

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PLANNING APPLICATION

The purpose of this statement is to support this Planning Application and address the issues raised during the Pre-Application meeting with the Ellena Fletcher on 23rd January 2019 and subsequent correspondence.

Mixed Use

The first aspect of this application is a change from agricultural to mixed use. We have no detailed knowledge of the historical use of the site save that it was previously owned by developers who made an unsuccessful application to build houses approximately 3 years ago. We also know that during much of the developer's ownership a herd of about 20 horses was grazed there.

We own 2 horses which we intend to keep on this land. In addition, we permit a shepherd to graze the field with sheep. No rent is paid. It is doubtful the land has any agricultural value in light of its location. It is close to the settlement boundary and as far as we know there are no longer any working farms on Bleadon Hill.

In all the circumstances mixed use is a sensible use of the land

The Building and Location

The proposal is for the erection of a timber clad building consisting of 2 stables and a hay store. The ridge line will stand 2.968 meters, it will be 10.789 meters long and 5.499 meters wide. The roof will be built of black "onduline" sheeting. The design is of a traditional stable consistent with other agricultural/equine buildings in the vicinity.

In accordance with the pre-application planning advice, the stable will be sited in the north western corner of the site adjacent to the road but 5 meters to the south of the hedge.

The entrance to the stable will face to the east, away from the nearby hedgerow to the west. There will be no external lighting as we are keen to ensure that any bats using the hedgerow and meadow for commuting and foraging are not unnecessarily disturbed.

By siting the stable here, we will avoid the need to build it in the field to the south which potentially has more ecological value as it is only semi improved.

A line of native trees and shrubs will be planted close to the east side of the stable to reduce the visual impact. The planting envisaged will contribute to the habitat available to wildlife and in a small way contribute to nature conservation and bio diversity.

In our submission the design of the building and its proposed location fits well with the strong rural character of the area. There are large surrounding fields, a number of which have the benefit of agricultural/equine buildings. The proposal is therefore sympathetic to the rural

landscape and does not cause any visual harm. It is our belief the size, scale, siting and materials proposed respect the visual character and cause no harm to the view into or out of the ANOB which lies approximately 312 meters to the east.

Bat Survey

A bat survey has been commissioned from Quantock Ecological dated 3rd September 2019. There is no finding in this survey that the proposed development will in any way be harmful to bats.

Hard standing

The applicants will use the current driveway for hard standing which will accommodate 2 vehicles. The driveway has been surfaced with a permeable consolidated material sourced from local stone through which water can drain easily. There is a "raised transition" of approximately 20 mm at the access gate so that gravel is retained within the site. It is not intended that visiting vehicles park on the grassed area of the field

Access

The only access to the site is the existing gated entrance from Bleadon Hill. It seems this has been in situ for many years. However, a gate has been set further back 12 meters from the original access point to enable agricultural vehicles to pull off the highway safely. The driveway has been enclosed with a post and rail stock proof fence in keeping with similar fences in adjoining fields.

To provide a sufficient visibility splay to the east it is proposed that a small section of the hedge now immediately to the east of the gate and measuring approximately 3 meters is removed and replaced with a stock proof post and rail fence. This will facilitate safer egress from the site.

The vegetation within the visibility splays at both sides of the access will be cut back so no vegetation will exceed a height of 600 mm.

The applicants confirm that any new works within the highway boundary will be to the council's specification and that prior to any further works, the applicants will arrange with the council's Streets and Open Spaces Highway Maintenance Team for their approval of any works within the highway.

Private Equestrian Use

This development will not be used for commercial purposes. It is envisaged that 2 horses will be stabled at the site and on occasions a small flock of sheep.

Highway Safety

It is within our own knowledge that Bleadon Hill is used extensively already by horses and their riders. In fine weather we regularly see 3 or 4 riders a day negotiating Bleadon Hill. Accordingly, the presence of horses on the road is a familiar experience for many local road users who, in our experience, are considerate and careful.

It is acknowledged that on occasions we will ride horses from the site and along Bleadon Hill to access bridleways and the like. There are bridleways situated at the end of Roman Road which gives access to the West Mendip Way. There is a further bridleway off Shiplate Road, up over Bleadon Hill to Hutton and there is also a route down the hill, through Uphill to the beach.

There is also considerable scope to exercise the horses within the 6.2 acres that constitute the site we own. We also have an arrangement with an adjoining land owner to ride through adjacent fields and access Bleadon Hill approximately 90 meters from its junction with Roman Road.

In all the circumstances it seems to us there will be no harm to highway safety as a result of this proposed development. We have described above how vehicles will be able drive straight onto the hard standing within the site.

Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

It seems to us the proposed development will help conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the ANOB. There is historic evidence that horses and equine stock have grazed and ridden extensively over the Mendip Hills for thousands of years. To this extent we are continuing a tradition which is part of the Mendip landscape.

Archaeology

The planning officer has confirmed that the area proposed for the erection of the stable and the hard standing is in an area of recorded archaeology. Further, that, "based on the likelihood that the archaeology is of local or regional, rather than national, importance, it would likely be that the remains would not warrant preservation in situ". The applicant, therefore, will keep a watching brief during the excavations necessary to complete this development and ensure that any remains which come to light are recorded, preserved and reported to the local authority.

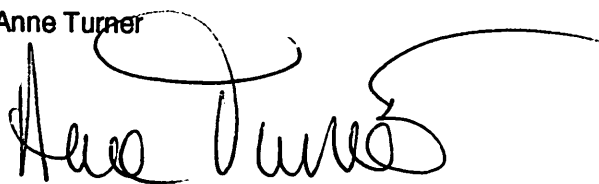
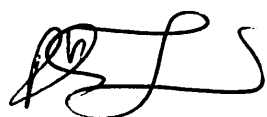
Waste Disposal

Any building waste arising from this development will be removed and recycled as appropriate or disposed of at the local recycling center. Top soil will be reused around the site. Animal waste will be spread over the fields that we own in time honored fashion as organic fertilizer.

This statement is true to the best of our knowledge and belief.

Signed: Paul Turner

Signed: Anne Turner



Date 31/10/19

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