

Agenda Item 82.

Development Management Ref No	No weeks on day of committee	Parish	Ward	Listed by:
162288	17	Remenham	Remenham, Wargrave, Ruscombe	Major

Applicant Location Spink Property
Malmesbury, Dairy Lane, Remenham Hill, Remenham, Henley-on-Thames **Postcode** RG9 3BQ

Proposal Full application for the proposed creation of a polo facility for private use, comprising of a polo field, exercise track, stable block, all weather practice area, summer pavilion and widening of existing access onto A4130

Type Full

PS Category 006

Officer Daniel Ray

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Planning Committee on 7 December 2016
REPORT PREPARED BY Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services

SUMMARY

The application proposes the erection of a stable block with a footprint of 720sqm, a 500m exercise track which would be unfenced, an all-weather practice area measuring 100m by 80m and a polo pitch measuring 275m by 145m as well as a small summer pavilion adjacent to the polo pitch. Works to the access would provide safe egress on to and off of the A4130 which is to the north of the site. 10 spaces would be provided for 4 full time members of staff and 14 part time staff members.

The site is an area of former parkland associated with the Park Place Estate. Planning permission, O/2008/1353 was granted for the erection of 5 dwellings which has broken up the estate in to a number of residential curtilages. In doing so inappropriate built form and associated landscaping for the former golf course that was on the site has been removed and the quality of the Green Belt and Countryside improved greatly.

The application site has also had planning permission for a single dwelling (RM/2010/1234 & EXT/2013/1133) approved however this consent has recently expired. This proposal seeks to return this area of parkland back in to single ownership and to provide a private polo facility to be associated with the Grade II Park Place House.

The proposal would ensure that the openness of the Green Belt is retained through sensitive landscaping and planting measures and the overall massing and volume of the built form is reduced with the Green Belt as the formerly consented house would no longer be constructed. For the same reasons, there would be no impact detrimental impact on the character and setting of the adjacent Grade II* Registered Park and Garden (Park Place). There would be no detrimental impact on the residential amenity of nearby neighbours and highway safety would be retained.

Subject to no objection from the Council's Ecologist and the use of the conditions recommended herein the report, it is recommended that this application is approved.

PLANNING STATUS

- Area of Special Landscape Importance
- Contaminated Land Zone
- Countryside
- Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
- Green Belt
- Green Route
- Groundwater Protection Zone
- Historic Park and Garden (adjacent to Park Place)
- Minerals Consultation Zone
- Local Wildlife Site
- Wind Turbine Safeguarding Zone

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

1. Timescale

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Approved Details

This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered 16/1997-20 rev D, 16/1997-21 Rev C, 16/1997-22 Rev C, 16/1997-23 Rev A, 16/1997-P40, 16/1997-41, 16/1997-30 Rev B and 8160507/6101 received by the local planning authority on 2 August 2016 and drawing numbered 502-0012-001 received by the local planning authority on 24 October 2016 and drawing number 028-P100 Rev F received by the local planning authority on 23 November 2016. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

3. Ground and building levels

No development shall take place until a measured survey of the site and a plan prepared to scale of not less than 1:500 showing details of existing and proposed finished ground levels (in relation to a fixed datum point) and finished 'track' and roof levels shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and the approved scheme shall be fully implemented prior to the occupation of the building(s).

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory form of development relative to surrounding buildings and landscape. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB21.

4. External materials

Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building/s shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory.
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3

5. Details of boundary walls and fences etc.

Before the development hereby permitted is commenced details of all boundary treatment(s) shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development or phased as agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for so long as the development remains on the site.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and highway safety.
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6

6. Landscaping

Prior to the commencement of the development, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structure (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc). Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development).

7. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until details of a lighting scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall include measures to minimise sky glow and light spillage to neighbouring properties. Such details as may be approved shall be implemented in full before the first use of the development and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the area. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 7 (Requiring Good Design), Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB21.

8. No development shall take place within the site until the applicant, or their agents or their successors in title, has secured a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one phase of work) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition.

Reason: To ensure that any archaeological remains within the site are adequately investigated and recorded or preserved in situ in the interest of protecting the archaeological heritage of the borough.

9. Parking details required

Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, details of off-street parking space within the site for 10 spaces. The spaces shall not be occupied until the parking spaces so-approved has been provided in full accordance with the approved details. The parking space shall thereafter be retained in accordance with the approved details and shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

Reason: To ensure adequate on-site parking provision in the interests of highway safety, convenience and amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

10. Visibility splay provision

Prior to the occupation of the development the proposed vehicular access shall have been formed and provided with visibility splays shown on the approved drawing number 8160507/6101. The land within the visibility splays shall be cleared of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height and maintained clear of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

11. Access surfacing

No building shall be occupied until the vehicular access has been surfaced with a permeable and bonded material across the entire width of the access for a distance of 10 metres measured from the carriageway edge.

Reason: To avoid spillage of loose material onto the highway, in the interests of road safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP6.

12. Access to be provided before development

No other development of the site as hereby approved shall take place until the access has been constructed in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: To ensure adequate access into the site for vehicles, plant and

deliveries associated with the development in the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

13. Gates

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no gates or barriers shall be erected unless set back a distance of at least 10 metres from the highway boundary and so as to open away from the highway

Reason: To ensure that vehicles do not obstruct the highway whilst waiting for gates or barriers to be opened or closed, in the interests of road safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

14. Construction method statement

No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:

- i) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
- ii) loading and unloading of plant and materials,
- iii) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development,
- iv) the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate,
- v) wheel washing facilities,
- vi) measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction,
- vii) a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety & convenience and neighbour amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

15. Accommodation of construction vehicles and deliveries etc.

No development shall commence until provision has been made to accommodate all site operatives, visitors and construction vehicles loading, off-loading, parking and turning within the site during the construction period, in accordance with details to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The provision shall be maintained as so-approved and used for no other purposes until completion of the development or otherwise as provided for in the approved details

Reason: To prevent queuing and parking off site, in the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP6

16. Traffic associated with development hereby permitted, including but not limited to, HGV's, Trailers and cars, shall not use Dairy Lane as a means of access to the site.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03.

17. The development hereby permitted shall be used only as a private facility by the

occupiers and guests of Park Place only. There shall be no public access and it shall not be used as a private club. No public events associated with the development hereby permitted shall take place at any time.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the area. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 7 (Requiring Good Design), Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB21.

18. The number of polo matches taking place on the polo pitch hereby permitted shall be limited to a total of 40 matches per annum. A record of the number of matches, dates and times shall be recorded and be made available to view by the Local Planning Authority at all times.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the area. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 7 (Requiring Good Design), Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB21.

19. There shall be no public address system or amplification on the polo field at any time.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the area. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 7 (Requiring Good Design), Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB21.

Informatives

1. The Head of Highways at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham [0118 9746000] should be contacted for the approval of the access construction details before any work is carried out within the highway (including verges and footways). This planning permission does NOT authorise the construction of such an access or works.
2. Adequate precautions shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on adjacent highways. For further information contact the Highway Authority on tel.: 0118 9746000.
3. Any works/ events carried out by or on behalf of the developer affecting either a public highway or a prospectively maintainable highway (as defined under s.87 New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA)), shall be co-ordinated and licensed as required under NRSWA and the Traffic Management Act 2004 in order to minimise disruption to both pedestrian and vehicular users of the highway.

Any such works or events, and particularly those involving the connection of any utility to the site must be co-ordinated by the developer in liaison with the Borough's Street Works team (0118 974 6302). This must take place AT LEAST three months in advance of the intended works to ensure effective co-ordination with other works so as to minimise disruption.

4. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been

received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant in terms of:

- addressing the evolving planning policy context;
- planning issues relating to ecology;
- addressing concerns relating to highway safety;
- amended plans being submitted by the applicant to overcome concerns relating to neighbour amenity and Conservation issues.

The decision to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.

PLANNING HISTORY

O/2008/1353 - Outline application for the demolition of 8 dwellings and erection of 5 new dwellings. Change of use of 3 dwellings to form 2 boathouses and guest accommodation. Conversion of 2 dwellings to form 1 dwelling. Alterations to the barns and the bungalow to form a single residential unit plus alterations and extensions to existing buildings – APPROVED

RM/2010/1234 - Reserved Matters application on outline consent O/2008/1353 for the erection of one dwelling (Aspect West- New Dairy Farm) Reserved Matters to be considered for the siting design (including floorspace height massing internal layout & external appearance) access and landscaping – APPROVED

EXT/2013/1133 - Application to extend implementation date for planning consent RM/2010/1243 for a further 3 years (Reserved Matters application on outline consent O/2008/1353 for the erection of one dwelling (Aspect West- New Dairy Farm) Reserved Matters to be considered for the siting design (including floorspace height massing internal layout & external appearance) access and landscaping.) - APPROVED

161849 - Full application for the proposed erection of a new dwelling. – PENDING CONSIDERATION

SUMMARY INFORMATION

For Residential

Site Area	23ha
Previous land use	Recent consent residential
Proposed land use	Equestrian
Proposed parking spaces	10

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Remenham Parish Council

The Parish Council have not objected to this application however would like to seek to ensure that:

- Minimal external lighting to be no higher than 2m
- The volume of buildings should not be higher than that for the alternative consented Malmesbury House
- Noise should be minimised by rotating the exercise track in behind the equine centre and not allowing the use of klaxons,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of matches should be limited during regatta times when the local traffic on the A4130 is already very high.
Berkshire Archaeology	No objection, subject to the use of a condition to ensure appropriate archaeological works are undertaken. (Condition 8)
WBC Biodiversity Officer	<p>Initial concerns related to lack of information regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on nearby Local Wildlife Site Impact on Protected Species <p>Further details were requested and have been submitted and further comments will be reported in due course.</p>
WBC Environmental Health	Raised no objection.
WBC Tree and Landscape	<p>Initial comments received requested further details and clarification on a number of details, revised details were submitted and as such no objection was made subject to the following details being secured by way of condition:</p> <p>The area around the new stable block will need to be detailed further and if appropriate can be dealt with by condition. I would be looking for the following additional information as part of a conditions application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent of new car park area and how it relates to new stables (to include existing and proposed levels). How the existing access road will be widened (at least 2 trees to be removed) and how there will be a connection from the existing access into the site. Additional planting along the northern boundary to help filter open views into the site that will be obtained of the parking area and the stable block and suggest this could also include trees as well as a new hedgerow. Replacement trees for those to be removed adjacent to the site entrance to enable the access road to be widened. Removal of the existing (2.5m) fence on part perimeter of existing stables to be replaced with new hedgerow and trees to reduce built elements in the Green Belt and to strengthen the existing landscape structure. Additional tree planting in area of exercise track. Additional hedge planting on the western side of the arena where it is not buried in the ground. This will help visually soften the 2m high fencing in longer views in this direction. <p>I would like to see the slight amendment of the location of the arena so that it is 5m from the boundary with Hurley Lodge in the north eastern corner. Revised details have now been received moving the arena.</p>
WBC Conservation Officer	No objection to this application which follows a lengthy period of pre-app discussions, site visits and revisions. The most recent change was to relocate the proposed exercise track from the west of the proposed polo pitch to a position south of the

proposed stable block.

Prior to the applicant taking ownership of the entire park and mansion, this section of the historic park was formerly set out as a golf course and club house. The area was restored by the applicant to park land as part of the conservation management plan covering the wider 2* Historic Park and Garden. It had become separated from the mansion as part of the retained park following the refurbishment and sale of the grade 2 house together with some 200 acres of parkland. The applicant currently has planning permission for a contemporary single storey house within the area now proposed for the polo field. This permission would be relinquished as part of any approval for the polo field scheme.

The most significant new structure would be the part timber/part stone stable block to the north of the application site. This substantial quadrangle of buildings would have an impact on some views from within this part of the park, particularly from the south and east. In response to these concerns, it has been set down into the ground and located back, adjacent to the existing Equine Centre building. Additional/relocated semi mature trees, (re)planted as parkland groups, are proposed to provide some filtering of views from these aspects.

The polo pitch itself would not require any material regrading of the landscape as the existing fall towards the north is near optimal for drainage and this part of the park is relatively flat. The most significant change would therefore be the nature of the grass insofar as it will be managed as a recreational surface during the playing season. The pavilion is of a size and design, and is location in a position (against a backdrop of woodland), which would limit its prominence within the landscape. A small area of woodland to the south of the polo pitch would need to be removed, but this loss would be more than offset through replacement planting to the northwest. The area of parkland grassland surrounding the pitch would continue to be managed as such.

The relocated position for the (unfenced) exercise track will still result in some visual intrusion. When looking west from the raised section of the park containing the current site compound, towards the existing Equine Centre building and proposed site for the stables, the park has an attractive undulating parkland character to the south of these buildings. By moving the track to this (northerly) location, then it should 1) follow the existing contours as much as possible to minimise the extent of cutting in to the rising land to the west and 2) additional parkland tree planting replaces those lost due to the track.

The all-weather practice area is proposed to be located on the existing site compound/car parking area to the east of the park.

	<p>The provision of some limited bunding, setting down of the area within the ground, and proposed parkland tree screening, should minimise the impact of this facility on the character of the park.</p> <p>The proposed upgrading of the perimeter access track to the north raises no serious concerns as this will be set down and not appear within views from the south. The irrigation lake, at the low point within the landscape would appear as a natural feature.</p> <p>Overall the proposed polo pitch and associated facilities will have an impact on the character of this part of the park. However, the harm is considered to be limited, and mitigated through proposed planting and the setting down of the buildings/structures to minimise their presence. It should also be recognised that within the tradition of country estates, a facility such as this is not untypical. Furthermore, this scheme would 1) remove permission for a substantial dwelling and 2) reunite a substantial area of parkland within the ownership of the mansion and reduce the potential risk of future fragmentation of character through multiple ownerships. On balance the scheme is therefore considered to be acceptable on conservation grounds.</p>
WBC Highways	<p>No objection has been made by Highways. Further information was requested including details on the volume of traffic, number of staff, a swept path analysis of the entrance was requested and a Road Safety Audit was requested.</p> <p>All of these details were submitted by the applicant, and have been assessed by the Highways Officer and subject to the use of conditions, the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the highway safety.</p>

REPRESENTATIONS

- 12 Letters were received from local residents outlining concerns and objections; the comments raised are as follows:
 - Relocate the exercise track to a less obtrusive location (Para. 20)
 - No equestrian vehicles should use Dairy Lane (Cond. 16)
 - Lighting should be limited and lower than proposed (Cond. 7)
 - Would like to retain the open landscape (Para's 10 – 14)
 - The level of traffic shall be high during the 'Regatta' months (Para's 22-25)
 - Concerned with the impact of 40 horses on the character of the landscape (Para's 10-14)
 - The exercise track is too close to residents on Dairy Lane (Para's 19-21)
 - Access to the training pitch is not clearly defined (Para's 10 – 14)
 - The number of large vehicles entering and exiting the site will be dangerous given the level of traffic on the A4130. (Para's 22-25)
 - The area is an accident black spot. (Para's 22-25)
 - Noise from the existing stable already occurs (Para's 19-21)
 - Noise disturbance from exercising horses for up to 2 or 3 hours at a time. (Para's 19-21)
 - The exercise track would lead to overlooking to properties on Dairy Lane. (Para's 19-21)

- The level of the stable should be lowered. (Para's 10 – 14)
- The size of the stables is too large and would have a negative effect on the Green Belt and village (Para's 10-14)
- Noise from the existing stable generated by a leaf-blower as early as 7am is inappropriate. (Para's 19-21)
- Is there enough provision for the treatment of effluent and dirty water (Building Control)
- The site should be accessed from other entrances and not via the A4130. (Para's 22-25)
- Degradation of the Green Belt (Para's 1-9)
- A full traffic survey should be submitted (Para's 22-25)
- Concern that the 'private use' will become public. (Cond. 17)
- One letter of objection regarding the relocation of the track to the north, with the original position preferred. (Para's 19-21)

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy policies:

CP1 - Sustainable Development

CP3 - General Development Principles

CP7 - Biodiversity

CP9 - Scale and Location of Development Proposals

CP11 - Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside)

CP12 - Greenbelt

Managing Development Delivery Document (Local Plan) (adopted February 2014)

CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC02 – Development Limits

CC03 - Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping

CC04 - Sustainable Design and Construction

CC06 - Noise

CC07 - Parking

CC09 - Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)

CC10 - Sustainable Drainage

TB01 – Development in the Green Belt.

TB21 - Landscape Character

TB23 - Biodiversity and Development

TB25 - Archaeology

Supplementary Planning Documents

Wokingham Borough Design Guide (BDG) Supplementary Planning Document (2012)

Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (28 May 2010)

PLANNING ISSUES

Principle of Development

1. The application site is within the open countryside, within a Grade 2* Historic Park and Garden, within an Area of Special Landscape Importance and within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The site once formed part of the Park Place Estate, however the estate has since been fragmented and until recent years was a golf course.
2. Planning Permission was granted (O/2008/1353) that covered much of the former estate which included the creation of five new dwellings within the former estate. One of the dwellings was located within the application site, the reserved matters for which were subsequently approved (RM/2010/1234 & EXT/2013/1133) refer to Appendix 1. Planning Permission has subsequently lapsed for this dwelling, however an identical application has been submitted for the same scheme (161849), the applicant has stated that this would be withdrawn should planning consent be granted for the polo pitch. If however the application for a new house is not withdrawn, a S106 agreement would have to be entered in to as part of the new application (161849) to ensure that only one of the proposed schemes is commenced should planning permission be granted for two different schemes on the same site.
3. The original masterplan for Park Place (as submitted under O/2008/1353) as a whole included the demolition of a large number of inappropriate buildings that had a negative effect on the character, openness and setting of the Green Belt, with the volume of the demolished buildings being traded for the new dwellings and structures associated with the five new dwellings.
4. This application proposes to depart from the original approach by reducing the number of dwellings within the estate down to four and reintegrating this site in to the curtilage of the Park Place House and back in to one ownership. Thus restoring a large area of the estate back in to its original curtilage.
5. The proposed use of the land would be for equestrian purposes with a polo pitch, exercise track, practice arena and stables being introduced. Equestrian use is an acceptable form of development within the countryside, however the NPPF and Development Plan Policies CP12 (Core Strategy) within Wokingham Borough highlight that there is a presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Policy TB01 within the MDD states that approval may be given for the use of land which preserves the openness of the Green Belt and which does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
6. The proposed use of the land as a private polo facility that would be limited to 40 matches a year would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with any of the purposes of including land in it. The proposed development would meet with the objectives for the use of land in the Green Belt as it would provide an opportunity for outdoor sport and recreation. This opportunity does not need to be for public access to meet the objective.
7. The proposal would include the widening of an existing access, the erection of a new stable block with additional parking (10 spaces), the erection of a small viewing pavilion and the formation of an exercise track and sunken practice arena. The volume of the stables (720sqm gross internal floor space) is much less than the approved scheme for the house (1125sqm gross internal floor space) thus reducing the overall built volume within the Green Belt. The proposed stable would be located close to the existing stable

with the parking area and thereby is not considered to result in excessive encroachment of development within the countryside. In any case, the level of hardstanding is much reduced for what would have been provided as part of the drive to the approved house RM/2010/1234 & EXT/2013/1133 (the layout plan for this scheme has been provided at Appendix 1).

8. The proposed exercise track and arena are all to be sunken in to the landscape (by between 1 and 1.5m) thus retaining open views across the Green Belt. As a result, the proposed operations associated with the proposed development would maintain openness and again would not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt.

9. As a result, the proposal does not amount to inappropriate development within the Green Belt. A number of previous appeal decisions have concluded that polo and associated activities have been found not to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt and is an accepted countryside and traditional estate use of the land. As such, the proposed development is acceptable in principle, subject to all other material planning considerations. Therefore, the proposal accords with policies CP1, CP3, CP11 and CP12 of the Core Strategy and MDD Policy TB01 in this respect.

Character and Appearance

10. The Polo pitch would be located on an area of grassland which is interspersed with several mature trees. The pitch itself is on an existing flat piece of land where minimal levelling works would be required. There would be no net loss of trees, despite the need to remove several trees, as these would be transplanted or replaced. This would be secured via a landscaping condition (Cond. 6) that would require the exact planting specification to ensure that there would be no net loss, but instead an enhancement of planting whilst retaining the openness of the Green Belt and Estate.

11. The proposed exercise track would be located to the south of an existing stable and the proposed stable. Views from the public vantage points to the north and east would be limited, however the exercise track would be unfenced and cut in to the landscape so that any views across the parkland would appear level and unbroken thus retaining the openness of the Green Belt and Parkland.

12. The application also proposes an open arena for the training of horses and practice during the winter months. This is located on an area of existing hardstanding which has been used as a site office and storage area through the development of the estate. Again, the arena would be sunk in to the ground with bunding and planting around it. Through a landscaping condition (Cond. 6); including the requirement for all levels to be agreed, the arena would have a limited impact on the openness and character of the Green Belt.

13. The stable itself is of a substantial size, however following officer advice and negotiation with the Council, it has been proposed that the stables be set slightly further southwards in to the site (approximately 5metres), as reflected by the submission of amended plans adjacent to the existing equine centre building, and set down. As a result, the height of the stables is reduced and, whilst views from the public realm would be limited, views from the south of the parkland would be less imposing than if the stables were constructed at existing ground level. Additional/relocated semi mature trees, (re)planted as parkland groups, are proposed to provide some filtering of views from these aspects. Parking and hardstanding would be limited to the north of the stables and would not be seen from within the parkland.

14. In addition, a small timber pavilion is proposed to the east of the polo pitch. The pavilion is of a size and design and in a position (against a backdrop of woodland), which would limit its prominence within the landscape. A small area of woodland to the south of the polo pitch would need to be removed, but this loss would be more than offset through replacement planting to the northwest. The area of parkland grassland surrounding the pitch would continue to be managed as such.

Overall, the proposed development would lead to an increase in planting and reduce the overall volume of buildings within the Green Belt from previously consented schemes. There would be no adverse impact on the openness and character of the green belt, subject to the use of landscaping conditions and the use of appropriate materials for the development as a whole. It is considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area including the Green Belt. Therefore, the proposal accords with policies CP3, CP11 and CP12 of the Core Strategy and policy TB01 and TB21 of the MDD in this respect.

Conservation issues

15. The site is within the setting of the Park Place Grade II* Registered Park and Garden. However, following consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer, the proposed development is considered to have a positive impact on the character and setting of the Park as a whole. The scheme would remove a dwelling from the Green Belt and estate whilst introducing a facility that is within the tradition of country estates and re-unite a substantial area of parkland within the ownership of the Park Place mansion and ensure that future fragmentation of the site is reduced.

16. Despite this, it is acknowledged that the proposed works would have an effect on the setting of the landscape as there would be an introduction of hardstanding and built form associated with the introduction of the proposed stable and that an area of woodland to the south of the polo pitch would be lost. However, this would be mitigated and compensated by replacement planting that would result in a net gain of woodland which would be ensured through a comprehensive landscaping scheme (Cond. 6).

17. Any views from the south of the site (looking northwards) effected by the introduction of the stable would be lessened as the stable is to be set down in to the ground, thus reducing the appearance of built form within the Green Belt. Additionally the proposed pavilion is of a scale and design, sited against a backdrop of woodland, so that any impact would be minimal.

18. Overall the proposed development would have limited harm on the parkland and would be mitigated through planting and the setting down of the buildings and structures so as to minimise their presence within the landscape. As such, the proposed development accords with policy TB24 of the MDD in this respect.

Impact on Neighbours

19. Due to the nature of the development and the location of the proposed stable, the development would have no impact on neighbouring residents in terms of overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts.

20. Notwithstanding this, concern had been raised that the proposed development would lead to excessive noise from the exercise track on the residents along Dairy Lane. As such, the applicants have submitted revised drawings relocating the exercise

track to the north of these properties and to the south of the existing and proposed stables. This was requested by a number of neighbours and the Parish Council. The result of which moves the exercise track a further ten metres (approximately 50 metres) away from the nearest residents where more mature and denser boundary planting already exists. Although concern has been raised by one resident that by moving the track it would lead to increased noise disturbance for them, the existing planting and proposed planting (final details to be agreed) would ensure that any noise at the boundary would be mitigated by additional and appropriate boundary planting.

21. Concern has been raised that the stables would lead to increased level of noise due to existing management practices such as a leaf blower may be used at unsociable hours. Officers were made aware by a local member that this had been highlighted to the Parish Council and following discussions, this practice has stopped. Regardless, should a statutory noise nuisance take place, this should be reported and dealt with under the relevant Environmental Protection Act. The Environmental Protection team were consulted however no objection has been raised to the proposed development. Therefore, the proposal accords with policies CP01 and CP03 in terms of residential amenity issues.

Highways

22. Following the submission of a Road Safety Audit, amended plans showing safe egress off of and on to the A4130 has been demonstrated as well as additional swept path analysis was submitted and details on the number of vehicles and staff was provided by the applicant and as a result, no objection has been raised by Highways in terms of Highway Safety.

23. As a result, the applicant has been able to demonstrate that the proposed access is acceptable, that adequate turning and vehicle movement space is available within the site for vehicles attracted to the site. It is proposed that access to the site should be to/from the east. In order to enforce this, the access design has been amended and the western radius decreased to physically discourage larger vehicles from undertaking manoeuvres to/from the west. This will also negate the issue of conflict with the new traffic island. Alongside this, private signage will be erected within the site to inform large vehicle drivers of this arrangement.

24. Whilst the detailed parking arrangement has not been defined, plenty of space for adequate parking is to be provided however the specific details shall be submitted as part of Condition 9 for 10 spaces.

25. Subject to the use of appropriate conditions (Conditions 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16) the proposed development would not lead to any detrimental impact on highway safety. Therefore, the proposal accords with policies CP3 and CP6 of the Core Strategy in respect of highway safety and parking issues.

Ecology

26. Initial concern was raised by the Council's Ecology Officer regarding the lack of information in relation to protected species including badgers and newts as well further information on how the development can bring about comparable compensation and wildlife enhancement in accordance with the over-arching Integrated Estate Management Plan that was agreed with the original Outline application to restore and enhance the Estate.

27. Further details have been submitted by the applicant and are currently being assessed by the Ecology Officer. Further details and clarification shall be submitted to the Committee by way of Member Update. The Officer recommendation for approval is subject to satisfactory details being submitted and appropriate conditions being used following a further response from the Ecology Officer.

Archaeology

28. Given that the new proposals will involve much more extensive groundwork and landscaping to those originally approved for a single dwelling a watching brief may no longer be the most appropriate scheme of work. Archaeological investigations in 1995 identified two areas of archaeological potential including possible Iron Age occupation and Roman activity and these areas could extend into the polo pitch and Arena area.

29. As such, a condition requiring a scheme of archaeological (Cond. 8) should be attached to any permission granted to ensure that any buried archaeology is preserved by record. Subject to adherence to such a condition, the proposal would comply with policy TB25 of the MDD.

CONCLUSION

Overall the proposed polo pitch and associated facilities would have an impact on the character of this part of the park in terms have having a more prominent leisure use. However, the harm is considered to be limited, and mitigated through proposed planting and the setting down of the buildings/structures to minimise their presence.

The openness of the Green Belt would not be compromised as a result of this development. The proposed stable is in a location next to existing built form and would also be sunken down, thus minimising the appearance of the building with the landscape. The proposed exercise track is also to be sunken so that long views across the park would appear flat and unbroken whilst planting and landscaping, condition 6, would ensure that the character and openness of the Green Belt is retained and enhanced as a result of this development.

In addition it is recognised that within the tradition of country estates, a facility such as this is not untypical. Furthermore, this scheme would remove permission for a substantial dwelling and reunite a substantial area of parkland within the ownership of the mansion and reduce the potential risk of future fragmentation of character through multiple ownerships.

The proposed development would not have an undue impact on highway safety nor would there be a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring development.

Subject to a satisfactory response from the Council’s Ecology Officer and the use of the conditions outlined above, the proposed development is acceptable.

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