



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

RE: ERECTION OF STABLE BLOCK AND RIDING ARENA

**Westfield, 31 Malmesbury Road, Leigh,
Swindon, Wiltshire, SN6 6RH**

**On behalf of:
Mr O. Ghazala**

Date: August 2026

Ref: AP/P/W-079

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1. INTRODUCTION

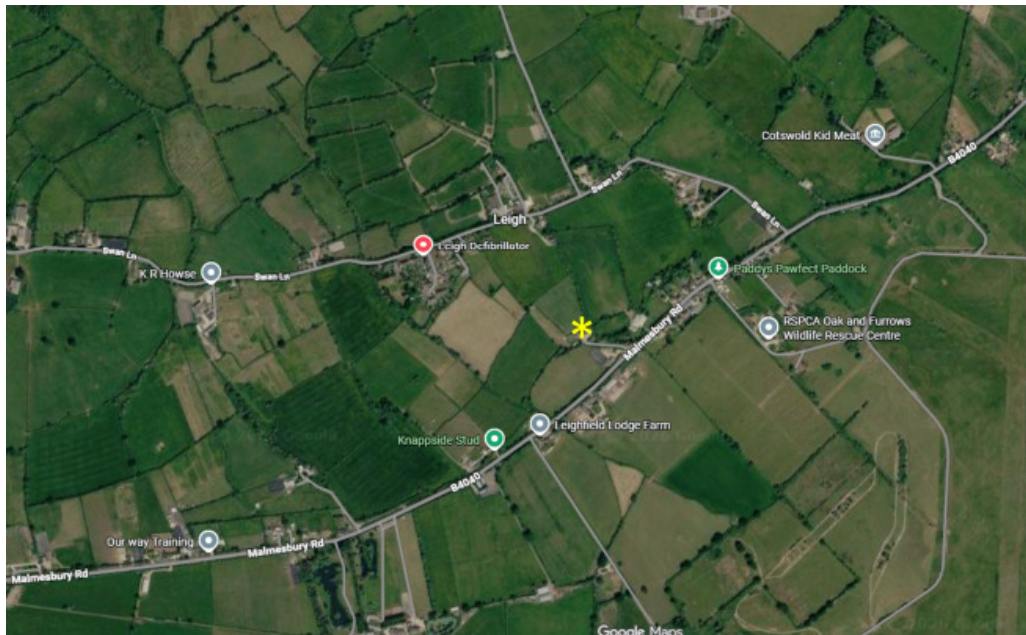
1.1 This statement has been prepared by **Plan-A Planning and Development Ltd** on behalf of the applicant in support of a full planning application for the erection of a stable block and riding arena at Westfield, 31 Malmesbury Road, Leigh. It describes and evaluates the context and character of the site, also taking account of any relevant planning history before going on to assess the proposals against the national and local policy framework, referring as appropriate to the following drawings:-

- Drawing No. WF 2-1 – Location/Block Plans
- Drawing No. WF 2-2 – Context Plan
- Drawing No. WF 2-3 - Site Plan
- Drawing No. WF 2-4 – Menage Plans
- Drawing No. WF 2-5 – Loose Boxes

1.2 Having taken all relevant material planning considerations into account, this statement establishes that the application proposals accord with relevant planning policies and will cause no material harm to any interests of acknowledged importance. Accordingly, in line with the prevailing local and national policy context, it concludes that planning permission should therefore be granted.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 Westfield lies within a mosaic of agricultural fields on the northern side of Malmesbury Road, approximately 2 miles to the south-west of Cricklade. The property comprises a detached dwelling with ancillary outbuildings and agricultural barn associated with an established agricultural holding in operation over the adjoining fields.



Google Earth extract of approximate site location (accessed April 2026)

- 2.2 The proposed stables and riding arena are to be located alongside the existing hedgerow to either side of the agricultural barn which is sited along the field boundary to the north-east of the dwelling. The land is predominantly flat and, although partially visible from publicly accessible viewpoints, such views are relatively distant and constrained by both existing vegetation and built development.
- 2.3 The land falls within Flood Zone 1 (the lowest flood risk category) and is not subject to any other protective designations.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Whilst there is some planning history concerning ancillary development associated with the existing dwelling, this is of no direct relevance to the current application. However, the following applications are relevant to consideration of the proposed development, so associated summary details are set out accordingly.

PL/2025/04718

- 3.2 This relates to a prior notification application for the erection of a general purpose agricultural building on land to the north-east of the existing dwelling. In reaching their decision that prior approval was not required, the case officer's report identified that the siting, scale and materials of the building are typical of other agricultural buildings within the rural landscape. Whilst noting the building's location to the boundary of the property and the fact that it would be visible from public view, the officer concluded that it would be fairly innocuous in its setting and would not result in any unacceptable or significant adverse impact on the character or appearance of the area. The LPA's decision notice confirming that prior approval is not required was issued accordingly in June 2025.

PL/2024/01339

- 3.3 This relates to a full planning application incorporating the installation of a riding arena on a site set within a similar context, approximately 1 mile to the west along Malmesbury Road. The proposed arena is sited over part of an existing grassed paddock and would remain in private use to provide a safe area for the applicant to exercise their horses. The associated case officer report confirms that, whilst the surrounding area would remain in agricultural use, equestrian use is an established use within the countryside. It also notes that permission had previously been granted for a riding arena adjacent to the site such that the principle of providing equestrian uses with supporting structures is acceptable in principle subject to a condition preventing any commercial use of the arena operations.
- 3.4 With reference to Core Policies 51 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the case officer's report confirmed that the site formed part of a network of fields well screened by existing hedgerows and large trees and as it would be viewed in the context of adjoining development would not be harmful to the rural character of the area. Planning permission was granted accordingly, by decision notice dated 20th August 2024.

4. THE PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The proposals relate to the erection of a new stable block and 45 x 30 metre equine arena for the private use of the applicant in parallel with the operation of their existing agricultural holding.
- 4.2 As shown on Drawing No. WF 2-5, the proposed stable block provides 4 no. loose boxes together with a hay/tack store arranged in an 'L' shaped planform with maximum dimensions of 14.4 x 10.8 metres. The building is to be sited against the existing field boundary hedgerow approximately 20 metres to the east of the existing dwelling, thereby ensuring that clear sight and sound can be maintained for animal welfare purposes. It is to be clad in timber under a shallow pitched corrugated sheet roof which overhangs the inner elevations of the building. Access is via the existing field entrance from the driveway which serves the property.
- 4.3 The proposed riding arena is sited further along the same field boundary, but on the northern side of the existing agricultural barn. It will be bounded by a timber post and rail fence whilst, in order to moderate the existing fall across the site to just 1.5%, the footprint of the arena will also be slightly raised, resulting in a shallow bank around much of the perimeter which rises to a maximum height of just 0.25 metres at the north-western corner.

5. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 confirms that where a determination is to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the Development Plan comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS) although the updated NPPF also represents a material consideration in its own right.

Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015)

Core Policy 1 – Settlement Strategy

- 5.2 In seeking to define where development will be the most sustainable and will help to deliver a stronger economy, this policy sets out the authority's settlement hierarchy, which comprises four tiers of settlement, defined according to their role and function and how they interact with their wider hinterland.

Core Policy 2 – Delivery Strategy

- 5.3 This sets out a Delivery Strategy in support of Core Policy 1 and restricts development proposals located outside the defined limits of development to a limited number of specific circumstances, including those which are aimed at supporting rural life (Core Policy 48 refers).

Core Policy 48 – Supporting Rural Life

- 5.4 This policy sets out the Council's approach towards supporting rural communities in locations outside defined 'limits of development' of Principal Towns, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages, as well as beyond the existing built-up areas of Small Villages. The policy confirms that proposals which improve access to services and facilities will be supported where the development will not be to the detriment of the local environment or local residents.

Core Policy 50 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 5.5 This requires development proposals to demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale, with the expectation that such features be retained, buffered and managed favourably to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term.

5.6 Where retention is not feasible, removal or damage will only be acceptable where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated and appropriate compensatory measures secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource.

5.7 The policy confirms that all development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

Core Policy 51 – Landscape

5.8 This policy highlights that developments should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character. Proposals are expected to demonstrate that landscape character will be conserved and where possible, enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures, including:

- Locally distinctive pattern and composition of natural features;
- Locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings;
- Maintaining separate identity of settlements and the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the urban fringe;
- Visually sensitive skylines;
- Important views and visual amenity
- The need to protect against intrusion from light pollution;
- Protecting the special qualities of AONBs.

Core Policy 57 – Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

5.9 This policy confirms that a high standard of design is required in all new development which draws on local context in order to maintain or create a strong sense of place. Proposals are expected to enhance local distinctiveness, retain existing landscape/natural features and be sympathetic to their surroundings, whilst making efficient use of land. The needs of future occupants should be taken into account through making use of high standards of building materials and maximising opportunities for sustainable construction techniques.

Core Policy 60 – Sustainable Transport

5.10 CP60 aims to help reduce the need to travel particularly by private car and to support and encourage sustainable, safe and efficient movement of people and goods within and through Wiltshire. This is to be achieved by measures including: planning developments in accessible locations, promoting sustainable transport alternatives, and through maintenance and selective improvements to the local transport network, and appropriate demand management measures.

Other Material Policy Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.11 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England, together with guidance on how they are expected to be applied. It is a material consideration in its own right in the determination of planning applications.
- 5.12 The NPPF confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which encompasses the three overarching and interdependent economic, social and environmental objectives. It confirms that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions. In doing so, Local Planning Authorities are instructed to take local circumstances into account to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area (paragraph 9 of the Framework refers).
- 5.13 At the heart of the NPPF is a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development (see paragraphs 10 and 11). For decision-taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay, or where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless: policies in the Framework provide a strong reason for refusing the proposals; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits having particular regard to key policies such as directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land and securing well-designed places.
- 5.14 The Framework instructs LPAs to approach decision-making in a positive and creative way, and to *"work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area"*. The Framework stipulates that decision-makers at every level should *"seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible"* (para 39 refers).
- 5.15 Para 115 outlines that planning decisions should take account of whether safe and sustainable access to the site can be achieved for all users. However, para 116 goes on to confirm that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe.

5.16 Para 131 highlights that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and helps create better places to live and work. Accordingly, para 135 confirms that planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments:-

- *“Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- *Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- *Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- *Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public spaces) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- *Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”*

6. PLANNING AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Based upon the details set out within the preceding sections, the planning considerations relevant to the assessment of this application are as follows:-

- Principle of Development
- Siting, Design and Appearance
- Landscape Impact
- Biodiversity
- Access

Principle of Development

6.2 In considering the proposed riding arena and equestrian use of land on the site approximately 1 mile to the west of the application site (WC Ref. PL/2024/01339 refers – see paras 3.3/3.4 above), the case officer highlighted the fact that equestrian use is an established use within the countryside. As such, they confirmed that the principle of providing equestrian uses with supporting structures is acceptable subject to a condition preventing any commercial use of the arena operations and compliance with other relevant policies.

Siting, Design and Appearance

6.3 As referred to in para 4.2 above, the proposed stables are sited and orientated to be within sight and sound of the applicant's dwelling in order to ensure the safety, security and welfare of the horses. As the proposed location is also largely screened by the existing barn and surrounding vegetation, the stables will have no adverse impact on the amenities of adjoining development. Furthermore, their typical scale, design and appearance is entirely compatible with their countryside setting.

6.4 As for the proposed arena, this is located away from any residential property and bounded by a simple post and rail fence, which is a common boundary feature within the countryside, and could in any case be erected under existing permitted development rights.

6.5 The proposals are therefore in full accordance with the requirements of Core Policy 57.

Landscape Impact

6.6 As referred to above, the proposed stable block will be largely screened from the wider landscape by both existing built development and adjoining vegetation, whilst the only

discernible evidence of the arena will be the post and rail fencing, which is a common boundary treatment within the site's wider landscape setting. Furthermore, both elements of the proposals are sited within the context of the existing agricultural barn and within a network of fields, whose boundary vegetation serves to curtail longer distance views. Therefore, the proposals will cause no material harm to the rural character of the area such that there is no associated conflict with the requirements of Core Policy 51.

Biodiversity

- 6.7 The proposals have been carefully sited to avoid utilising land which has any material nature conservation value. However, appropriate biodiversity enhancement measures such as the installation of bat and bird boxes can be secure by appropriately worded planning conditions. Accordingly, the proposals are in full accordance with the requirements of Core Policy 50.
- 6.8 Also, as the application site area falls under the threshold for mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, it is exempt from the need to provide a 10% uplift in habitat units.

Access

The proposed stables and riding arena are for the personal use of the applicant in parallel with their existing agricultural operation so will not result in any material increase in traffic. Furthermore, as they are served from the existing private driveway associated with the property, they will have no wider impact on the local highway network. The proposals are therefore in full accordance with the requirements of Core Policy 60.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 It has been established that the proposal is in full accordance with all relevant national and local planning policy requirements and will cause no harm to any interests of acknowledged importance. Accordingly, in accordance with the provisions of s38(6) of the Act, planning permission can safely be granted for the submitted proposals.