

APPLICATION NO.	P22/V1247/FUL
SITE	Antwick Stud Letcombe Regis Wantage, OX12 9JD
PARISH	LETCOMBE REGIS
PROPOSAL	Conversion and extension of stable buildings to form three family homes with amenity space, parking, and associated works
WARD MEMBER(S)	Paul Barrow
APPLICANT	Mr and Mrs Samuel
OFFICER	Martin Deans

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Permission subject to the following conditions:

Standard

- 1. Commencement 3 years - Full Planning Permission**
- 2. Approved plans**

Prior to Commencement

- 3. LS2 - Landscaping Scheme**
- 4. LS4 - Tree Protection**
- 5. MC1 - Materials Details**
- 6. MC25 - Drainage Details (Surface Water)**
- 7. MC26 - Drainage Details (Foul Water)**
- 8. Details of Ecological Compensation and Enhancement**

Prior to Occupation

- 9. HY7 - Car Parking**
- 10. HY10 - Turning Space**
- 11. MC19 - Removal of Mobile Homes**

Compliance

- 12. RE2 - PD Restriction on Extensions and New Outbuildings**
- 13. RE5 – PD Restriction on Fences/Walls**
- 14. RE7 – Boundary Details in Accordance with Plan**
- 15. RE29 - Refuse Storage**
- 16. Development in Accordance with Ecological Avoidance and Mitigation Measures**
- 17. No external lighting other than in accordance with approved details**
- 18. CIL: General Consent**

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL

1.1 This application comes to committee at the request of the ward member, Paul Barrow.

1.2 The planning application site comprises the three stable yards at Antwick Stud, an equestrian business that lies just to the north of Letcombe Regis. Antwick

Stud is approximately 17ha in area and principally contains two dwellings, three stable yards with 37 stables in total, and approximately 13ha of paddocks and gallops. Vehicular access to the site is via a driveway that joins Court Hill Road at its junction with Windmill Hill. The site slopes down to the south and lies within the AONB. It is adjacent to the village conservation area, which is situated to the south. A Byway Open to All traffic (BOAT) runs along the west and north boundaries of the Antwick Stud site. The site location plan is below, showing the application site edged in red and the rest of the Antwick Stud site edged in blue.



- 1.3 The application is for the conversion of the three stable yards to three individual dwellings. The north-west yard would be converted to a 5-bedroom dwelling (Unit 1), and the south-west and south-east yards would each be converted to a 4-bedroom dwelling (Units 2 and 3 respectively). Glazed corridor extensions would be added to the internal walls of all three to provide circulation space. A single storey extension would be added to Unit 2 and to Unit 3 to provide enclosure and more floor area. Two existing mobile homes sited to the north of the north-west yard would be removed. The application plans are **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 2.1 Complete versions of all representations can be found on the planning application pages of the council's website, www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

<p>Letcombe Regis Parish Council</p>	<p>Object for the following summarised reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal will harm the viability of the equine business and reduce employment • No evidence that the existing stables are redundant • Light pollution will conflict with dark skies objective • The previous application P07/V1250 should be determined before the current application is considered • A viability report should be sought • Harm to the character of the AONB due to urbanising effect • Adverse effect on highway safety • No change of use of land is proposed
<p>Local Residents</p>	<p>5 objections have been received on the following summarised grounds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal represents creeping development and will lead to pressure for more housing • The loss of the existing business and employment • There will be pressure for stables on the remainder of the site • It will be visible from surrounding public routes • Loss of biodiversity • The viability of the existing business should be verified • The site is not recognised for housing development • There is no evidence that the existing buildings are redundant • The proposal is out of keeping with the character of housing found in the rest of the village • It will harm the character of its surroundings • The submitted structural survey is deficient and much more new build will be required
<p>County Highways Officer</p>	<p>No objections subject to conditions</p>
<p>Countryside Officer</p>	<p>No objections subject to conditions</p>
<p>Forestry Officer</p>	<p>No objections subject to tree protection condition</p>

Contaminated Land	No objections
Environmental Protection Officer	No objections
Waste Management Officer	No objections subject to conditions
County Archaeologist	No objections

3.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1 [P21/V3553/PEM](#) - Advice provided (23/03/2022)

Proposed conversion and extension of stables to form three family homes.

[P07/V1205/O](#) -Current

Outline application for the erection of additional stables (30), store and tackrooms to create three commercial equestrian yards and one private yard. New indoor riding school, manege and lunge ring. Conversion of existing bungalow into two dwellings (amended plans and additional highway information received April 2010 and further highway information and business plan information received September 2012)

[P06/V1643](#) - Approved (08/01/2007)

Extension and Alterations to existing dwelling. Erection of a domestic garage

[P97/V0498](#) - Approved (10/07/1997)

Ten additional stables and tack room. Construction of an all-weather gallop.

[P81/V5121](#) - Approved (28/10/1981)

Single storey extension at rear to provide additional living accommodation together with internal alterations.

[P80/V5141](#) - Approved (17/09/1980)

Erection of a bungalow. Site area 0.33 acres.

[P79/V5120](#) - Approved (27/02/1980)

Erection of a bungalow, as owners bungalow. Total holding area 42 acres. Site area 0.33 acres.

4.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 The site lies within the AONB which is a sensitive area as defined in section 2 of the EIA Regulations 2021. However, the proposed development is relatively small in scale and falls well below the scale of development described in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations. Therefore, the proposal does not require screening for an EIA.

5.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

5.1 **The Principle of the Development**

The site lies outside the built area of Letcombe Regis, in open countryside. Policy DP7 of LPP2 deals with the conversion and extension of buildings for dwellings in the open countryside. It states that applications will be permitted provided that:

- The building is of permanent and substantial construction and is capable of conversion without extensive reconstruction – a structural survey will be required and a detailed survey may be required where appropriate
- It respects the character, appearance and setting of the original building, and
- It respects the rural landscape, character and locality, and
- It retains features of architectural or historic merit where appropriate

5.2 The various elements of this policy will be examined in the sections below. In terms of principle, the proposal is for the conversion and extension of existing buildings to dwellings. Objectors state that the buildings are not redundant and that the change of use will affect the viability of the lawful equestrian business. However, policy DP7 requires neither that the buildings are redundant nor that a viability appraisal accompanies a proposal. Consequently, officers consider that these aspects cannot be reasonably considered or requested as part of the application.

5.3 **The Previous Planning Application for Equestrian Development**

There is a current undetermined outline planning application on the site for equestrian development (P07/V1205). The application is for the provision of an additional 30 stables and associated storage buildings, the construction of an indoor riding school and manege, and the subdivision of The Cottage to two dwellings. This application was presented to Planning Committee in 2009 and again in 2013 when it was resolved to grant planning permission subject to a section 106 legal agreement. The site plan for the proposal is **attached** as Appendix 2.

5.4 Progress on the legal agreement was held up by a number of issues. During 2019 and 2020 discussions were held between the applicants and officers to explore other options for the site. These led to a pre-application submission in 2021 to convert the stable yards to three dwellings (ref P21/V 3553/PEM), and then to the current application.

5.5 If the current application is permitted and implemented, it will prevent the equestrian development from being implemented. The two could not be implemented together. The applicants have confirmed that the current application to convert the stables to three dwellings is the preferred alternative of the two.

5.6 Objectors are concerned that, if the current application is approved and implemented, there will be pressure for new equestrian development on the rest of the site. There is no evidence for this assertion. As members are aware,

committee should only consider the planning application as presented and should not consider other speculative future proposals.

5.7 Design and Landscape Impact

Policy CP44 of LPP1 seeks to ensure that the impact of development on local landscape is acceptable. With regard to the AONB it states that high priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB and that planning decisions will have regard to its setting. Policy CP37 of LPP1 requires a good quality of design.

5.8 A structural survey has been submitted with the application. This concludes that, with the exception of part of the north-west yard, the stable buildings are in general good condition. The buildings are constructed of block walls with timber cladding and almost all of the roofs are covered in slate. Objectors are concerned that the changes required to enable the buildings to be used as dwellings, such as internal insulation, will mean far more alteration and rebuilding than is proposed. Officers are aware of a large number of similar rural buildings across the Vale that have been successfully converted to dwellings over many years without significant rebuilding. The evidence is that the buildings are in generally sound condition and officers consider there is no evidence for concluding that significant rebuilding will be necessary. In terms of policy DP7, therefore, officers consider the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion without significant reconstruction.

5.9 Unit 1, the north-west yard, will have a small, glazed extension within the yard to provide circulation space. Unit 2 and Unit 3 will have similar glazed corridor extensions but will also have larger extensions. The larger extensions will be of a similar height and similar proportions to the existing stables, and will be constructed using the same external materials, all with the intention of achieving the appearance of natural enclosing elements that reflect traditional courtyard rural buildings. The extensions will be subordinate in scale to the existing stable buildings and, like them, will include stepped changes in slab level to accommodate the local slope. Officers consider they will be acceptable in design terms.

5.10 With regard to landscape impact, the application site lies over 100m from the BOAT to the west, over 200m from the BOAT to the north, and over 200m from Court Hill Road and Windmill Hill to the east. Consequently, the stables are seen at some distance from the closest public vantage points. The proposed internal glazed corridors will not be particularly visible from public viewpoints. Officers consider that the larger extensions to Units 2 and 3 will appear as natural enclosing additions to the stables that do not extend the built form much beyond the existing framework of the stable buildings on the site. It is recommended that permitted development rights are removed for both extensions and alterations to the proposed dwellings, as well as for boundary treatments, to allow for control of the future extent of built form and of the visual appearance of the site.

- 5.11 Objectors are concerned that the proposed residential use of the buildings, and the associated domestic activity, will cause harm to the character and appearance of the area through urbanisation. The application red line encloses the buildings and confirms the intention that the domestic activity associated with the proposed dwellings will be contained within the enclosed form of the buildings. The car parking will also be located within the framework provided by the proposed built form. Consequently, the built form and its associated activity will remain relatively contained and compact and, when viewed from surrounding public vantage points, will be little changed. Therefore, officers consider that the impact of the proposal on the wider landscape of the AONB will be relatively limited and will not cause harm to its natural beauty.
- 5.12 There is also concern about the potential for light pollution from the development and conflict with the dark skies objective. The applicants have confirmed that external lighting will only be installed in accordance with details first agreed with the council. This can be controlled through the use of a planning condition, and this should ensure there is no harmful light pollution from the proposal.
- 5.13 To conclude, in terms of the requirements of policy DP7, officers consider that the proposal respects the character, appearance and setting of the original buildings, and respects the rural landscape character of the locality. In consequence, it is considered that the proposal complies with all relevant aspects of policy DP7.
- 5.14 **Impact on Trees**
Policy CP44 requires that, as part of any development proposal, important trees are retained. There is one significant tree on the application site, a horse chestnut that is the subject of a tree preservation order (97V11) and which lies between Unit 1 and The Cottage. The applicants have clarified that there is an area of existing hard standing under part of the tree's canopy and that, although the proposal will make use of this hard standing for parking, it will not alter the hard standing. The Forestry Officer has assessed the impact on the tree and is satisfied that there will be no harm subject to protection measures during construction which can be controlled by condition.
- 5.15 **Impact on Heritage Assets**
The boundary of the village conservation area lies to the south of the site. Policy CP39 of LPP1 and policy DP37 of LPP2 state that new development must conserve or enhance the special interest, character, setting and appearance of a conservation area. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 5.16 This part of the village conservation area is characterised by significant space that lies between the isolated buildings along Court Hill Road, around the buildings grouped with Antwicks Manor, and up to the northern boundary of the housing on the cul-de-sac, Mill Paddock. The stable buildings on the application site, together with the adjacent Antwick Stud dwellings, sit within a large green

space that runs alongside the boundary of the conservation area and complements the space within the conservation area. This relationship is discernible from the surrounding public rights of way.

- 5.17 The proposal is for a change of use from equestrian business use to a residential use. The residential use will be limited in scale by reason of the small number of dwellings that are proposed. New built form will be added to the stables which will be sympathetic in terms of design and subordinate in terms of scale. It will reflect the courtyard form of locally distinctive, traditional rural buildings. Moreover, the new building will not significantly alter the spatial extent of the existing built framework on the site, or the proximity of it to the conservation area. In addition, the domestic activity and parking associated with the development will be contained by the enclosed built form. It is recommended that permitted development rights for extensions and for boundary treatments are removed to retain future control over the appearance of the site.
- 5.18 In view of the limited scale of both the proposed use and of the proposed additional built form, and the compact and contained nature of the associated activity, officers consider that the contribution of the site to the green, spacious setting of the conservation area will not be materially affected, and the proposal will not cause harm to the character or appearance or setting of the conservation area.
- 5.19 **Residential Amenity**
Policy DP23 of LPP2 seeks to prevent harm to neighbours' amenities from development. The closest neighbouring dwellings to the application site are the two dwellings associated with Antwick Stud, The Cottage and Antwick Stud House. The closest neighbouring dwelling not associated with Antwick Stud is The Coach House, which lies approximately 95m to the south of the application site. The next closest are Antwicks Manor and Antwicks Stud House, approximately 150m away, and no.10 and no.11 Mill Paddock, also approximately 150m away.
- 5.20 The likely level of noise and activity associated with the proposed three dwellings is unlikely to cause harm to the amenities of the adjacent Cottage or Antwick Stud House. In view of the distance to other nearest neighbours, officers consider there is unlikely to be any harmful impact to their amenities either. Consequently, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this regard.
- 5.21 **Traffic, parking and highway safety**
Policies CP36 and CP37 of LPP1 and policy DP16 of LPP2 require safe access and adequate parking for new development. Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that development should only be refused on traffic grounds if the impact on highway safety is unacceptable or the impact on the road network would be severe. The County Highways Officer has assessed the application. The site has a lawful business use comprising 37 commercial stables, with a consequential level of traffic that can be reasonably associated with this use. The proposal will effectively replace these 37 stables with three dwellings. In

comparing the lawful use with the expected relatively modest level of traffic associated with three dwellings, the County Highways Officer considers that the existing access onto the main road is acceptable to serve the development. He also considers that the proposal can accommodate a turning area for delivery vehicles, and a passing space on the access drive. These details can be subject to a planning condition. Overall, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of highway and public safety.

5.22 Biodiversity

Policy CP46 of LPP1 requires all development to avoid the loss of biodiversity, including harm to protected species, and to secure biodiversity gain where possible. A preliminary ecological survey has been submitted with the application and this has been assessed by the Countryside Officer. The survey indicates that some day roosts for bats and nests for barn swallows may be affected, but that these can be subject to compensation through the provision of bat boxes, a new nesting swallow barn and bird boxes. The Countryside Officer considers that the details of the compensatory measures can be satisfactorily controlled by planning condition. Subject to this, officers consider there will be no loss of biodiversity and that the proposal complies with policy CP46.

5.23 Drainage

Policy CP42 of LPP1 requires new development to minimise flood risk. The application site is neither at high risk of river flooding, nor at high risk of surface water flooding. Nevertheless, as the proposal is for residential development, officers consider it is prudent to apply conditions requiring pre-commencement agreement of surface water and foul water drainage.

5.24 Contaminated Land

Policy DP27 seeks to remove risk to development from contaminated land. The application includes a contamination risk assessment. This has been assessed by the Environmental Protection Officer. He agrees with the conclusion that there is no contamination risk to the proposal.

5.25 Community Infrastructure Levy

The proposal is for new dwellings and the proposed new floor areas are liable for CIL. The appropriate forms have been submitted.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 The proposal is considered to comply with policy DP7 on the conversion and extension of existing buildings to dwellings in open countryside. The evidence is that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction and are structurally sound enough to be converted. The impact of the proposed change of use and extensions will be relatively limited and will not harm the AONB. The setting of the village conservation area will be preserved. There will be no harm to neighbours, to highway and public safety, to the protected tree on the site, or to biodiversity. There is no risk from contamination. The proposal is considered to comply with relevant policies of the development plan and with the NPPF.

The following planning policies have been taken into account:

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

- 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:

- DP07 - Re-use, Conversion and Extension of Buildings for Dwellings in the Open Countryside
- DP23 - Impact of Development on Amenity
- DP27 - Land Affected by Contamination
- DP28 - Waste Collection and Recycling
- DP37 - Conservation Areas

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Design Guide 2022

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

Planning Practise Guidance

Equalities Act 2010

Officers have paid due regard to the duties under Section 149 of the Equalities Act. It is considered that no recognised group will suffer discrimination as a result of the development.

Human Rights Act 1998

The application has been assessed against the European Convention on Human Rights, particularly Article 1 and Article 8. The individual objections have been balanced against the public interest and the recommendation is considered to be proportionate.

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