



Planning Statement



Little Mulberry
Stoke Golding Wharf
Upton Lane
Stoke Golding CV13 6EU
On behalf of Mr P. Morris

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Planning Policy	4
3. Planning Considerations	7
4. Conclusion	13

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cerda Planning Ltd has been instructed by Mr Paul Morris to prepare a planning application to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council for the retrospective change of use of part an agricultural building to stables, a manège, and change of use of land to paddocks at Little Mulberry, Stoke Golding Wharf, Upton Lane, Stoke Golding CV13 6EU.

The Application Site

- 1.2 The application site is situated to the south of Upton Lane and bounded to the east by the Ashby de la Zouch Canal. The site currently comprises of several agricultural buildings, one to the north and two to the west boundary,
- 1.3 The application site lies outside, and to the west of, the defined settlement boundary of Stoke Golding and is therefore located within the designated countryside. The site is bounded to the north by Upton Lane, from which the principal vehicular access is taken. A secondary agricultural access is located to the south, connecting onto Higham Lane.
- 1.4 To the eastern boundary, the site adjoins the Ashby de la Zouch Canal and Public Right of Way (PRoW) Footpath T54, both of which fall within the Ashby de la Zouch Canal Conservation Area. Beyond the canal lies linear and ribbon residential development along Station Road, which leads into the centre of Stoke Golding. Agricultural land extends to the south of the site, while to the west are farm buildings and further areas of agricultural land.
- 1.5 The site is located within Flood Risk Zone 1, indicating a low probability of flooding.
- 1.6 Site access is taken directly from Upton Lane, via an existing gated entrance.

Site Planning History

- 1.7 A review of the publicly available records held by Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council has been undertaken to determine the relevant planning history relating to the site
- 23/01180/P3CQ (2023) - Permission granted for the conversion of a barn to a class C3 dwellinghouse.
 - 24/00432/FUL (2024) - Permission refused for the construction of two barns for agricultural use.
 - 24/00438/FUL (2024) - Permission granted for the conversion of a barn to dwelling with flue and solar panels, and associated parking, landscaping.
 - 25/00002/FUL (2025) - Planning permission was sought for the construction of a barn for agricultural use; (withdrawn)

Proposals

- 1.8 The layout of the proposed development is illustrated on the accompanying proposed site layout plan.
- 1.9 The proposal seeks a change of use of agricultural land to paddocks and the conversion of part of an existing barn to stables. Additionally, the proposal seeks to construct a manège.
- 1.10 The proposed manège will be located to the south of the existing barn and east of the existing agricultural buildings: and will be enclosed by a post and rail fence, measuring approximately 1.2 metres in height. The manège measures some 60m x 40m. The field in which the manège is to be constructed is bounded by established hedgerows along the southern, eastern and western boundaries.
- 1.11 The existing agricultural barn situated along the western boundary of the site is proposed to be partially converted to provide stabling. The conversion will be contained entirely within the existing building envelope, with no external alterations proposed. As a result, the scale, appearance, and agricultural character of the barn will be retained, ensuring that the development sits comfortably within its rural context and does not result in any visual harm to the wider countryside setting.
- 1.12 No alterations to the existing access are proposed. Consequently, as the manège is intended solely for the applicant's private use and having regard to the existing lawful

use of the access by agricultural vehicles, the level and nature of equine-related vehicle movements are considered to be broadly comparable. On this basis, the proposal is not considered to give rise to any material increase in traffic generation, and the proposed use is therefore not considered to materially alter the character or function of the access arrangements.

2. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)

- 2.1 Paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies that planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.2 The NPPF is a material planning consideration in planning decisions. The current Development Plan consists of the adopted Core Strategy and the adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (SADMP). In accordance with Paragraph 232 of the NPPF, due weight should be given to existing policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF.
- 2.3 Paragraph 88 of the NPPF supports the diversification of agricultural land.
- 2.4 Section 12 of the NPPF confirms that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and the creation of high quality, beautiful, and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.
- 2.5 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF details the six national policy requirements of development to ensure the creation of well-designed and beautiful places. Paragraph 139 of the NPPF states that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes.

Development Plan

- 2.6 The Development Plan (2006 - 2026) for Hinkley & Bosworth Borough Council comprises the Core Strategy adopted in December 2009 and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies SADMP, adopted in July 2016.
- 2.7 There are no policies contained in the Core Strategy of relevance to the determination of this application.

2.8 The following policies contained in the Site Allocation & Development Management DPD are relevant to the determination of this application:

- DM1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- DM4 - Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation
- DM10 - Development and Design
- DM17 - Highways and Transportation
- DM18 - Vehicle Parking Standards

Local Plan Review

2.9 The Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan Review is currently working towards the adoption a new Local Plan, which will guide development in the district up to 2045.

2.10 Consultations on the proposed Regulation 18 draft Local Plan were conducted initially between 31st July and 27th September 2024; however, a subsequent consultation was conducted between 17th October and 28th November 2025 – related solely to specific (new or updated) policies and site allocations.

2.11 The next stage of the Local Plan Review will be Regulation 19 consultations, which is intended to take place during summer 2026; further details will be published by the council following approval by the council to commence.

2.12 The timeline for the local plan review, based on the Local Development Scheme (LDS), defines the following key target dates:

- Public consultation on submission Draft Plan (Regulation 19) - (March to April 2026)
- Submission to Secretary of State (Regulation 22) - November 2026
- Estimated date for examination - Early 2027
- Programmed date for adoption - Late 2027

2.13 However, based upon the above dates, the timeline is likely to be delayed due to the Regulation 19 consultations taking place in Summer 2026, rather than as initially intend between March and April.

2.14 The Regulation 18 Draft does not have any specific equine related policies, however, Spatial Objective 1(i) outlines the plan's aim to:

“Support and create strong, healthy and self-reliant urban and rural communities where the identities of existing settlements are respected. Communities have access to green spaces and nature, the social, recreational, sports and cultural facilities and services they need in their places, which in turn help them to thrive, grow sustainably and improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all.”

2.15 The new Local Plan once adopted, will replace the current adopted plan.

Stoke Golding Neighbourhood Plan

2.16 The Stoke Golding Neighbourhood Plan was formally adopted on 9th May 2024 and now forms part of the statutory development plan for the district.

2.17 While the Plan does not contain specific policies relating to equine development, it acknowledges Stoke Golding’s rural character through policy SG7 and the support for the re-use and adaption of buildings as well as recreation development provided the scheme is within or adjacent to settlement boundaries.

2.18 Furthermore, SG15 advises on design, and the support of development which reflects the traditional character of Stoke Golding.

2017 Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Landscape Character Assessment

2.19 The 2017 landscape assessment for Stoke Golding identifies the strong rural character and setting of the village. Guidance seeks to ensure that new development is sensitive to the local context. Whilst there is no specific guidance or reference to equine development, there is a provision which aims to “Maintain and enhance the recreational assets including rights of way network and canal”; given that the proposed manège would be for the landowner’s personal recreation, this provision would support development – as long as it is sensitive to the surrounding character.

3. Planning Considerations

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.2 The key issues in respect of this application are therefore:

- Principle of development
- Design and impact upon the character of the area
- Impact upon residential amenity
- Impact upon parking provision and highway safety
- Ecology and biodiversity

Principle of Development

3.3 Paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies that planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material planning consideration in planning decisions. The current Development Plan consists of the adopted Core Strategy, the adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (SADMP), and the Stoke Golding Neighbourhood Plan (SGNP) (2022).

3.4 The application site lies outside the defined settlement boundary of Stoke Golding and is therefore situated within the designated countryside. The proposed manège would be located on land currently in agricultural use. Equestrian development is typically associated with countryside locations due to the land requirements and nature of such activities.

3.5 Policy DM4 of the SADMP, seeks to protect the intrinsic value, beauty, open character, and landscape character of the countryside by resisting unsustainable forms of development.

3.6 Policy DM4 identifies a number of circumstances in which development within the countryside may be considered sustainable. The criteria of most relevance to the current proposal are as follows:

- (a) It is for outdoor sport or recreation purposes (including ancillary buildings) and it can be demonstrated that the proposed scheme cannot be provided within or adjacent to settlement boundaries*
- (b) The proposal involves the change of use, re-use or extension of existing buildings which lead to the enhancement of setting; or*

3.7 In this instance, the proposed development is considered to accord with criteria (a) and (b) of Policy DM4. The proposal relates to a small-scale private equestrian use that is appropriately located within the countryside and would utilise and complement the existing rural setting.

3.8 Furthermore, paragraph 88(b) of the NPPF supports the sustainable growth and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. In this regard, the proposal represents an appropriate form of rural diversification that would not undermine the character or appearance of the countryside.

3.9 The keeping and stabling of horses at the site, together with the proposed manège, are intended solely for the private and personal use of the applicant. Having regard to the modest scale of the development and its location adjacent to the settlement boundary, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle, subject to the assessment of all other material planning considerations. These considerations are addressed in the following sections of this report.

Design and Landscape

3.10 Policy DM10 of the SADMP advises on a set criterion which development proposals will be permitted to following. DM10(c) states that development should either complement or enhance the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design and materials.

3.11 In addition, (i) and (ii) of Policy DM4 of the SADMP states that development within the countryside will be considered sustainable where:

- i.) It does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character, and landscape character of the countryside; and
- ii.) It does not undermine the physical and perceived separation and open character between settlements.

- 3.12 The proposed manège would measure approximately 60 metres by 40 metres, resulting in a total area of approximately 2,400 square metres. The development would be formed at existing ground levels and would not require significant excavation, engineering works, or land regrading. The only structures projecting above ground level would comprise a timber post-and-rail fence with a height of approximately 1.2 metres. The proposed materials, including the fencing and gates, are considered appropriate within the rural context and would maintain the character of the surrounding countryside. The manège would also be positioned adjacent to the existing built form, thereby consolidating development within a contained area of the site.
- 3.13 The site benefits from existing boundary hedgerows and mature vegetation which provide effective screening from wider public viewpoints, including from Station Road, Upton Road and the nearby canal corridor. As such, the proposal would have limited visibility within the wider landscape and would not appear prominent in views from Stoke Golding or the surrounding countryside.
- 3.14 The proposed post-and-rail fencing, at a height of approximately 1.2 metres, represents a form of boundary treatment commonly found within rural areas. Fencing of this scale would ordinarily constitute permitted development under Schedule 2, Part 2, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), and is therefore not considered visually intrusive or out of keeping with the character of the area.
- 3.15 The proposed development comprises features typically associated with rural and equestrian land uses and is considered compatible with the established character and function of the countryside. The proposal would preserve the natural landscape setting and would not erode the rural qualities of the site or its surroundings.
- 3.16 The development is intended solely for the applicant's personal and non-commercial use. As such, the proposal would remain low intensity in nature and compatible with the rural character of the area. The restriction to private use can be secured by planning condition if deemed necessary.

- 3.17 The proposed manège is appropriately scaled and sensitively located within the site, ensuring that it integrates satisfactorily into the existing landscape and does not result in undue harm to the openness or visual amenity of the countryside.
- 3.18 Overall, the proposal represents a modest, well-related, and appropriate form of rural development that would support private outdoor recreation without adversely affecting the character, appearance, or openness of the countryside. The proposal also seeks to minimise landscape impact through the re-use of existing hardstanding areas and the close association with existing structures on the site.
- 3.19 Having regard to the above considerations, it is concluded that the proposal would not result in significant harm to the intrinsic value, beauty, landscape character, or open character of the countryside. Furthermore, the development would complement the character of the surrounding area and is therefore considered to accord with Policies DM4 and DM10 of the SADMP.

Impact upon residential amenity

- 3.20 Policy DM10(a) and (b) of the SADMP states development will be permitted provided that it would not have a significant adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of nearby residents and occupiers of adjacent buildings, including matters of lighting and noise and that the amenity of occupiers would not be adversely affected by activities within the vicinity of the site. This is supported by Policy SG15(5) of the SGNP.
- 3.21 The application site currently comprises agricultural land in active use for grazing, together with associated agricultural activity, which establishes a low-intensity baseline condition in terms of noise, activity, and lighting. There are no immediate residential neighbours adjoining the site, and the nearest residential properties are separated by the Ashby de la Zouch Canal and associated buffer.
- 3.22 Given the existing rural and agricultural context, and the absence of nearby residential receptors, the proposed development is unlikely to give rise to any material harm to neighbouring residential amenity. The nature and scale of the proposal would not materially alter the established baseline conditions of the site, nor introduce activities that would result in unacceptable impacts in terms of noise, disturbance, or lighting.

Impact upon parking provision and highway safety

- 3.23 The proposed development will utilise the existing access arrangements from Upton Lane. Having regard to the established baseline conditions, it is considered that the proposals would not result in any detrimental impact on the operation or safety of the access. In particular, the level of movements generated by the proposed use would be comparable to, and no greater than, those associated with the existing agricultural use of the site. The proposed equestrian manège is intended for private use only, in association with the keeping and stabling of horses on the site and would not operate on a commercial basis. As such, no material increase in traffic movements is anticipated.
- 3.24 The existing areas of hardstanding within the site provide sufficient space to accommodate the manoeuvring and turning of horse boxes and associated vehicles, enabling all vehicles to enter and exit the site safely in a forward gear. The parking and circulation arrangements are therefore adequate to serve the proposed development
- 3.25 The lawful agricultural use of the site already supports vehicular activity associated with slow-moving farm vehicles. Against this context, the occasional transportation of horses to and from the site would not represent a material change in either traffic speed or volume along Upton Lane.
- 3.26 Having regard to highways and parking considerations, the proposed development is considered to accord with Policy DM17(c). The scheme would not result in any demonstrable adverse impact on highway safety, nor would it generate a material increase in vehicular movements when compared to the lawful agricultural use of the land.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 3.27 The ecological impacts of the proposed development have been assessed having regard to the relevant policies of the SADMP in particular Policy DM6: Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest, which seeks to ensure that development protects and, where possible, enhances biodiversity and avoids harm to protected species and habitats.
- 3.28 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) has been submitted in support of the application. The report identifies the site as comprising of agricultural buildings,

hardstanding, hedgerows, ditches, scattered trees and heavily grazed modified grassland of low ecological value. The grassland is classified as being in poor condition, reflecting intensive agricultural management and limited species diversity. No statutory or non-statutory ecological designations are present within the red-line application boundary.

- 3.29 A detailed assessment of protected species concluded that the risk of adverse effects is low. No buildings within the site were found to have suitability for roosting bats, and all trees with potential roost features are to be retained. While the wider site provides foraging and commuting habitat for bats, the development itself will not result in any habitat loss; a sensitive lighting strategy is recommended to avoid light spill onto retained hedgerows and the nearby canal corridor. Similarly, the potential for impacts on nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians, badgers, riparian mammals, hazel dormouse and hedgehogs is considered low, with standard precautionary measures recommended during construction where appropriate.
- 3.30 In ecological terms, the proposals are associated with a negligible change to baseline conditions and are not expected to result in any significant adverse impacts on biodiversity. The report confirms that no further ecological surveys or mitigation are required to support the planning application, subject to the implementation of proportionate best-practice measures. The applicant has also expressed an intention to deliver voluntary biodiversity enhancements, including hedgerow planting, which would result in a net ecological benefit over and above the minimum policy requirements.
- 3.31 A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has also been submitted with this application. The baseline habitats comprise modified grassland of low distinctiveness and in poor condition, resulting from long-term agricultural management.
- 3.32 The report concludes that the proposals deliver biodiversity net gain entirely on site, without the need for off-site compensation.
- 3.33 Overall, the development is demonstrated to comply with national and local biodiversity policy and makes a measurable positive contribution to biodiversity in accordance with statutory requirements.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 This Planning Statement has demonstrated that the proposed change of use of part of an agricultural building to stables, the construction of a manège, and the change of use of land to paddocks at Little Mulberry Farm, Upton Lane, Stoke Golding, is appropriate and acceptable in planning terms.
- 4.2 The development represents a modest, low-intensity form of rural development that is well suited to its countryside location. The proposals are for private, non-commercial equestrian use and are closely related to the existing agricultural buildings ensuring that development remains consolidated and does not encroach unnecessarily into open countryside. The principle of development is supported by national policy and accords with Policy DM4 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, which allows outdoor recreation and the re-use of existing rural buildings where there is no harm to countryside character.
- 4.3 In design and landscape terms, the manège is appropriately scaled, positioned at ground level, and enclosed by traditional post and rail fencing. The retention of existing hedgerows and vegetation ensures limited visibility from the wider landscape, including the canal corridor, Upton Lane and Station Road. The partial conversion of the existing barn to stables involves no external alterations, thereby preserving its agricultural appearance and rural character. The proposals therefore comply with Policies DM4 and DM10 and would not result in harm to the intrinsic character, openness, or visual quality of the countryside.
- 4.4 There would be no unacceptable impact on residential amenity, given the absence of nearby residential receptors and the low-intensity nature of the proposed use. Similarly, the use of the existing access onto Upton Lane and the limited level of traffic associated with private equestrian use ensure that there would be no detrimental impact on highway safety, in accordance with Policy DM17.
- 4.5 Ecological matters have been robustly addressed through the submission of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment. These demonstrate that the proposals would not result in significant ecological harm and would deliver a measurable biodiversity net gain on site, exceeding statutory

requirements. Appropriate mitigation, enhancement and management measures are identified and can be secured through condition where necessary.

- 4.6 When considered in the round, the proposal is consistent with the Development Plan, the Stoke Golding Neighbourhood Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework. There are no material considerations that indicate planning permission should be withheld. The development represents a sustainable and appropriate form of rural development, and it is therefore respectfully submitted that planning permission should be granted.