



RCC TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANCY



Site: Land Adjacent to Heath Cottage, Moor Lane, Garsdon, Malmesbury,
Wiltshire, SN16 9NW

Proposal: New field access, construction of access track with agricultural
barn, adjoining equestrian barn and associated works, together with
change of use of land to allow agriculture/ equestrian for private use only.
(Proposals to be submitted as four separate applications)

On behalf of: Ms S Parsons
Date of Issue: August 2026



RCC TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANCY

PLANNING STATEMENT

RCC Town Planning Consultancy

T: 01380 730047

W: www.rcctownplanning.co.uk

E: info@rcctownplanning.co.uk

This statement is the Copyright of RCC Town Planning Consultancy Ltd. To this extent this statement may not be copied or used by any means or for any purpose without the written consent of RCC Town Planning Consultancy Ltd.

CONTENTS PAGE

Background and Development Proposal	1.0
Site Context	2.0
Planning Policy	3.0
Planning Assessment	4.0
Conclusion	5.0

1.0 BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This overarching planning statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicants to support their planning applications for:

Application 1 – New access

This application is the key urgent priority for the applicant. It proposes the creation of a new access point into the applicant's own field to a gateway, set in off the highway to allow vehicles to safely pull in. It includes the necessary visibility splay, which will also serve as a passing place.

Application 2– Agricultural barn 9.1m x 13.7m, access track and associated works

This will provide hay storage from the hay crop and to accommodate modest requirements arising from a small flock of sheep (for lambing pens, storage of associated equipment etc). In addition, this application includes an associated hardstanding area for parking/ tractor, a new access track which is intended to run from the access shown in Application 1 and is specified as 3.5 metre width twin track geogrid with grass down the middle.

Application 3 - Equestrian barn 9.1m x 13.7m for private use only and associated works.

The barn would incorporate 4 stables to suit the applicant's own horses and small tack and feed room. Whilst the application has to show the proposed structure in its own right, the intention is that if planning permission is forthcoming for Applications 1 & 2, the equestrian barn will directly adjoin the Application 2 agricultural building, meaning that the western wall of the equestrian barn will be the same as the eastern wall of the agricultural barn and it will thus be completely internalised. Illustrative 'combined plans' are therefore provided to demonstrate the 'overall' appearance. This barn would use the access and track as proposed in Applications 1 & 2. Application 3 includes provision for a dung heap close to the agricultural barn and a small parking area for trailer.

Application 4 – This application simply proposes the change of use of existing grazing land to equestrian/ agricultural use to allow the applicant to graze/ keep her horses on the land along with her small flock of sheep. The applicant has installed some boundary stockproof fencing under permitted development rights. For the avoidance of doubt the proposals show where additional fencing is proposed, and being all under 2 metres in height, this would also be permitted development. All fencing is wooden posts with professional Gallagher wire, designed to minimise its appearance on the landscape. Bungeed gateways would provide easy access across the footpath route should any users of the dead-end footpath wish to use. They will remain open unless in use.



- 1.2 The applicant has chosen to submit the different components of the proposals as separate planning applications in order to minimise planning risks following the receipt of pre-application advice, thereby allowing the Council to consider each component separately. The applicant's clear and urgent priority is the proposed new access, as she is currently dependent upon a shared access which is unsuitable. Given the limited issues associated, we hope that by submitting this under separate cover, allows the Council to issue a decision on this application promptly.
- 1.3 A pre-application submission was made to Wiltshire Council in August 2025 under reference ENQ/2025/01340. This was for an equestrian building only. A response was received on 19th January 2026 which, in that officer's opinion, raised some matters which required further justification/ information. This response has in part helped to shape these amended proposals, and matters of principle are addressed by this statement within the Planning Assessment at Section 4.0. This pre-application response is referenced in this statement where relevant.
- 1.4 The remainder of this statement will examine how the proposed development relates to the site and its context, as well as provide an explanation and justification for the scheme having regard to as national and local plan policy and guidance.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

- 2.1 The application site is located within the small village of Garsdon which lies approximately 3 miles northeast of Malmesbury. The village of Garsdon is verdant and sporadic in nature, characterised by its clusters of development, particularly centred around farmsteads and larger properties. Buildings are, in general, set well back from the roads which are lined by verges and hedges. The application site is situated northeast of the main village 'cluster'.
- 2.2 The land relevant to these proposals was formerly associated with Heath Cottage to the southwest. However, when the property was recently sold, the land was split into two lots; the lot closest to Heath Cottage was retained with the house whilst the remaining land was purchased by the applicant.
- 2.3 The applicant has sought to purchase a suitable parcel of land for many years for her four horses and small flock of sheep; however, such land parcels are few and far between. This site is within easy walking distance of the applicant's parents' home and her parents provide the majority of basic care/ visits to the animals. Thus, the land is ideally placed for their circumstances, and the applicant's parents usually walk or cycle to the site, even in the winter.
- 2.4 The application site extends to circa 4 hectares in area and comprises part of two separate fields. The field to the east gently slopes away to the west down to a ditch and well vegetated boundary which separates the two fields.
- 2.5 The northern, eastern and western boundaries of both fields are clearly defined by mature trees and hedgerows. The southern boundary of both fields forming the applicants land, were previously open as this is where the parcels of land have been subdivided at sale. However, these have since been planted up with over 400 metres of new mixed native hedging undertaken by the applicants.
- 2.6 An aerial photo broadly identifying the approximate extent of the applicant's land is shown below in Figure 1.





Figure 1: Showing approximate extent of applicant's land in blue, along with local clusters of development, farm buildings and farmsteads dotted about the landscape.

- 2.7 Whilst there is an existing right of access to the land via the established access from Moor Lane serving Heath Cottage, which has been provided by the neighbours as required, this is across neighbouring land. However, last year it became so wet and impassable, it made attendance by vets, or hay deliveries to the site impossible. Furthermore, the use of this access resulted in mud on the highway, but the applicant does not own this and is unable to improve this herself. The access is critical for animal welfare and it is necessary for a new access to ensure the applicant is able to provide a safe and well-maintained access at all times to her land. With climate change forecasts showing that periods of prolonged rainfall are increasingly likely, this situation is therefore only likely to worsen over time without the solution as proposed. The access will also allow year-round access to the site by essential farming / maintenance machinery.
- 2.8 The application site is not subject to any particular heritage or landscape designations, with no nearby conservation areas or listed buildings, and the site lies wholly within Flood Risk Zone 1 (lowest flood risk) though the site includes a very localised area of potential surface water flood risk close to the road at the

top (south) of the site. A dead-end section of public footpath LECL21 crosses the eastern field from the south but it does not lead anywhere and terminates in the northwest of the field. It is not known to be used. Its route would not be obstructed by the proposals as bungeed gateways would be provided through any new fencing lines to allow easy access. A further public footpath (CHAR5) runs along the northern boundary of the site, separated from the site by a mature boundary hedgerow.

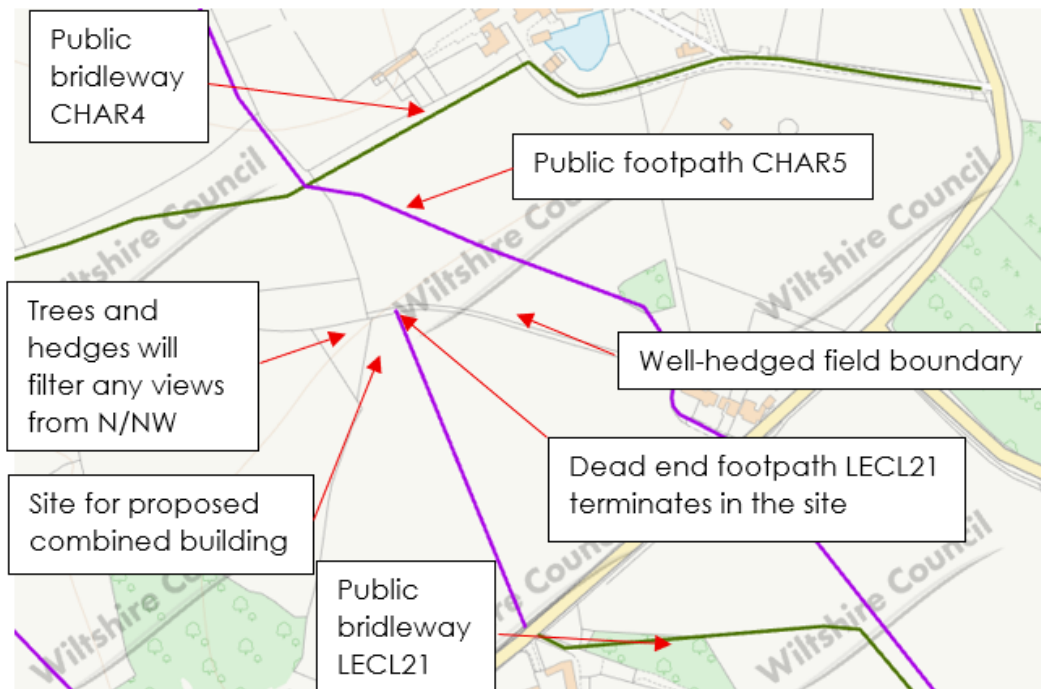


Figure 2: Shows locations of nearby public rights of way including dead end footpath terminating on the site, vegetation cover and illustrating good access to public bridleways.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1 Under the provisions of section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 At the current time, the Development Plan comprises the 2015 Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS); Saved Policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan and adopted Supplementary Planning Documents. Whilst Lea, Garsdon and Cleverton Parish have embarked on producing a Neighbourhood Plan, the latest progress indicates that evidence is presently being collated and there is as yet, no published draft or 'made' Neighbourhood Plan covering the application site.
- 3.3 The Wiltshire Core Strategy is now somewhat out of date and although it had been due to be replaced, the Inspectors examining the revised Wiltshire Local Plan effectively deemed it unsound and as such, there will be no up to date Development Plan for the foreseeable future (currently scheduled for 2029 at the earliest). Consequently, more recent overarching national planning documents are considered especially pertinent.
- 3.4 Material considerations comprise the following:
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 Car Parking Strategy
 - The Wiltshire Design Guide (2024)
 - National Planning Policy Framework 2026 (NPPF)
 - National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- 3.5 The NPPF provides the most up to date planning document, with the government now publishing clear new policies, as at 17th September 2026. The relevant policies and guidance are set out in the associated tables:

WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY

Policy	Title
CP1	Settlement strategy
CP2	Delivery strategy
CP13	Strategy for the Malmesbury community area
CP50	Biodiversity and geodiversity
CP51	Landscape
CP57	Ensuring high quality design and place shaping
CP60	Sustainable transport
CP61	Transport and new development
CP67	Flood risk

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (August 2026)

Policy	Title
4	Achieving sustainable development
7	Building a strong, effective economy



14	Achieving well-designed places
18	Managing flood risk and coastal change
19	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

4.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

4.1 The main planning issues to be discussed are:

- The principle of the proposed agricultural and private equestrian use
- Design and visual impact, including for each of the applications and justification for the scale of the proposed buildings
- Residential amenity
- Highway impact
- Ecology
- Drainage
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

4.2 As mentioned above, a proposal for the same access/ track as proposed here together with a single larger equestrian building was submitted as part of a pre-application submission to the Council. Reference will be made where appropriate to this response.

Principle of Development

4.3 Agricultural use is the 'baseline' planning use in the countryside. Equestrian uses, being an outdoor sport and recreation use, have many similarities with agricultural uses and are synonymous with the countryside. They require large areas of grazing land and access to rural roads, bridleways and byways for safe riding. As a leisure/ recreational use, they provide health and wellbeing benefits to their owners. It is for these reasons, that locations for both agricultural and equestrian developments are rarely found in the more 'sustainable' of locations; close to large volumes of houses or in places which are highly accessible by public transport.

4.4 Nonetheless, in this particular instance, the applicant's parents live close to the site (within 400m) and as the main basic care providers, they regularly walk or cycle to attend the animals. The applicant is currently seeking to move closer or into the village. The applicants work locally and they are invested in both the local economy and community. The land will be used for the applicant's small flock of sheep and her personal horses only and she is happy to accept a condition restricting the use of the site accordingly. Thus, the Council can be assured any vehicular movements will be minimised.

4.5 Notwithstanding this, the planning 'fallback' position is also a material consideration here in terms of considering 'locational sustainability'. The use of the site and indeed any land, is *automatically permitted* for agricultural purposes in planning terms, so the use of the land for sheep or as grazing for other stock does not need any grant of planning permission. It is good practice



for any such stock to be visited twice daily for welfare checks, to ensure adequate water supply and provide feed as appropriate. Any horses in stables would simply be serviced as part of the same trip and thus, given the proposal is for personal use only, these trips would be a similar in number, whether or not a 'keeping of horses' use were to be permitted. As such, the sustainability of the location is not a valid ground for resisting the proposed equestrian use.

- 4.6 Surprisingly, the Council, in their pre-application response, indicated some concern over the principle of the proposed equestrian use in the countryside, and, in planning policy terms, pointed only to the Council's generalised core policies which seek to concentrate new housing and employment development in the more sustainable settlements. Whilst it is true that, as for agricultural development, there are no specific policies contained within the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the previous version of the NPPF clearly allowed the principle of such developments under Chapter 6, paragraph 89.
- 4.7 As may be expected within this relatively rural county, with a large equestrian community, Wiltshire Council have a long track record of granting both new equestrian and agricultural developments. Such decisions have been either supported in principle by the NPPF as outlined above, or have been supported on the basis that there is in fact, no relevant Wiltshire Council policy when the previous NPPF also presumed in favour. Within the new NPPF, the Government have reaffirmed an even stronger commitment to sustainable rural development within Section 4, now presuming in favour of granting permission for certain forms of development..
- 4.8 In such instances, the new NPPF confirms at policy S3 a firm presumption in favour of approving applications for sustainable development. At policy S5, the NPPF is very clear that outside of settlements, certain forms of development are deemed acceptable in principle and ought to be approved '*unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by the adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework.*' This includes as listed at a) Development for agriculture, horticulture, outdoor sport and recreation, inter alia. The proposed uses fall firmly within this category and any adverse effects are extremely limited, as evidenced in this submission, such that they would certainly not outweigh the notable benefits to the applicant, her family, the welfare of her animals, other highway users who will benefit from an additional passing place, and the subsequent positive impacts on the rural economy.
- 4.9 Of course, the principle of 'sustainable development' encompasses other matters such as being environmentally sustainable, including being appropriate in terms of landscape, ecology and highway impacts, and these matters are addressed within the relevant sections below.
- 4.10 A further comment by the Council within their pre-application submission indicated that due to the proposed position of the barn,



'It is not considered feasible or realistic that valuable horses would be left unattended overnight in an unsecured, unmonitored location remote from the applicant's or any other dwelling to which the facility relates and serves; and not overlooked by other neighbouring properties.'

They went onto indicate likely future pressure for a dwelling at the location as part of their justification for dismissing the principle of a proposed equestrian barn.

- 4.11 We **strongly** refute this viewpoint and can point to many circumstances where horses are kept on parcels of land, even in far more remote situations, across Wiltshire and elsewhere without the need for someone to live on site or direct surveillance. The site does, however, benefit from the proposed access being close to Heath Cottage, the proposals do propose an enclosed barn which can be secured when no one is on site and CCTV and other security options, including a gate sensor, could be considered should these be deemed necessary. As explained, the applicant's parents' home is just 400m from the site, allowing regular checks and for someone to be almost immediately on hand at most times, should any sensors be triggered.
- 4.12 It is worth noting that the applicant is very experienced, has owned/ trained and competed horses/ and owned other animals most of her life. As a consequence, she has a good understanding of their needs and the site was purchased with this in mind and the proposals are tailored accordingly. This is a long-term investment allowing her to manage their needs which are of utmost importance to the applicant and her family, in a suitable location close to her parent's home.
- 4.13 Moreover, the applicant has no intention of living on site, neither has she indicated that her horses are of 'high value' which is quoted within the pre-application response – in fact one is retired and one is a companion pony.
- 4.14 Indeed, the only means by which the Council would grant permission for a dwelling in the countryside in association with an agricultural /equestrian use is for there firstly, to be a genuine rural business use, with a business plan demonstrating that any such business can financially support the employment of at least one member of staff AND secondly, for there to be an essential functional need for such a person to be on site 24 hours 7 days a week.
- 4.15 Clearly, the proposals as set out for personal agricultural/ equestrian use do not allow for these conditions to be met. We are not therefore at all clear as to why such a matter was referenced within the pre-application submission and in view of these circumstances, the Council can be assured that this is not a realistic concern for consideration nor provides reasonable grounds for refusing planning permission.

Justification for the proposals including visual impact, design and scale

- 4.16 Careful consideration has been given to both the scale and siting of the proposed buildings and this has included looking at the impacts of alternative sites and setting out the minimum scale of buildings needed for the proposed uses. The dimensions of the proposed barn have been revisited since the pre-application submission to ensure that impacts are minimised whilst meeting the needs of the holding, though its design and materials are similar.

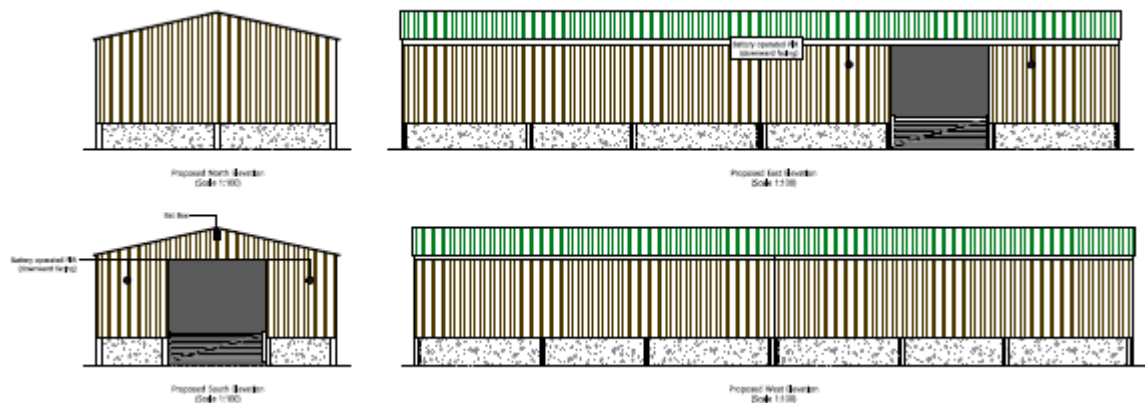


Figure 3: Showing combined proposals with agricultural barn (left hand portion as per Application 2) adjoined to the proposed equestrian barn (Application 3) on the right. Note typical agrarian form, use of sensitive materials and modest height, allowing the building to nestle towards the field boundary.

- 4.17 The pre-application response indicated that the proposed barn was indeed of a *'scale, form, and nature broadly typical of a countryside setting'* it went onto indicate that these forms of development are usually justified in the public interest of supporting agriculture and/or the rural economy, inferring that this may not be the case here.
- 4.18 However, the applicant has a small flock of sheep and four of her own horses. Whilst it is true that these are all for personal use and there will be no direct employment nor any intention to run a business from the site, the use of the site for these purposes will clearly benefit the wider and rural economy. In addition to the construction phase which will support local merchants and groundworker/ builder, horses and sheep require feed and bedding from local merchants; hay production and hedge maintenance may involve a local agricultural contractor; sheep require shearing and hoof trimming and other maintenance along with equipment purchased locally, animals need local vets, equines require saddlers, farriers, physiotherapists. Without private individuals supporting many of these rural-based professions, rural jobs would certainly decline. As such, we submit that the proposals would indeed have a positive impact on the rural economy.
- 4.19 Additionally, we would submit that the health and well-being impacts to both the applicant and her family members, are notable, and should be factored into the justification. Time spent in the fresh air, tending to the animals on a

regular basis, along with the exercise involved in both the care of the animals and riding has a hugely positive impact on the applicant and her family.

- 4.20 As regards the scale of the buildings, the applicant has carefully considered the very minimum spaces required. The agricultural barn is proposed to house hay bales produced from the site, with cuts being taken from both fields as summer grazing requirements are more minimal, leaving at least 4.5 acres dedicated to hay production through the hay-making season. This is considered likely to produce 125 – 150 small hay bales per acre, meaning an expected annual yield of 562.5 bales of hay based on 125 bales per acre.
- 4.21 Furthermore, following the extremely dry season and poor hay yields in 2025 and 2026, hay prices have increased substantially, and it is considered good practice given climate unpredictability, to retain some hay from the previous year's crop to mitigate this increasing risk.
- 4.22 The applicant has a registered agricultural holding number and has a small flock of sheep. The applicant's intention is for numbers be kept to around 10 sheep, with an allowance of 2m² made per sheep within the barn, for the safe keeping of sheep and lambs throughout the year. Having a dry storage area allows animal supplies to be bought in bulk, thus further minimising trips to and from the site.

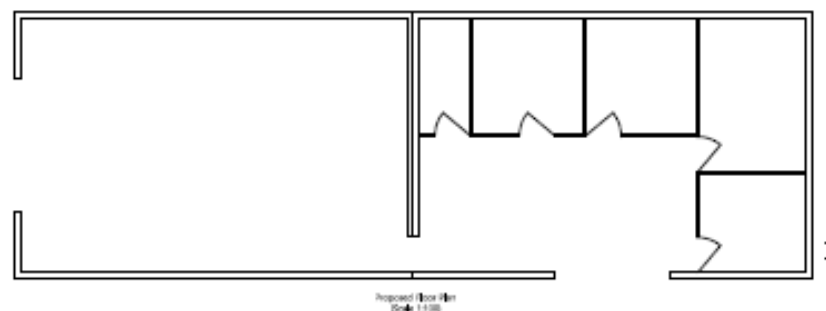


Figure 4: Showing modest agricultural barn on the left and the four stables and minimal feed/tack room on the right.

- 4.23 A small amount of space is allowed for secure storage of equipment, including that associated with maintaining the land and managing trees on site, along with a sheep trailer.
- 4.24 Similarly, the equestrian barn, as demonstrated by the proposed layout, shows the very minimum area required to serve the applicant's four horses; some of which are rather large! Four stables along with a modest tack/ feed room, are proposed to allow the horses to come in off the land both for shelter and to enable the land to be conserved in inclement weather. With the wetter winters being experienced and which are forecast to continue, it is in the interests of the health of the land that grazing can be properly managed. The applicant is well aware that overgrazing and poaching is detrimental to soil quality, biodiversity and diminishes the quality of the grazing and hay yields, which are not in the interests of the health of the land or the animals. By dividing the land into paddocks, and providing stables for the horses, land can be properly

rested and rotated and turnout can be managed when the ground is wetter, to ensure that it is managed in a truly sustainable manner.

- 4.25 The proposal for the two adjoining barns means that small-scale paraphernalia can be kept inside, and the building secured, thus minimising the impacts on the landscape. Suitable areas have been allowed for parking of horse trailer and a small tractor thus ensuring impacts are well planned and contained.

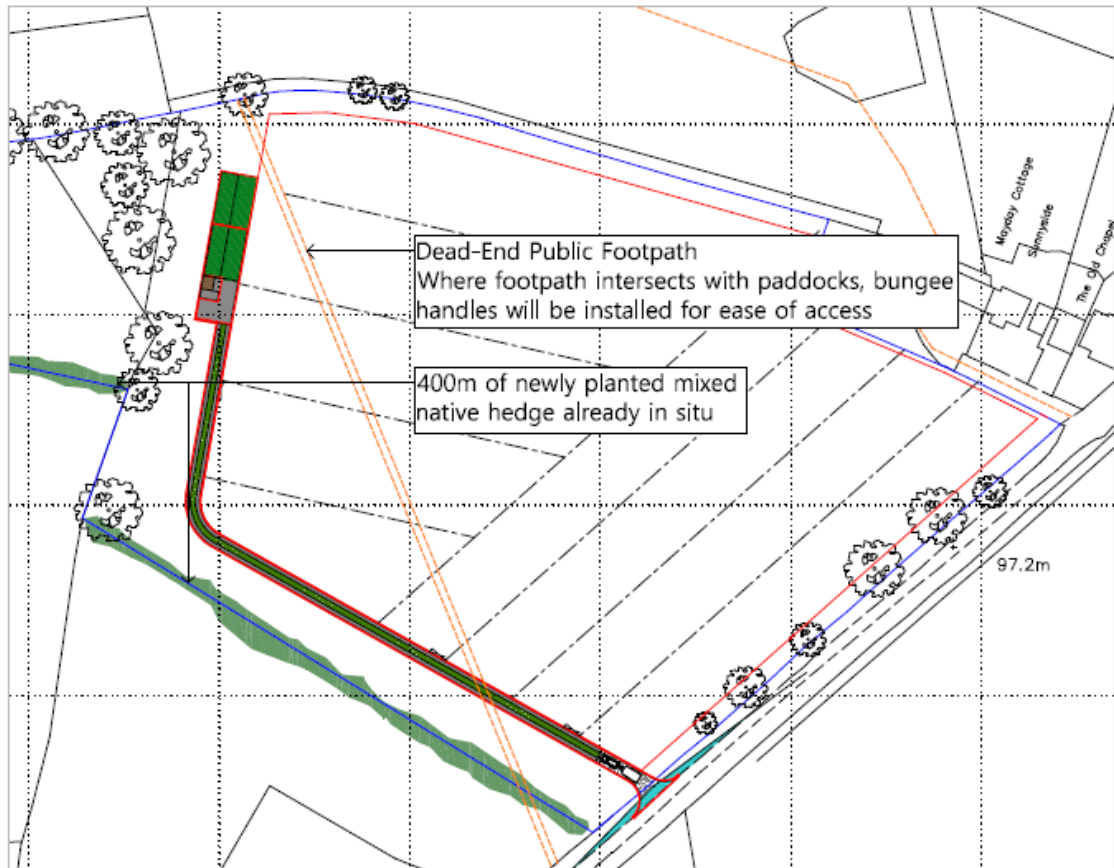


Figure 5: Showing proposed 'combined site' layout, with adjoining barns tucked in the corner, downslope of the road.

- 4.26 In addition to reviewing the footprint of the proposed barn since the pre-application submission, further consideration has been given to the minimum height required. A lower, 4 metre eaves height is now proposed, and with a shallow pitched roof and narrower gable span, the ridge height of the proposed barn would be just 5.24m. This allows just enough head room for the horses and the manoeuvring of bales by tractor and will allow the proposed barn to nestle into the landscape downslope of the adjacent road.
- 4.27 The site for the building has been chosen as it is considered the least impacting, following the lie of the land and close to existing established vegetation. Positions closer to the road whilst arguably in plan form would be seen more in the context of the cluster of development located to the south, crucially, this would then be on the highest part of the site where any barn structure would likely appear quite dominant and would be far more impacting on the verdant character of the village. Such a location would also

likely have a greater impact on the amenities of neighbours. Moreover, as demonstrated on aerial photographs, it is not unusual to see farm-style buildings in the locality in positions that are set further away from the road.



Figure 6: Showing corner of field looking north where the development is proposed. Note other countryside dwellings/ buildings are visible in the locality.



Figure 7: Showing well established vegetation on left which would be retained west of the combined building. Noting this is a winter with deciduous vegetation.

4.28 Being of a typical agrarian form and in keeping with the character of the countryside in the locality, it was felt that it was better to position the building to

take advantage of the natural lie of the land, in the lower lying location as proposed towards the north of the site.



Figure 8: Shows how the landscape drops away to the northern corner of the field where the development is proposed to be located. This would allow the modest building with juniper green roof to nestle congruously in the landscape.

- 4.29 In this location, it would appear modest in scale and entirely in keeping with the agrarian landscape. Activity on site would be distanced from neighbours and the quiet rural character would be conserved.
- 4.30 In this position, the proposed development benefits from well-established boundary hedgerows interspersed with trees, which provide instant filtering of the proposed development, helping it to immediately assimilate with its surroundings and minimising the impact from both short and longer range viewpoints.
- 4.31 Clearly, from the dead-end footpath which transverses the site, open, close-range views of the development will be possible. However, the development is considered entirely compatible with the character of the area and the footpath is not known to be used as it does not lead anywhere. Here the green-roofed building would be seen against the backdrop of established vegetation as shown.
- 4.32 From the roadside, the western boundary has a well-established hedge with a number of mature trees which would heavily filter views. Whilst medium range views above the hedge would allow glimpses of the building, these would be transient. Note also, other dwellings/ countryside buildings are visible within many of these views. Typical direct views towards the site are shown below.



Figure 9: Showing a typical 'more open' view towards the site from the adjacent roadside.



Figure 10: A further typical roadside view towards the site, countryside buildings visible. Views are heavily filtered by existing vegetation.

- 4.33 From the public footpath (CHAR 5) to the north of the site, some short and mid-range views of the combined building would be possible. However, again these would be partially filtered by the presence of mature boundary hedging along the entirety of the northern boundary and would be. As illustrated by figure 8, the building would be set down and of a modest scale such that its impact would not result in any significant harm when viewed from here.
- 4.34 Finally, in addition to the scale, height, layout of the site and the careful positioning of the building, proposed external materials and finishes have again been chosen to reflect typical agrarian character and minimise the building's impact on the landscape. Walls are proposed to be vertical timber Yorkshire boarding, left natural to weather to a silver-grey, above concrete panels with a dark green (Juniper Green) coloured profiled fibre cement sheeting to the roofs.
- 4.35 Whilst fencing up to 2 metres in height is typically permitted development, the applicant has also taken care to ensure that any effects are minimised. Rather than unsightly temporary fencing or post with numerous rails which can look

intrusive, the applicant is investing in timber post and wire fencing (grey/brown wire) as shown in the illustrative photograph on the 'combined plans'.

- 4.36 Regarding the proposed access arrangements, as explained in paragraph 2.7, the applicant presently has a right of access over neighbouring land. It has been proven that this is not suitable over the last winter, and the applicant is aware of some local concerns of mud/ gravel on the highway. As the applicant is not the owner of this access and does not have rights to carry out improvements to it, a new access is proposed through the existing boundary hedge as was submitted at pre-application stage. Its position allows for suitable visibility splays and avoids impacting on any trees. The submitted ecology report also confirms very limited impacts in ecological terms, notwithstanding that a very modest section of the boundary hedge will need to be removed.
- 4.37 No particular concerns were raised by the Council about the position, specification or impact of this proposed access. The visual impact of the proposed access track has been minimised by specifying this as a 'twin track' geo-grid, with grass to the centre, avoiding an over-engineered solution and minimising its visual impact whilst ensuring that the site is suitably serviced to avoid mud on the highway. This track will ensure less damage to the field as it has had to be accessed by vehicle across the grass on a regular basis. A simple five bar gated entranceway is proposed with new boundary fencing to suit.
- 4.38 The scheme is not situated in an area designated for landscape sensitivity and as evidenced, the proposals would not result in any notable harm to the visual amenities of the area or the wider landscape. The scale, design and positioning of the development have been properly justified and sensitively specified so as to minimise any impacts. Consequently, the scheme accords with Core Policies 51 and 57, Chapters 4, 14 and 19 of the NPPF and the Wiltshire Design Guide.

Residential amenity

- 4.39 As a result of the location of the proposals, and as indicated by the Council at pre-application stage, the proposed buildings would be a substantial distance from neighbouring properties and as a result, there would be no particular harm to amenity in terms of overbearing impact, overshadowing, loss of privacy or light, noise or odour. Provision is made for a small dung heap within the area of hardstanding adjacent the existing building. This would be removed at regular intervals by a local farmer, thereby supporting the local rural economy. At suitable intervals, some will be spread on the fields to improve the nutrient quality of the ground for our grazing animals. The applicants use woodchip/shavings bedding only so there is no straw/hay waste which also minimises the dung heap requirements.
- 4.40 The proposals thus accord with high-quality design requirements set out in Chapter 14 of the NPPF and Core Policy 57 of the WCS along with supplementary design guidance.



Highway impact

- 4.41 The principle of the proposal in terms of its siting have already been addressed in paragraphs 4.3 to 4.14 inclusive above. As noted in that section, the proposals are for private use for the applicant's animals only, so vehicular movements would be minimised and would be tantamount to a permitted agricultural use of the site in any case. The applicant's parents currently provide the lion's share of animal care live within close proximity of the site, and they regularly walk or cycle to the site so as to minimise journeys by car. The applicant is actively seeking to purchase a property in the vicinity of the site so that she is also able to journey by sustainable means.
- 4.42 It is notable that the highway authority at pre-application stage raised no particular concerns in respect of the proposed location or specification of the new access, or the parking and turning arrangements, which were all deemed suitable. Whilst there have been some changes to proposed building and hardstanding arrangements since the pre-application, the access remains the same and the arrangements still allow for ample parking and turning of vehicles.
- 4.43 The proposed access as specified will allow for suitable visibility for egressing vehicles, and the gateway has been set back to allow ample space for a car and horse trailer to pull in off the carriageway. The access apron itself would be hardsurfaced to meet the carriageway edge and in so doing, would facilitate the safe passing of vehicles along this singletrack section of road.
- 4.44 Formalising separate access arrangements to service the site will lessen vehicular movements through the land at Heath Cottage and will result in improvements to surfacing and the provision of an additional formalised passing place. Consequently, the proposed development will deliver a safe new access, with good visibility, which will improve the highway environment, and provide ample space on site for parking, turning and safe access and egress.
- 4.45 The proposals thus accord with Chapter 15 of the NPPF and Core Policies 60, 61 & 64 of the WCS.

Ecology and biodiversity net gain (BNG)

- 4.46 This application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment undertaken by Cotswold Environmental Ltd. The report provides a comprehensive assessment of the ecological potential of the site and confirms no likely significant effects as a result of the proposed development, notwithstanding the removal of a short section of boundary hedge (which is classified as Priority Habitat for the purposes of BNG). The report recommends a number of mitigation and enhancement measures, which will be adhered to, including provision of bat box and swallow nests as shown on the plans. Furthermore, the applicant has already planted an additional 400 metres of new mixed native hedgerow which will notably enhance local networks. Notwithstanding this, the proposed access application is liable for BNG as it



involves priority habitat and so the required completed metric is provided and the applicant agrees to the purchase of offsite credits accordingly.

- 4.47 Due to timeframes, it was not possible to use the same ecology company for follow up BNG work so a different ecology company have carried out the required BNG work. For the purposes of these applications, they have confirmed that Applications 2 & 3 do not involve priority habitat and are under 0.2 hectares and are thus exempt from BNG.
- 4.48 Finally, application 4 is a change of use application only which won't see any diminishing of existing minimal species grazing habitat. As a consequence, the ecologists confirm the change of use application is confirmed as exempt from BNG as it would not affect 25 sq metres of habitat nor affect any priority habitats and meets the de minimis exemption.
- 4.49 It is proposed that the credits calculated to provide the BNG compensation and necessary uplift for the new access, would be purchased from a habitat bank. As such the proposals comply with CP50 of the WCS, the NPPG (as last updated on 6th August 2026) Chapter 19 of the NPPF and the Environment Act 2021.

Drainage

- 4.50 The proposals are accompanied by a drainage strategy. This confirms the site is at low risk of flooding and provides the necessary calculations and infiltration testing results to demonstrate that proposed drainage via soakaway (SUDS) is appropriate to ensure run off standards are met/ exceeded. Consequently, the proposals demonstrate suitable drainage measures and would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 4.51 The proposals therefore accord with Core Policy 67 of the WCS and Chapter 18 of the NPPF.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 It is considered that this statement, together with the plans submitted, has demonstrated that the proposals are properly planned and address all relevant planning matters, whilst meeting the minimum needs of the applicant.
- 5.2 This statement has reasoned why the proposed developments in support of both the agricultural and private equestrian use, are entirely acceptable in principle in the countryside. Such outdoor sport and recreational developments are explicitly supported in outside of settlement locations such as this by Chapter 4, Policy S5 of the up-to-date NPPF published on 17th August 2026.
- 5.3 This statement has provided clear justification for the scale and siting of the combined building in landscape terms, noting that this is not an area designated for particular landscape sensitivity. Notwithstanding this, the plans show a well-designed scheme which makes best use of existing mature vegetation and the lie of the land to truly minimise its impact, taking careful account of its surroundings and any viewpoints.
- 5.4 Moreover, this statement has reasoned why the location is in fact a most sustainable location for the applicants, being within 400m of the applicant's parents' home and with good bridleway access. This statement has also reasoned why the 'possible future pressure for a dwelling' which was raised as a matter by the Council at pre-application stage, is clearly not a likely scenario and certainly does not warrant resisting an application for private agricultural/equestrian developments of this small-scale nature.
- 5.5 This statement has explained why the proposal would cause no particular harm to residential amenity, highway safety, drainage or ecology and demonstrates how the BNG requirement would be met in full.
- 5.6 Consequently, there would be no notable adverse effects, when assessed against the Framework, that would substantially outweigh the benefits of doing so. These benefits include, as identified in this statement, health and wellbeing benefits enjoyed by the applicant and her family, highway improvements including an improved access to the site and the provision of an additional vehicular passing place. The proposal would help to support the rural economy and would provide ecology, BNG and drainage enhancements. In these circumstances, Chapter 4 of the NPPF at Policy S5 1, directs that this application should be approved.
- 5.7 The proposals are therefore considered acceptable, with no material harm arising and the Council is politely requested to grant planning permission for these applications.

