

APPLICATION NO.	P21/V2415/FUL
SITE	Smiths Hill Farm Letcombe Bassett Wantage, OX12 9LX
PARISH	LETCOMBE BASSETT
PROPOSAL	Erection of two stable blocks and ancillary hard landscaping to yard area. Use of the site for equestrian business purposes. (Additional statement, topographical survey and amended block plan with landscaping received 25 May 2022). (Additional Information received 7 July 2022 - Applicants advice letter and plan illustrating ground levels.) (Additional Information for clarification received 26 August 2022 - Clarification letter from agent on highway impact & update to description)
WARD MEMBER(S)	Paul Barrow
APPLICANT	Mr Alfie Bradstock
OFFICER	Sarah Green

RECOMMENDATION

Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Commencement of development – 3 years**
- 2. Approved plans**

Prior to construction of stables above slab level

- 3. Surface and foul water drainage details for approval**
- 4. Updated landscaping scheme, to include hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting either side of the site entrance; planting around the southwestern corner of the site where the old access was; and details of planting to the northern embankments**

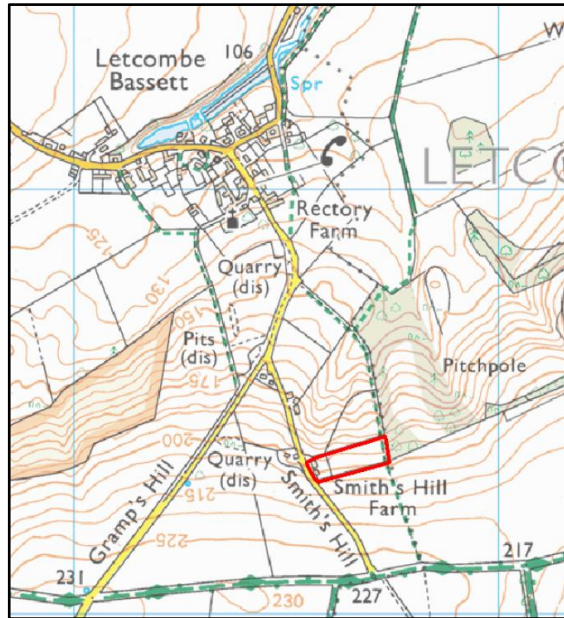
Compliance

- 5. No external lighting installed other than in accordance with details first approved**
- 6. No rooflights in stables**
- 7. Access and visibility splays in accordance with plans**
- 8. Turning space in accordance with plans**
- 9. Materials in accordance with application**
- 10. Restriction on use of site**

1.0 **INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL**

1.1 This application is referred to planning committee at the discretion of the Development Planning Manager.

1.2 The site is located south of Letcombe Bassett towards the top of Smiths Hill near the Ridgeway, as shown on the location plan below:



1.3 Currently on western half of the site is a manege which is around 35-40m from the road and measures 50 x 30m. Between this and the road the land has been levelled to the same height as the manege. This has been created by cutting into the hill to the south and filling on the downslope. There is an access from the road in the northwest corner of the site onto Smiths Hill. The rest of the site to the east remains as it was. Smiths Hill is a highway up to the site, beyond which it becomes a restricted byway and carries on up to The Ridgeway.

1.4 **Background**

The site was originally part of what was historically Smiths Hill Farm. Originally the farm buildings were located on the land with the associated bungalow located on the opposite side of the road. This bungalow has not been redeveloped with a replacement house.

1.5 Planning permission ref P13/V1749/FUL was granted on 24 October 2013 (the 2013 permission) for the change of use of the land for equestrian training, the removal of farm buildings and 3 bay stables, the erection of a 5 bay stable block and manege. The barn nearest the road was to be retained and converted for storage uses. The approved plans for this are provided at **Appendix 3**.

1.6 That permission was subject to pre-commencement conditions relating to drainage and landscaping. It was also subject to the following condition due to

the potential impact an unrestricted commercial use could have on vehicle movements:

*“The application site, stables and manege hereby permitted shall be used for the private equestrian purposes of the applicant, Alfie Bradstock, only and shall not be used for any other commercial horse riding, livery, breeding or training.
Reason: In the interest of highway safety (Policy DC5 of the adopted Local Plan).”*

- 1.7 The manege was constructed on site and the change of use of the land to equestrian training but the pre-commencement conditions were never discharged. Therefore, retrospective planning permission ref P19/V0931/FUL (the 2019 permission) was sought and granted on 7 June 2019 to rectify this. A copy of the plans is included at **Appendix 2**. The 2019 permission did not seek permission for any new buildings on the site. They were all proposed to be demolished. That permission required the approved landscaping scheme to be implemented within 12 months of that permission. This condition was varied to 20 months by ref P20/V1133/FUL on 14 July 2020 due to a wet winter planting season and the Covid pandemic meant this was not possible.
- 1.8 In 2021 an application was submitted described as erection of 2 stable buildings. The supporting information submitted with that application indicated that the intention was more akin to a full commercial livery yard/riding school and hence the description was changed to refer to commercial use with the agreement of the agent at the time. Following that, further discussions with the then agent and applicant it appeared that this was not the intention, and that livery was not to be part of the scheme, and neither were lessons. It was therefore suggested to withdraw that application and resubmit a fresh one with it clearly set out what the intention was for the use of the land and how it would be used. The current application, now before committee, was therefore submitted.
- 1.9 **The proposal**
There are several different types of horsiculture for planning purposes, which involve different horse related activities and variations in their management. This includes riding schools, livery and racing stables and stud farms, through to grazing and ancillary purposes to other uses. The variations can be subtle. It is therefore not surprising some confusion can occur. Officers sought advice from a specialist consultant, Reading Agricultural Consultants, with experience in the equestrian field on the nature of the use proposed.
- 1.10 The application proposal includes the erection of 2 stable buildings: one with 5 stables located to the north of the site, in a similar location to the 5 stables which were granted in the 2013 permission; and one with 10 stables located alongside the road where the original retained barn in the 2013 had been located. Ancillary works to create a larger yard area and landscaping is also included. The access to the site would be in the northwest corner, with the gates to the site set back from the road.
- 1.11 The site already has a use as an equestrian training facility by the previous permission, although this is currently conditioned to the private use by Alfie Bradstock.

- 1.12 The intention is for the site to be used by the applicant Alfie Bradstock for the keeping and training of show jumping and eventing horses. Mr Bradstock is an international showjumper and member of Team GB. The horses would be privately owned, and the applicant would be remunerated by their owners for schooling, training and bringing them on, and riding them in show jumping competitions in pursuit of his career as a professional show jumper. Currently the applicant has use of 12 horses, owned by 3 separate individuals.
- 1.13 It is also intended that the manage would be used by racehorses stabled at Old Manor Stables situated in the village and owned and operated by Mark Bradstock Racing (the applicant's parents), although it is suggested that this use would be occasional.
- 1.14 To ensure clarity and to avoid any future confusion the description of development includes 'use of the land for equestrian business purposes'.
- 1.15 The site will not be used for general livery (where anyone can keep a horse at site), riding lessons, or any form of competitions, open to the public or used by any other businesses/enterprises.
- 1.16 A supplementary planning statement with an updated block plan and topographical plan was submitted in May 2022. In July 2022 a section plan illustrating levels was submitted, along with a counsel opinion from the applicant. A further letter on highway matters was submitted in August 2022, following a request from the highway authority. Each of these submissions have been available on the website and relevant parties notified and allow to comment.
- 1.17 Extracts of the plans for the current proposal are included at **Appendix 1**.

2.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 2.1 A summary of the representations received to the application is set out in **Appendix 4** for ease. Full copies can be viewed online.

3.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 [P21/V0292/FUL](#) - Withdrawn (11/06/2021)

Change of use of the site for use as a commercial equestrian business/enterprise as well as the erection of stables (Amended description, amended plans and supporting information received 6 April 2021)

[P20/V1133/FUL](#) - Approved (14/07/2020)

Variation of wording of condition 2 from "12 months to 20 months" for implementation on planning application P19/V0931/FUL. (Use of land for a manege for use as equestrian training facility.)

[P19/V0931/FUL](#) - Approved (07/06/2019)

Use of land for a manege for use as equestrian training facility (29 May 2019 - Landscaping scheme received)

[P13/V1749/FUL](#) - Approved (24/10/2013)

Change of Use of the land for equestrian training, remove farm buildings and 3 bay stables. Erection of a 5 bay stable block and manege. (additional supporting information received 23 August, 1 September, 20 September and 25 September 2013) (amended plans received 17 October 2013)

4.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 The site lies within the North Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). An AONB is defined as a sensitive area under the EIA Regulations. Therefore, the proposal has been screened as to whether an EIA assessment is necessary or not.

4.2 National Planning Guidance advises that EIA assessments should only apply to those projects which are likely to have a significant effect, having regard to magnitude and extent of the project, on the environment and will only apply to a small proportion of projects considered within the planning regime.

4.3 Given the scale and type of development is it considered that the effects will not be significant under the terms of EIA regulations. The effects can be identified and if appropriate mitigated through the planning process. Therefore, this proposal is not considered EIA development and no further assessment under the EIA regulation is required.

5.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

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

- **Principle**
- **Landscape and AONB**
- **Highway Impact**
- **Impact on Neighbours**
- **Contaminated land**
- **Heritage and Archaeology**
- **Ecology and biodiversity**
- **Flood risk and drainage**
- **Specific use**
- **Community Infrastructure Levy**

5.2 **Principle**

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

5.3 Policy DP12 of the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 2 states:

“Proposals for the keeping, rearing, training and livery of horses on a commercial basis will be permitted where:

1. *the proposed premises will have safe access from the site to the public*

bridleways, gallops or other exercise areas in order to avoid conflict between horses and other public highway users, and

2. the proposal does not unacceptably impact upon the site and the amenity of its neighbours.”

5.4 Supporting paragraph 3.81 says “*Development Policy 12 also supports proposals for new equestrian use and buildings in the countryside, provided they are accessible and appropriate to the landscape and the surrounding environment. Development proposals involving new equestrian use and buildings that are associated with the keeping of horses for private use and the business of horse breeding, training and livery, will be supported where they are appropriate within the landscape and fully accord with other planning policies set out in the Local Plan 2031 and all other material planning considerations.*”

5.5 The NPPF at paragraph 84 says:

Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

5.6 The site already has permission as an equestrian training facility. The horses will be trained on site and therefore will not require off site exercise areas. The highway impact of the proposal will be covered in a separate section. The impact on the area and neighbours are also covered separately below. Subject to those considerations being acceptable, the principle of development would be acceptable under policy DP12 and the NPPF.

5.7 **Landscape and AONB**

Policy and Guidance

Under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW Act) the local planning authority must have regard for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB in the making its decisions.

5.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states at paragraphs 176 and 177:

‘176. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

177. When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be

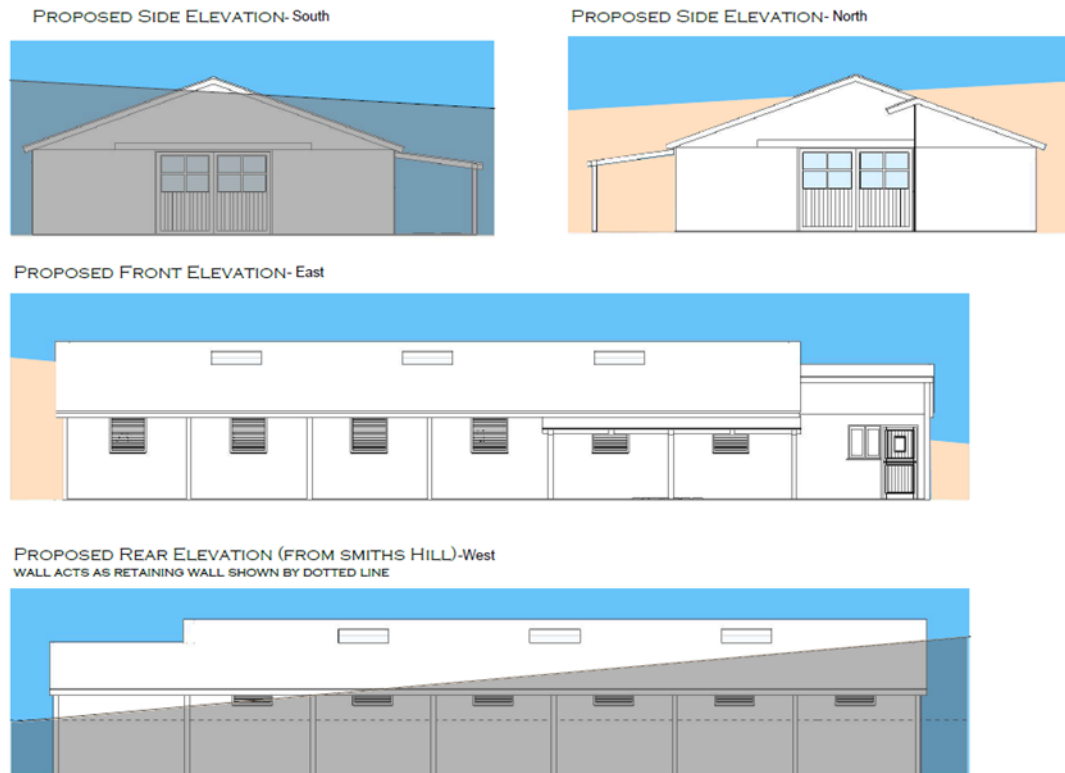
refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.'

- 5.9 Policy CP44 is the landscape protection policy in the local plan for the district. It states:
'The key features that contribute to the nature and quality of the Vale of White Horse District's landscape will be protected from harmful development and where possible enhanced, in particular:
i. features such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, watercourses and water bodies important landscape settings of settlements
iii. topographical features
iv. areas or features of cultural and historic value
v. important views and visually sensitive skylines, and
vi. tranquillity and the need to protect against intrusion from light pollution, noise, and motion.'
- 5.10 With regard to the AONB, the policy states that *'High priority will be given to conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs AONB and planning decisions will have regard to its setting. Proposals that support the economy and social wellbeing of communities located in the AONB, including affordable housing schemes, will be encouraged, provided they do not conflict with the aims of conservation and enhancement'*
- 5.11 The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024 (AONBMP) is also of relevance. This sets out that the North Wessex Downs AONB is recognised as a nationally important horse racing centre and makes a significant contribution to the local economy. Owners of horses have an important role to play in maintaining the natural beauty of the downs. It also recognises that how horses are cared for and the developments associated with keeping and training horses can have a significant impact on the character and quality of the AONB landscape.
- 5.12 Guidance is also provided in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on the Natural Environment. At paragraph 039 (Reference ID: 8-039-20190721) it confirms the duty when exercising any function in relation to land in an AONB, regard shall be had to their purposes for which these areas are designated. It also provides advice at paragraph 041 (Reference ID: 8-041-20190721) on how development in an AONB should be approached. It reinforces the Framework and states that this 'makes clear that the scale and extent of development in these areas should be limited, in view of the importance of conserving and enhancing their landscapes and scenic beauty'.
- 5.13 Assessment
It is contended by third parties that the development could be considered as 'major development' in the AONB and therefore permission refused on this point of principle under paragraph 177 of the NPPF.
- 5.14 The NPPF does not provide a definition of what constitutes 'major development' in the context of paragraph 177. Footnote 60 provides some assistance and confirms that 'whether a proposal is 'major development' is a

matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined’.

- 5.15 Officers have taken a similar approach to that of the Appeal Inspector for the recent appeal (APP/V3120/W/20/3244645) for a new roadside service interchange on the A34 at Chilton in coming to this assessment. This involves making an assessment of the impact and visual effects of the development on the landscape, and then whether the effects are considered significantly adverse and whether it would conflict with the purposes for which the AONB was designated.
- 5.16 *Landscape and visual effects*
Two previous planning permissions have been granted for the site. One in 2013 and one in 2019. The 2019 is the one which has been implemented. Nevertheless, although not implemented, the development in the 2013 permission was considered to be acceptable and would not have harmed the landscape or the AONB. Policies for assessing landscape impact have not materially altered since then.
- 5.17 Both these permissions granted a certain amount of cut and fill to enable the manage to be created on flat ground and a hardstanding yard area was to be created. The 2013 permission also permitted a 5 bay stable building on the north side of the site on similar footings to an existing building. The land around it would have been built up as indicated on the approved plan.
- 5.18 The current application includes: Works to the yard area to include excavation to the south and the creation of a plinth to the north; The erection of two stable buildings, one 5 box and one 10 box; the installation of gates across a widened access; and further landscaping. A full measured topographical survey has been undertaken and submitted, showing the levels relative to OS sea levels in metres. These levels details have been added to the block plan. These shows that the site levels are and will be:
- Manage: +199.6 (OS datum)
Yard area: +199.6 (OS datum)
- 5.19 The works have resulted in the lowering of land along the southern part of the yard by 3 metres and this has created a steep earth bank. The northern part of the yard area has been extended outwards to create a larger flatter bank area such that it has created a steeper slope along this part of the site compared to the slope along the north of the manege.
- 5.20 The largest stable building would be sited along the boundary with the road but would in effect be sunken down from the road within the excavated area. It would be 26m along its longest side and 10.8m wide with a ridge height of 4.6m. The ridge height in OS levels terms would be +204.2. This stable building relative to Smith Hill and the land to the south has been indicated on the supplementary plan submitted by the agent, a copy of which is shown below. The council’s landscape officer comments that the road sits higher than the site

levels and the development would change the views available from here, but the establishing hedgerow will soften the view of the building. They suggest that additional planting around the proposed access and to the southwestern corner of the building where the now closed access was. This will further help soften the building.



- 5.21 The smaller stable building would be sited along the northern boundary of the yard area including on the land which has been made up. It would be 18.5m by 4m and have a ridge height of 3.9m. The ridge height in OS datum would be +203.5.
- 5.22 A similar stable building was permitted under the 2013 permission. Although not implemented, it was found to be acceptable in terms of its visual and landscape impact. The ridge height for that building would have been +203.2 (OS datum)
- 5.23 Officers have viewed the site from Smiths Hill and the footpaths to the north and east of the site as well as from the The Ridgeway to the south. In your officers view the site will look like an equestrian facility in the countryside. The proposed buildings will be sited close to the roadside boundary of the site and given the sunken nature of the larger one in particular, it would appear sat within the slope and would not appear prominent in views from the north or views from the road. The smaller stable building would be more visible but this does mean its harmful. The stables are considered of an appropriate design and appearance for their function and location and would not appear out of place in a rural location. The buildings and land changes have been located between the existing manage and the roadside helping to contain the built form between existing features. Landscaping along the northern boundary will help

to mitigate and soften any longer views of the stable buildings, and additional planting along Smiths Hill will soften immediate views.

- 5.24 The site is outside of the main village but there is other sporadic development up the hill, including Gramps Hill Stud and Smiths Hill Farm dwelling on the opposite side of the road from the application site. Prior to 2013 the site had farm buildings on the same area of the site. Officers consider the site is not completely isolated and the type of development would not be seen as out of character or context in the countryside or in the North Wessex AONB.
- 5.25 Objections have been raised to the change of land levels. Officers acknowledge that at the time the works were done they did look unsightly. The earth banks are steep when viewed up close. These banks will be vegetated. Having walked the footpath which crosses the field to the north and up the east of the site, the land levels here vary and steeply slope in places. With the new hedging in place and the slopes vegetated fully, officers consider that the land changes would not be prominent or visually harmful in the long term.
- 5.26 To the south of the site there is an existing hedgerow and the land beyond rises further, but less steeply, to The Ridgeway. From The Ridgeway the site cannot be seen.
- 5.27 With regard to the effect of lighting on the dark skies of the AONB, there is a document produced by the AONB Unit on how to manage this. According to this document the site falls within area E0– Dark Sky Light Control Zone, (although the AONB Unit consider it is E1(which is less restrictive)). Lighting and the potential for light spill is the main concern of the Council’s landscape officer. The proposed rooflights could potentially allow upwards light spill and it is suggested these are removed. Given each stable box is also shown with a window or side opening they would still be served with natural light with the removal of the rooflights. It is recommended that a condition is imposed to ensure no rooflights are inserted into the stable buildings.
- 5.28 There will be the need for some external lighting on the site mainly by the stables. The details of this and its use can be subject to agreement by planning condition, noting that such lighting should take account of the AONB lighting guidance but also recognising the need for emergency/security lighting. There are no plans for floodlights on the site or on the manege.
- 5.29 The AONB unit raises an objection to the creation of a commercial scale equestrian centre. As set out in the introduction the site will not be for general livery or riding lessons. It is to be for specific enterprises training show jumping and event horses and for some racehorses. From the information submitted officers are satisfied that the use of the site will not be of a level or scale as to result in an adverse visual impact. The training of horses in this particular area of the AONB is a characteristic of it. Officers therefore do not agree with this objection.
- 5.30 Given the type and scale of the proposal it is considered that its impact on the wider landscape would be limited and seen in the context of other rural

development and buildings, and equestrian uses typically found in this part of the countryside. The greatest visual impact would be within the immediate setting of the site, however it is considered it would not appear out of keeping or detrimental to the rural character. Officers conclude that it would comply with Policy CP44 and Policy DP12.

5.31 *Is it 'major development' in the AONB*

An AONB is designated 'for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area'. The development would have limited visual impact on the wider landscape and locally it would be seen as part of the fabric of rural economy and not out of keeping with the rural location. Officers therefore consider that the development would not conflict with the purposes for which the AONB was designated. In the context of paragraph 177 of the NPPF and its footnote - 'whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined'. Your officers' conclusion is that this proposal does not amount to major development in the AONB and accordingly, the requirements in regard to exceptional circumstances in this case are not engaged.

5.32 **Highway Impact**

The NPPF seeks to ensure developments provide a safe and suitable access to the site. Paragraph 111 states "*Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.*"

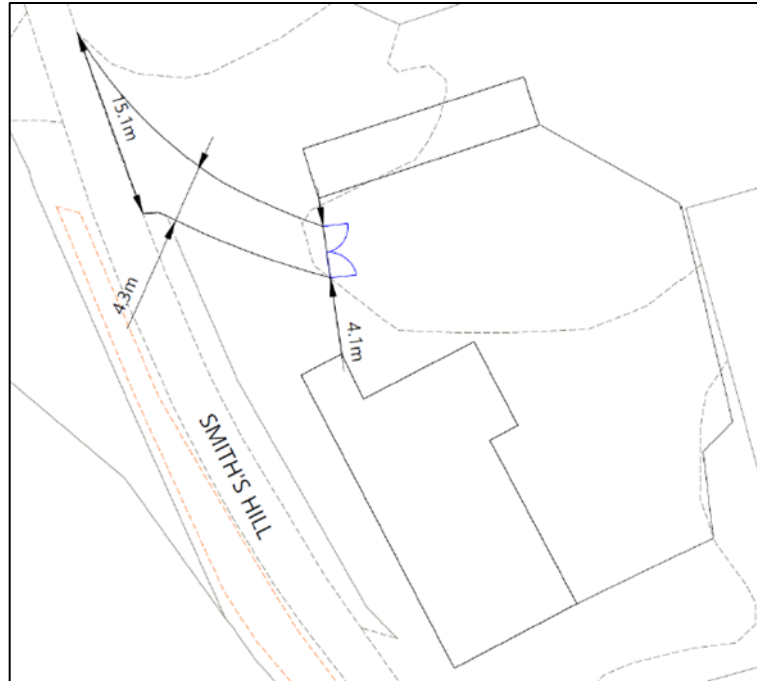
5.33 Policy CP33 seeks to ensure that the impacts of new development on the strategic and local road network are minimised. Policy CP35 seeks to ensure adequate parking is delivered for new developments. Policy CP37 seeks developments to be designed well connected to provide safe and convenient ease of movement by all users, ensuring that the needs of vehicular traffic does not dominate at the expense of other modes of transport, including pedestrians and cyclists, or undermine the resulting quality of places.

5.34 Gramps Hill leads south out of Letcombe Bassett up to The Ridgeway. Smiths Hill comes off Gramps Hill approximately halfway along its length and provides a route also up to The Ridgeway. Smiths Hill is a highway up to application site, beyond which it becomes a restricted byway to The Ridgeway.

5.35 Gramps Hill Stud is located at the junction where Gramps Hill and Smith Hill and is accessed from here. As well as the application site, the residential dwelling, Smiths Hill Farm, opposite the application site is accessed from Smiths Hill. There are also a couple of field accesses to the fields and paddocks to the north of the application site, one off Smiths Hill and another further down Gramps Hill.

5.36 *Access to the site*

The proposed entrance to the site would be set back from the road and would be a gated access. The plans (Appendix 5 of the transport statement) show the entrance would be 4.1m at the gates, widening to 4.3m from the gates to the road, with the splays along the road being 15.1m. Extract included below.



5.37 Visibility splays and details are also included within the transport statement. This includes cutting back vegetation within the splays to the north of the site. Turning of vehicles within the site has also been demonstrated and is acceptable. The geometry of the access and its use are not objected to.

5.38 *Vehicle movements*

Both the 2013 and 2019 permissions were restricted to the private equestrian purposes of the applicant, Alfie Bradstock, only and not to be used for any other commercial horse riding, livery, breeding or training. This was because there was concern at the time from the highway authority that an unrestricted commercial equestrian use could have had the potential to generate an increase in vehicle movements on Smiths Hill.

5.39 This proposal has been assessed on its own merits. Information has been sought from the applicants on the likely vehicle movements which would be associated with the specific nature of the proposed use. The advice from Reading Agricultural Consultants has also been helpful. The consideration for members is whether the resultant level of movements would result in harm to the safe operation of the highway or not.

5.40 The highway authority comments are included at Appendix 4 and 5 which sets out their assessment. They have considered all information, including the highway statement submitted by an objector. Based on their experience the highway authority does not object to the proposal on highway safety grounds, subject to the usage of the site being restricted to the enterprises of the

applicant and his parents. An unrestricted commercial use or by another business could potentially operate very differently and as such could have very different impacts on the highway. As such it is proposed the following condition is imposed if permission is granted:

'The stables hereby permitted and the adjacent menage on the application site shall be used for the keeping and training of horses for the purpose of the applicant's equestrian enterprise, for show jumping and eventing equestrian disciplines including dressage and cross country, and for the schooling only of racehorses stabled at Old Manor Stables, Letcombe Bassett by Mark Bradstock Racing enterprise and shall not be used for any other commercial horse riding or equestrian purposes including use as a riding school or for livery, breeding, racing or other training of horses, and no equestrian competitions shall take place on the site.'

5.41 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policies CP33, CP35 and CP37.

5.42 **Impact on neighbours**

Policy DP23 of LPP2 seeks developments to not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses in terms of: i. loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight; ii. dominance or visual intrusion; iii. noise or vibration; iv. dust, heat, odour, gases or other emissions; v. pollution, contamination or the use of / or storage of hazardous substances; and vi. external lighting.

5.43 The residential property which would be most affected by this proposal is opposite the site, Smiths Hill Farm. The access to this neighbour is located opposite the application. The dwelling itself is set to the north of its access. The stables buildings on the application site are generally sited to the south of the access. Given the stables will be single storey and their height and distance relative to the road and the neighbour, they would not cause any overshadowing or dominance on this neighbour, nor would it be expected that any lighting would cause an issue. The keeping of horses on the land would give rise to associated odours but this is not expected to have a significant adverse impact, given its countryside context and that the site is already in existing equestrian use. Overall, the proposal is considered to not adversely harm the residential amenity of this property, complying with policies DP23 and DP12.

5.44 **Contaminated land**

The contaminated land officer has reviewed the proposal from a contaminated land perspective and has no objections.

5.45 **Heritage and Archaeology**

The site lies around 700m to the west of the scheduled Monument of the Iron Age hillfort of Segsbury Camp. Historic England were consulted but have not responded to this particular application. In a response to the previous withdrawn application last year they responded that they did not wish to offer any comments but suggested seeking the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers, as relevant. In terms of archaeology, the county

archaeologist has been consulted and concludes there would be no archaeological constraints to the scheme. Officers have verbally discussed the proposal with the council's conservation officer and they consider the proposal would not harm the significance of heritage assets. The nature of the proposed development is consistent with the rural and agricultural character of the wider area and they are satisfied that it would not impact the experience of either Segsbury Fort, Letcombe Bassett Conservation Area or the Listed Buildings within it. The proposal would accord with policies CP39, DP36, DP37, DP38 and DP39.

5.46 Ecology and biodiversity

The site lies outside of the nutrient catchment zone of the River Lambourn Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Therefore, the development is not required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality. There are no protected species affected by the development. In terms of biodiversity, the majority of the site has permission for hardstanding in the form of the manage and yard already. The rest of the site was grass or hedge or trees. Although there will be changes, an updated landscaping scheme with additional planting will help to restore and provide an opportunity to enhance biodiversity on the site.

5.47 Flood risk and drainage

The site does not lie in a flood zone and is not shown on the council files to be within an area susceptible to surface water flooding. A drainage condition can be added to any permission for details of surface and foul water to be submitted for approval to ensure they are acceptable.

5.48 Specific use

Personal reasons are generally not planning considerations, although the NPPF does encourage the support of sustainable rural communities and local land based rural enterprises. It is clear that the applicant is an international showjumper and member of Team GB. The proposal therefore would have wider implications than just local impacts. It is also clear from some local representations that equestrian uses are important to the village of Letcombe Bassett. These are material considerations to be weighed in the planning balance.

5.49 Community Infrastructure Levy

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy charged on new development. In accordance with the Councils charging schedule, this proposal is not liable for the levy.

6.0 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF says the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which has three overarching objectives: economic – to build a strong economic and support growth of businesses; social – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities;

environmental – to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.

- 6.2 Economically, the proposal would support a local equestrian enterprise as well as other local commercial rural enterprises (such as vets, farriers etc). Socially, as evidenced by some of the representations received, equestrian uses are a part of the village history and community. The applicant and family are local to the village. The proposal would have clear economic and social benefits, both locally and wider afield. The environmental impact of the proposal has been carefully assessed. The NPPF gives greater weight to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of AONBs. It has been concluded that the landscape and purposes of the AONB will be protected and there is scope to enhance with some additional landscaping. The impact of the local highway network would not be significant given the type and scale of the proposal and is considered unlikely to cause harm to highway safety.
- 6.3 The proposal is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the development plan and it would fulfil the objectives of sustainable development. Therefore, officers recommend the application is approved.

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
- 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
- CP46 - Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity

A Regulation 10A review (five-year review) for Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) has been completed. The review shows that five years on, LPP1 (together with LPP2) continues to provide a suitable framework for development in the Vale of White Horse that is in overall conformity with government policy.

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
- DP25 - Noise Pollution
- DP28 - Waste Collection and Recycling
- DP36 - Heritage Assets
- DP39 - Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

Neighbourhood Plan

There is no neighbourhood plan for this area.

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Design Guide 2022

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

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.

Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

The duty on relevant authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB

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