

DESIGN & ACCESS
AND PLANNING
STATEMENT

Site Address: Swalcliffe Park Equestrian
 Grange Farm
 Swalcliffe
 Banbury
 Oxfordshire OX15 5EU

Prepared for: Mr R Taylor
Date of report: January 2019

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This Design, Access and Planning Statement accompanies the full planning application for the erection of a veterinary building at Swalcliffe Park Equestrian, Grange Farm, Swalcliffe.

1.0 Site Assessment

1.1 Site Location

The application site is located at Swalcliffe Park Equestrian, Grange Farm, Swalcliffe.



Figure 1: Site Location

1.2 Planning History

The Planning History for the Swalcliffe Park Equestrian site is as follows:

14/01762/F. Use of land at Grange Farm for mixed use comprising part agricultural, part equestrian training and competitions (Use Class D2); retention of 1no. access and relocation of 1no. access on to the road leading from the B4035 to Sibford Ferris; extension to existing parking area and retention of equestrian jumps and obstacles; as detailed in agent's letter dated 22nd December 2014. *Application Permitted.*

1.3 Flood Risk

The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low probability) on the EA designated area of flood risk map. Therefore it is not vulnerable to flooding.

2.0 Justification

2.1 Purpose and Description

The end user for the veterinary building will be the Hook Norton Veterinary Group which is an equine, pet and farm animal veterinary practice based in the village of Hook Norton and founded by Alan Walker MRCVS in 1981. Originally a one man veterinary practice, it has grown organically but rapidly to now being a 20 vet, 60 employee partnership with two additional small animal sites (in Charlbury and Deddington).

The majority of the small animal work still takes place at the Hook Norton site, which is also the base for the 6 vet equine only veterinary team. As all the departments have expanded, there is increased pressure on the main site, both inside and outside the building (the latter referring to car and lorry parking in particular).

The Applicant is therefore seeking to move their equine department to Swalcliffe Park Equestrian, which would allow both the equine and small animal teams to expand as they need to and take the larger (horse) vehicles away from driving through a small village and past a village school (Hook Norton).

2.2 Pre-application

A Pre-application was undertaken with the Council in March 2018, the Pre-application Report issued 12th March 2018 accompanies this application.

To summarise the Report, the design of the proposed veterinary building is acceptable. The location of the building on the site should be determined by an LVIA.

2.3 Transport

Currently there are approximately 100 vehicle movements a day at the White Hills Surgery in Hook Norton, of which approximately 5 a day are horse transport vehicles. Although the number of horse transport vehicles is not enormously high, allowing space for these severely restricts the space available for the much more numerous smaller cars and the Veterinary Group like to be able to use the whole space for the cars of employees and customers.

The plan is to move their equine team to Swalcliffe, which comprises currently 6 vets, 3 nurses and 3 receptionists. Moving should allow them to expand the equine business and therefore recruit more staff - an anticipated increase of 3 employees in the short term with more as required in the longer term. The vast majority of the 60 existing employees live locally and the Group try to recruit local people wherever possible.

Moving the equine side of the practice away from Hook Norton will allow the small animal side to grow so there will also be increased local employment opportunities on that side of the business as well.

Regarding traffic movements, it is anticipated that there will be on average 5 daily horse transport movements moving to Swalcliffe in the first instance. As the business expands in its new location this is expected to rise to 7-8 per day (car movements are likely to be on average 30 per day).

Although originally located in a Category A village (Hook Norton) in compliance with policy *SLE1* the equine side of the practice has grown to a point where further expansion of the practice at the existing facilities is no longer feasible due to space and parking constraints.

Hook Norton Veterinary Group specifically wish to move to Swalcliffe Park Equestrian as the equine veterinary practice would fit in very well with the existing facilities, particularly the onsite farrier and arena, and utilisation of both of these should encourage growth of all of the onsite businesses.

3.0 Design and Access

3.1 Design and Layout

The location of the veterinary building on the farm has been carefully considered in conjunction with the Landscape and Visual Consultants before it was chosen. The undulating nature of the topography and the lack of publicly accessible locations from which to view the proposed development ensure that both the landscape and visual effects are localised.

The 4m high roller shutter doors will ensure that horse boxes can be backed inside the building when needed. The tunnel effect created by having them at opposite sides of the building will improve ventilation throughout.

The veterinary building will comprise of 7 stables, 2 knock downs, theatre & scrub area, rest room, Vet's office, store, stocks, reception and visitor WCs (including disabled WC).

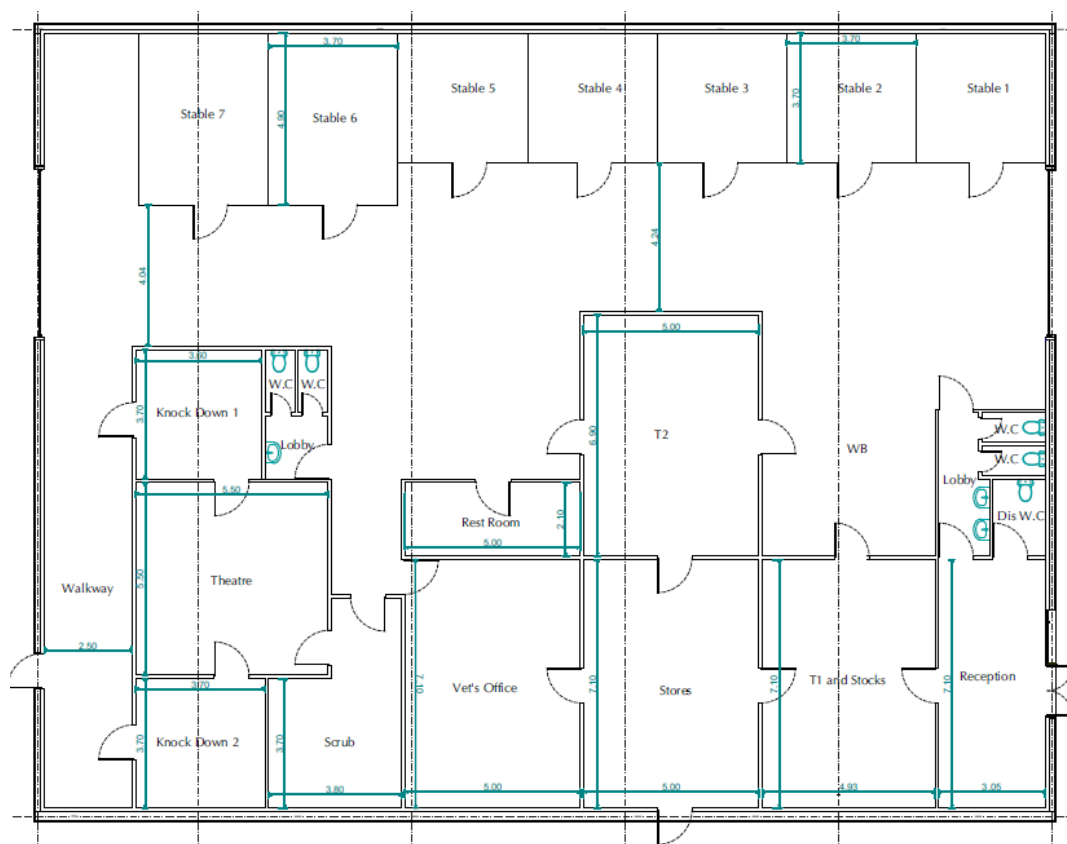


Figure 2: Proposed Floor Plan

3.2 Landscaping

Native hedgerow will be replanted to the north and west of the building to ensure sufficient screening to limit wider visual and landscape effects in line with recommendations from the Landscape Consultants.

3.3 Appearance

The veterinary building will have dark green corrugated wall cladding external walls, with dark green corrugated roof sheets.

Visually it will be in keeping with the style and size of other equestrian and agricultural buildings in the locality.

3.4 Scale

The building has a footprint of 651.83m², the eaves height is 5.52m and the ridge height is 8.54m.

3.5 Access

As per the Highways Liaison Officers comments in the Pre-application Report the change to the overall traffic network will be minimal due to the proposed relocation of the veterinary practice, and fewer vehicles will pass through Hook Norton.

4.0 Third Party Reports

4.1 Landscape and Visual Appraisal

A **Landscape and Visual Appraisal** was undertaken by Crestwood Environmental Ltd. on the building. To summarise the report states that the landscape and visual effects of the proposed veterinary building are generally localised. There are no publicly accessible locations from which the proposed development would be visible due to the undulating nature of the topography and no cumulative landscape or visual effects have been identified.

The complete Landscape and Visual Appraisal accompanies this submission.

4.2 Transport Statement

A **Transport Statement** was undertaken by Development Transport Planning Consultancy (DTPC). To summarise the Statement, traffic flows have been assessed, the location has no capacity issues based on a robust view of the flows and no capacity issues are expected to arise. As such the scheme would have little or no impact on the local network for the day to day proposed uses.

The complete Transport Statement accompanies this submission.

4.3 Preliminary Ecological Assessment

A **Preliminary Ecological Assessment** including initial walk over survey was undertaken by Wharton Tree & Ecology Consultants Ltd. as per the recommendation from the Ecology Officer in the Pre-application Report. To summarise the report no further surveys are required as part of the proposed development.

As recommended two Swift Nest boxes and Greenwood Ecostyocrete bat boxes have been integrated into the proposed development. They are located on the south west and north east elevations as per drawing no. 3214-A.02.2.

The complete Preliminary Ecological Assessment accompanies this submission.

5.0 Planning Policy

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

The NPPF sets out the three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. These dimensions, which are seen as mutually dependent, give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- The **economic role** should ensure that sufficient land to the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure.
- The **social role** supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply the housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the communities needs and support health, social and cultural well-being.
- Lastly the **environmental role** should contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

Amongst the core principles set out in the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities' are urged to seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

As the NPPF is the National Policy that all LPAs Policies need to be compliant with, it therefore carries significant weight in planning decisions.

5.2 Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1)

The Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 was formally adopted by Cherwell District Council on the 20th of July 2015 and therefore carries significant weight in planning decisions and takes precedence over National Policy.

Policy SLE1 states that: *“unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated, employment development in the rural areas should be located within or on the edge of villages within Category A as identified in Policy Villages 1”*.

It should be recognised that the proposed use is one that is not particularly appropriate within the built-limits of a settlement. There are some advantages of the use in this particular location, given that a farrier operates from the site and the existing equestrian use. Due to the scale and nature of the proposed development it is not possible for it to be located within or on the edge of a Category A village, it had previously been located within Hook Norton.

The principle of development is acceptable and exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated for this particular location.

The Proposed Development is considered to comply with local plan policies ***PSD1***, ***ESD10*** and ***ESD13*** and is not considered to:

- Cause undue visual intrusion in to the open countryside;
- Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography;
- Be inconsistent with local character;

- Impact on areas judged to have a high level tranquillity;
- Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark feature; or
- Harm the historic value of the landscape.

6.0 Conclusions

In conclusion the application should be granted because of the reasons outlined above. The scheme is policy compliant and as per the Pre-application Report an LVIA has been undertaken which demonstrates that the proposed location of the building will not be visible except from in the immediate vicinity due to the undulating topography.

The materials proposed are characteristic of equine buildings and are in keeping with rural buildings in the locality.

We respectfully ask that Planning permission is granted for our proposals.