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<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P20/V0550/O</a>
<b>SITE</b>	Stonehill Farm (Riding School) Stonehill Drayton, Abingdon, OX14 4AA
<b>PARISH</b>	DRAYTON
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Provision of a covered horse-riding arena on equestrian land (Additional justification received from agent on 16 May 2020)
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Andy Cooke
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Mrs S Simmonds
<b>OFFICER</b>	Sarah Green

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## RECOMMENDATION

Outline Planning Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement - Outline with Reserved Matters
2. Approved plans
3. Surface water drainage details submitted prior to commencement of development
4. Details of external materials submitted prior to construction above slab level
5. Details of any external lighting to be submitted prior to installation

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This application is referred to planning committee because it is classified as a major application and the parish council has raised an objection.
- 1.2 The site is at Stonehill Riding School and lies to the west of the existing stable buildings. It is located between Abingdon and Drayton and accessed off Stonehill Lane as shown on the location plan below:



- 1.3 It is explained in the application that the riding school has been run by the applicant at the site for 50 years and that Stonehill Riding School is fully licenced and operates 8.30am until 2.30pm on Wednesdays and Weekends. There is an existing collection of stables buildings and an existing outdoor grass arena. 19 horses are kept on the land.
- 1.4 This proposal is for an indoor riding arena. The application is seeking outline permission with approval sought for access, appearance, layout and scale. Landscaping is reserved for approval at a later date.
- 1.5 Extracts of the plans are **attached** at Appendix 1. The arena building would be 60 metres x 40 metres and a maximum of 9.6metres to the ridge in height. The walls would be concrete block and timber with the roof being corrugated sheeting. An example of the building submitted by the agent as part of additional information to the application is **attached** at Appendix 2. The proposal would mean the existing smaller outdoor arena could be returned to grazing land as the proposals overlap slightly.

2.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 2.1 A summary of the responses received to the latest plans is below. All comments can be viewed in full online at [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

<b>Drayton Parish Council</b>	Objection 1.That the proposed building is going to be visually intrusive due to the ridge height, it will be visible from the main road between Abingdon and Drayton. 2.Is of an inappropriate size for the limited band of open country separating Abingdon and Drayton as the proposed area is around the size of two football fields" and is disproportionate for other buildings on the site
<b>Drainage officer</b>	No objection subject to surface water condition
<b>Environmental Protection Team</b>	No objection
<b>Oxfordshire County Council Single Response</b>	No objections

3.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 None

3.2 **Pre-application History**

None

4.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 This proposal does not fall within one of the identified classes of development in Schedule 2 of the EIA regulations and is not in a sensitive area. A screening opinion under the Regulations is therefore not required.

5.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

5.1 **The relevant planning considerations are the following:**

- **Current policy**
- **Safeguarded land**
- **Design and visual impact**
- **Residential amenity**
- **Flood risk and drainage**
- **Highway safety**
- **Historic environment**
- **CIL**
- **Conditions**

5.2 **Current Policy**

Development policy 12 of the Local Plan supports equestrian developments subject to them having safe access to exercise areas in order to avoid conflict between horses and other public highway users, and that the proposal does not unacceptably impact upon the site and the amenity of its neighbours. Officers are also mindful that the NPPF supports the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

5.3 The proposal will provide an area to exercise and train horses all year round. It will be used by the applicant and family as well as tuition at the school. The applicant makes the case that from October to March the wet weather and ground conditions often prevent the horses from being full exercised and trained outdoors. The equestrian premises is already established on the site and improved facilities will contribute to sustaining a rural business. In principle there is no issue with the provision of an indoor facility.

5.4 Additional information has been provided to justify the size of the proposal. The size 60 x 40 metres is a standard size of riding arenas for jumping and this will provide a practice area and will also allow flexibility for the school. It is explained that it is very difficult to adapt a clear span building once erected. i.e. one cannot make it bigger in width without wholly replacing it. Having a larger arena also allows people (e.g. parents) to stand inside the building to watch in a segregated/ cordoned area if necessary. The applicant is hoping to just have the one arena which will suit all purposes and allow better grassland management of the outdoor areas by returning the existing grass arena back to pasture. Officers consider the size of arena sought is therefore not unreasonable

5.5 **Safeguarded land**

The equestrian site and the surrounding land lie within the area of land that has been designated as safeguarded for strategic highway improvements under core policy 12 of the local plan. This area relates to a potential south Abingdon

bypass and is a swath of land more than 340 metres wide around the south of the town. It does not indicate where the precise alignment of the road will be or any potential timeframe.

- 5.6 The Highway Authority strategic team have provided the following comments in relation to this matter:

*“The development proposal under planning application reference P20/V0550/O at Stonehill Farm comprises the provision of a covered horse-riding arena, this forms part of the Stonehill Riding School. This existing use sits within the corridor safeguarded in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 for the Abingdon Southern Bypass.*

*At present there is no funding identified or immediate plans for the delivery of this infrastructure. However, it remains the case that this scheme could be delivered in the future. Given the scale of the development proposed and its relationship to the existing use in this location, there is no strategic highways objection to this proposal.”*

- 5.7 On that basis officers are satisfied that the development would not prejudice the delivery of the road, and the proposal complies with core policy 12.

5.8 **Design and Visual impact**

Core policy 37 requires developments to be of a high quality design. specifically they should

*“...responds positively to the site and its surroundings*

*...is built to last, functions well and is flexible to changing requirements of occupants and other circumstances*

*...is visually attractive and the scale, height, density, grain, massing, type, details and materials are appropriate for the site and surrounding area”*

- 5.9 Core policy 44 seeks protecting key features of the landscape from harmful development. Development policy 29 requires proposals to demonstrate that a settlements character is retained and physical and visual separation is maintained between settlements. It states:

*“Development proposals will be considered in the context of Core Policy 4 in the Local Plan 2031: Part 1, and in addition, will only be permitted provided that:*

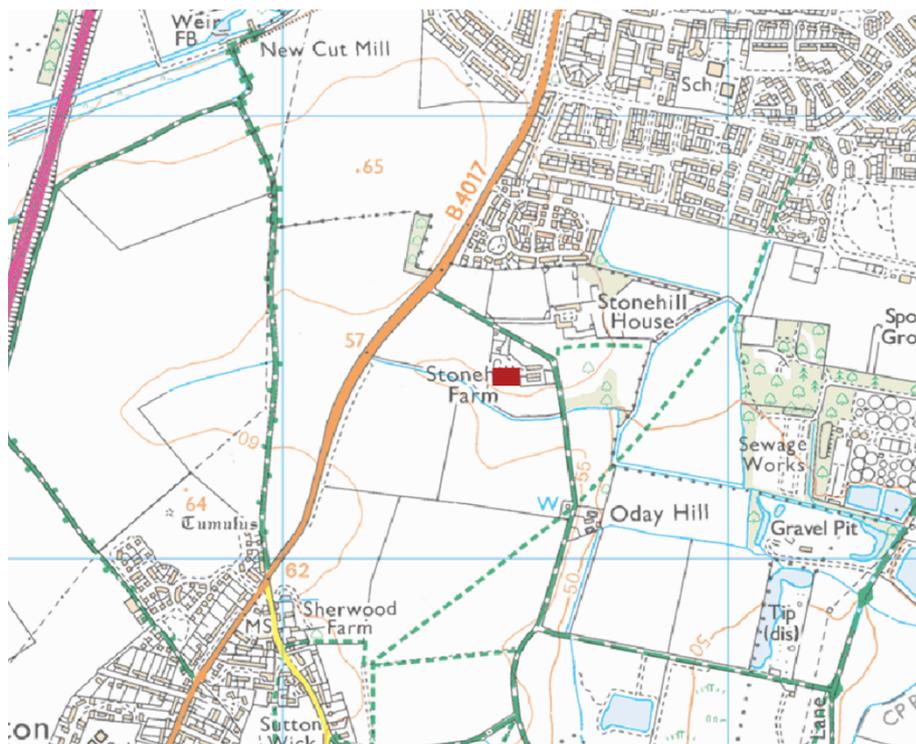
*i. the physical and visual separation between two separate settlements is not unacceptably diminished*

*ii. cumulatively, with other existing or proposed development, it does not compromise the physical and visual separation between settlements, and*

*iii. it does not lead to a loss of environmental or historical assets that individually or collectively contribute towards their local identity”*

- 5.10 Policy P-LF2 of the Neighbourhood Plan requires developments do not extend the villages boundaries through ribbon development along roads to the adjacent settlements of Abingdon, Steventon, Sutton Courtenay and Milton. Policy P-LF3 requires new development to be designed to a high standard which responds to the distinctive charter of Drayton.

- 5.11 The building will look very similar to a modern style agricultural building, with lower concrete panelling and timber sides with a profile sheeting roof. It will be located close to the existing stables buildings thereby keeping the buildings on the site together, and preventing sporadic spread of development across the fields. The site is set back from Drayton Road by over 250 metres. Therefore any views of it will be in the context of the existing buildings and the wider fields and hedgerows that exist. Officers acknowledge the building will be significantly larger than others than currently exist, however its form and external appearance are similar to a typical agricultural barn that would found in the countryside. Therefore on this basis it would not appear out of keeping with its rural surroundings or visually intrusive in officers view.
- 5.12 In terms of the separation of Drayton and Abingdon, officers do not believe this building would result in eroding or diminishing this. Whilst it is a large building, in the context of the gap between both settlements it would not significantly compromise the physical separation, as is indicated on the image below with the building shown by the square in the centre. Officers do therefore not agree with the view of Parish Council in this regard.



- 5.13 Officers are therefore satisfied that the proposal would accord with core policies 37 and 44, development policies 12 and 29 of the local plan, and policies P-LF2 and P-LF3 of the neighbourhood plan.
- 5.14 **Residential Amenity**  
The applicant lives adjacent to the site. To the north of this is a cottage in separate ownership. Further away to the north east is Stonehill House. Given the distances involved it is considered that the building would not be

overbearing on the dwellings or be harmful to their amenity. The equestrian use is already operated on site. Environmental health have not raised any objection to the proposal from a noise perspective. It is considered that the proposal would be acceptable and not harmful to neighbour amenity in line with policy DP23 of the local plan.

5.15 **Flood Risk and drainage**

The records show that the site lies within flood zone 2. A flood risk assessment has been submitted with the application and the council's drainage engineer has reviewed it. He concludes the following:

"I am in agreement with the submitted FRA, that the EA fluvial mapping is inaccurate, as the application site is at + 5.5 m higher than the nearest mapped flood plains, however I can only assume that the JFlow model has been used by the EA subsequent to an historical flood event at the site and this model does not need to relate to main river AEP flood levels. I would have no objections to planning permission being granted subject to the inclusion of the following SWD condition"

5.16 Therefore, subject to a surface water drainage condition, the proposal would comply with core policy 42 of the local plan.

5.17 **Highway safety**

The proposal is providing the existing riding school with an indoor arena. It would allow for all year round riding so there may be a small net increase in vehicle trips possible between October and March, although the site is also easily accessible by bus or bicycle. There is existing parking on site. The junction of Stonehill Lane and Drayton Road has acceptable visibility splays to the highway officer. He has not raised any objection. Therefore the proposal satisfies core policies 33, 35, 37 and development policy 16 of the local plan.

5.18 **Historic Environment**

Under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the local planning authority has a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. To the north east of the site is Stonehill House and its barns which are listed buildings. These are over 100m away from the proposal and generally screened from view by their existing boundary vegetation. Given the distance and that the proposal is in keeping for its rural surroundings it is considered that the proposal would not harm the setting of the listed buildings, thereby complying with core policies 39 and development policies 36 and 38 of the local plan and P-LF5 of the neighbourhood plan.

5.19 **Community Infrastructure Levy**

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy charged on new development in the Vale. The money raised will be used to fund infrastructure to support growth in the district. This proposal does not fall within one of the categories which is liable for the levy. Therefore no levy is required.

5.20 **Pre-commencement conditions**

Section 100ZA (6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990(a) requires that any pre-commencement conditions are agreed with the applicant prior to the issuing of a decision. The agent has agreed to all the conditions.

6.0 **CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE**

6.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.2 In this case it is considered that the proposal would have economic and social benefits by supporting a business and providing training and lessons to people. Officers agree that the proposal is a large building. Consideration of this is however weighed up against its intended use and external appearance. Its size is a known arena size for equestrian uses and its agricultural barn like appearance is appropriate for its rural setting. Therefore in balancing the environmental impact, officers are satisfied it would not result in harm to the visual amenity of the area or the setting of Abingdon or Drayton. The application is therefore recommended for approval as it would accord with the relevant development plan policies.

The following planning policies have been taken into account:

**Development Plan Policies**

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (LPP1) Policies:

- CP01 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CP03 - Settlement Hierarchy
- CP06 - Meeting Business and Employment Needs
- CP12 Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Highway Improvements within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe SubArea
- CP33 - Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility
- CP35 - Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking
- CP37 - Design and Local Distinctiveness
- CP39 - The Historic Environment
- CP42 - Flood Risk
- CP44 - Landscape

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (LPP2) Policies:

- DP12 - Rural Diversification and Equestrian Developments
- DP16 - Access
- DP21 - External Lighting
- DP23 - Impact of Development on Amenity
- DP29 - Settlement Character and Gaps
- DP36 Heritage Assets
- DP38 Listed Buildings

Drayton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015-2031 Policies

- P-LF2: BOUNDED DEVELOPMENT
- P-LF3: BUILDING DESIGN GUIDANCE

P-LF5: THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

**Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents**

Vale of White Horse Design Guide 2015

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

**Other Relevant Legislation**

Human Rights Act 1998:

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report.

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this planning application the Council has regard to its equalities obligations including its obligations under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

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