future.

The Appearance of the Development

- 6.13 As proposed the design of the house represents a significant improvement over the somewhat bland appearance of the approved design adjoining Barton Yard.

- 6.14 This design for the house in this location which benefits from existing natural screening would sit comfortably within the rural landscape. In proposing to build in this location rather than to the west of Barton Yard it is relevant to compare the proposed and approval locations for a house and, it's submitted, the position and design as detailed within this application represent an improvement over that with extant consent.

Access

- 7.1 The site is within the wider Manton Park Estate which has access routes across it, including to where the house is proposed. There is already access to the site and this would remain with a new drive created to provide a pedestrian and vehicular access into the site.

Ecology & BNG

- 8.1 The application is accompanied by a preliminary ecological appraisal, a BNG metric and a BNG report. Elements of the planting proposed for the site also enhance the biodiversity of the area.

Conclusion

- 9.1 Planning permission is in place for a trainer's house at Manton Park. The extant approval is of a workmanlike design and in a location that has become increasingly isolated because of changes to the way the equestrian business operates around it. This proposal is effectively to move the approved trainer's house to a new, better, location and provide a house of a significantly improved design.
- 9.2 This application addresses the reasons the previous submission on this site was refused and also has regard to the guidance from the Council's landscape officer that any house in this location should be adequately screened by the trees around the site. The house as now proposed achieves this and is of a design that is low key, but also of an appropriate built vernacular for the Marlborough downs. The additional planting proposed would ensure the longevity of the current screen planting and enhance this with new trees to the south of the site.
- 9.3 The application also addresses the previous objection to a lack of an ecology report. The report from Icon Ecology details the current ecological state of the site and provide mitigation calculated through the appropriate metric and set out within the BNG report.
- 9.4 Subject to the Council agreeing to this proposal a legal agreement would be prepared to transfer the extant planning approval for a trainer's house to this new location.
- 9.5 As such, it is submitted that approval of this proposal and the removal of permission for the trainer's house neighbouring Barton Yard represents a planning gain which should be supported by the Council.

Document 1: Officer report on application 13/03279/VAR**CASE OFFICER'S REPORT**

Application Reference: 13/03279/VAR
Date of Inspection: 03-09-2013
Date site notice posted: 03-09-2013
Date of press notice: N/A

POLICIES

PD1, HC26 of the adopted Kennet Local Plan 2011.
Chapter 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

ISSUES

The principle of relaxing the equestrian occupancy restrictions on the approved dwellings.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish Council – Support

No further representations received.

ASSESSMENT:

The application site is a substantial country estate, which was permitted to expand its racehorse training enterprise including additional trainer's yards with stables, manager houses, associated facilities and grooms' accommodation under various previous planning permissions. Whilst many of these permissions were developed out, it appears that the latest permissions were only lawfully implemented in part (the access to the latest permission for 37 dwellings, 2 x 12 bed hostel accommodation), meaning that there remains extant consent for these additional units.

The application includes a brief outline of the business operations including the rapid expansion and success of the business until 1991. The latest permissions (in 2003) were effectively a renewal of earlier permissions granted and justified on the basis to support the then expanding industry. At this time, it is understood a proposal was put forward to sub-divide the estate into five separate racing yards, but investment was not forthcoming and following the decline on the racing industry the existing owners sold their horses in 2006/7. One existing trainer expanded to take up some of the space to 140, but still left 60 stables vacant and this number has subsequently declined to about 80/85. 60 stables were let out in 2012 but there remains over 60 empty stables, cottages and hostel accommodation. Those dwellings which are less restricted have been let out to help support the estate.

The applicant is seeking some further flexibility to that afforded under the previous consents in order that the vacant units and stabling can be utilised for alternative equestrian purposes, potentially sublet to other equestrian related disciplines as eventing yards, dressage yards, showjumping yards, polo yards or similar. The existing occupancy restrictions (including legal agreement dated 1-9-1994) only permit occupation by those wholly or mainly working in the training or care of racehorses stabled and trained on the said Land or in agriculture or forestry. This was a restriction to ensure the sustainability of dwellings in this countryside location but is now unduly restrictive since the decline of the business. The use by other equestrian trainers of this countryside facility for their horses and grooms is logical and the variation of this restriction to enable their occupation to a person solely or mainly working, or last working, in the training/keeping/breeding of horses, in agriculture or in forestry in the locality, or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependants seems reasonable.

In this instance, it is prudent to give consideration to the permission for the extant units; in permitting additional flexibility to the business given the decline of the industry there would be some concern for additional new dwellings to be constructed in the countryside with no current need or justification for those units. The applicant is keen to retain consent for some of the units (3 plus hostel) at the Barton Yard site to enable this to be an attractive proposition to a trainer as the yard and facilities are already located here and given the extent of the extant consent and scale of this part of the site, this is understandable. The applicant

is otherwise in agreement to relinquish the consent for the additional 34 extant residential units plus hostel and in view of this, officers are minded to accept the proposed variations.

This particular application relates to the variation of the occupancy restriction on the extant consent (for the three dwellings plus hostel that the applicant wishes to retain) – condition number 12 of original outline permission K/036070/O.

For the avoidance of doubt, the permission to be relinquished in part relates to K/036070/O and reserved matters application K/045156/R and includes the following properties which are outlined on the attached plans;

15 x 2 bed terraced houses at Barton Yard
4 x 3 bed houses at Manton House Tennis Court
4 x 3 bed houses at Astor Yard and
2 x semi-detached houses at Astor Field
(8) 2 x sets of 4 No 3 bed houses at Barton Yard,
1 x 8 bed hostel at Red Post Yard,
1 vets house.

Permission to be retained for;

1 x Barton Yard (trainers house)
1 x 12 bed Hostel at Barton Yard and
2 x semi-detached properties at Barton Yard

This is a total of 3 dwellings plus one hostel, in addition to the various stabling, training gallops and access roads etc that were also permitted.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve with conditions (to standard model equestrian/ agricultural occupancy condition) and deed of variation to S.106 to relinquish consent in part as set out above.