Planning, Design & Access Statement

Planning Application for

Erection of horse walker, lunging pen and associated hardstanding

at

Warnham Lodge Farm, Mayes Lane, Warnham,
West Sussex RH12 3SG

on behalf of

Ms K. Dearlove

October 2026

Chartered Town Planner
Royal Town Planning Institute

1. Introduction

1.1. This Statement supports the planning application for the erection of horse walker, lunging pen and associated hardstanding at Warnham Lodge Farm. This Statement should be read in association with application forms and drawings. The proposed facilities are considered to be a reasonable addition to the equestrian property.

1.2. This Statement sets out the background to the application and need for the development, before summarising the site planning history and relevant planning policies. It then analyses the proposals against that background before concluding how the development would meet those policies and other material considerations.

2. Site Description and Proposals

2.1. The application site sits in the countryside on the outskirts of Warnham, accessed off of the western side of Mayes Lane. It comprises of a substantial dwelling with equestrian facilities, set within approximately 24 acres. The equestrian facilities comprise of 12 stables with enclosed yard, tack room, feed room, wash bay/solarium, sandschool and fenced paddocks.

2.2. The new facilities are proposed to the east of the sandschool and north of the driveway, which is bounded by a mature hedgerow and a wide existing gateway. A mature treeline and wooded belt extend along the road side to the east and just inside the northern and western boundaries. A public footpath runs along the northern boundary but views of the site are not afforded through the wooded belt. Only a glimpse of the sandschool itself is visible through a gap where there is a field gate, but views are not afforded of the proposed siting.

2.3. The proposed horse walker would measure 12m in diameter with a height of between 2.75 and 3.5m. The lunging pen would measure 18 x 15m and be enclosed by a 1.6m high post and rail fence. A parking and turning area is proposed for horseboxes. There is currently no parking or turning area for

horseboxes at the site. A photograph of the applicant's horsebox is included below. Post and rail fencing is proposed around the parking area. The facilities are for the private use of the household.



2.4. There will be no change to vehicular movements on and around the site likely to arise from this proposal given that the horses are already stabled at the site.

2.5. The general area is characterised mainly by open fields interspersed with mature trees and hedgerows and some wooded blocks. Land levels are flat across the site. Photographs of the application site are included below for reference.





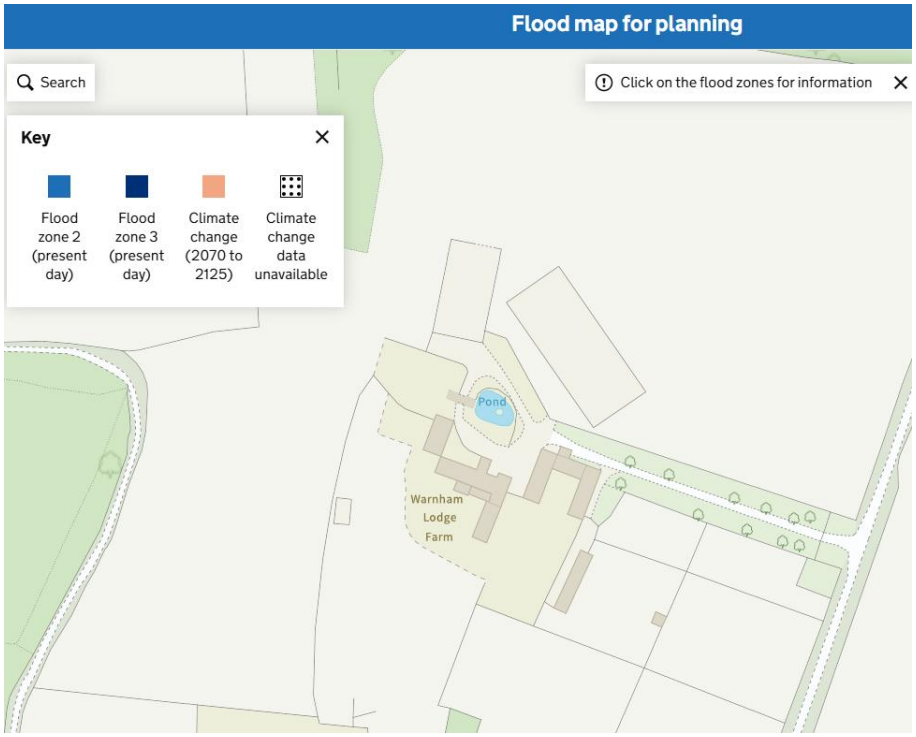
2.6. Further photos of the existing equestrian facilities are included below:



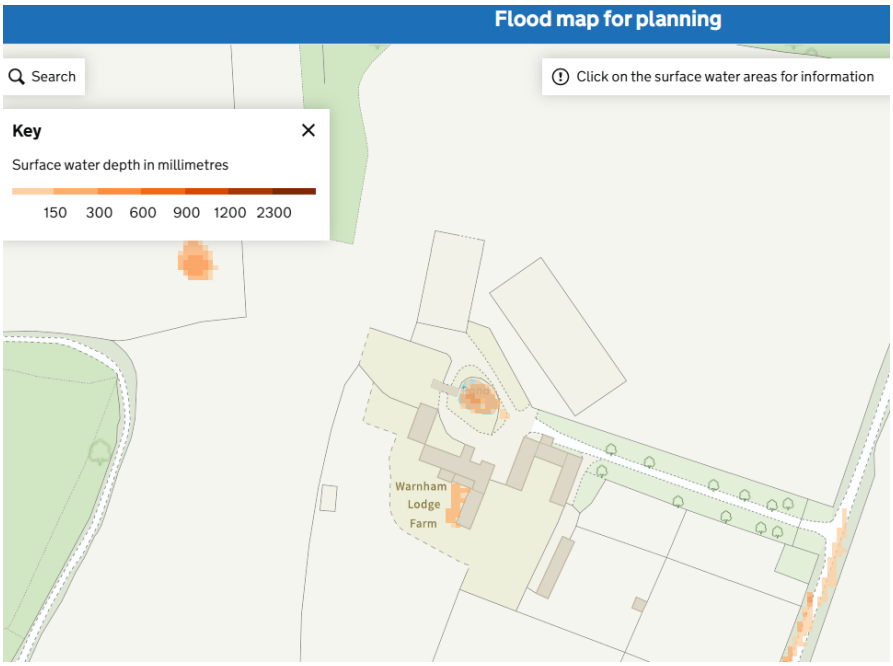




2.7. Warnham Lodge Farm is not listed and there are no heritage assets nearby. The site is not in Flood Zones 2 or 3 as confirmed by the extract from the Flood Map for Planning below:



2.8. The site is also free form surface water flooding as demonstrated by the extract below:


Flood map for planning
Search
Click on the surface water areas for information
Key
Surface water depth in millimetres
150 300 600 900 1200 2300
Warnham
Lodge
Farm

3. Planning History

3.1. The planning history for the property is listed below, although it is noted that a number of the entries relate to a now separate dwelling which exists to the south of the property and is no longer relevant to Warnham Lodge Farm:

- Construction of a sand school
  Ref. No: WN/53/01 | Status: Application Permitted
- Conservatory alterations to existing roof demolition and rebuilding of part ground/first floor accommodation
  Ref. No: WN/12/02 | Status: Application Permitted
- Erection of overhead line & poles
  Ref. No: WN/2/02 | Status: Application Permitted
- Overhead line and poles
  Ref. No: WN/1/03 | Status: Application Permitted
- Change of use of farm building to dwelling
  Ref. No: WN/52/03 | Status: Non-Determination
- Conversion of barn into 1 dwelling.
  Ref. No: WN/6/04 | Status: Application Refused
- Ground floor infill extension
  Ref. No: WN/2/95 | Status: Application Permitted
- Erection of 5 stables, store and wash area
  Ref. No: DC/04/2092 | Status: Application Withdrawn
- Retention of new feed store and provision of new access
  Ref. No: DC/04/2141 | Status: Application Refused
- Erection of stable block
  Ref. No: DC/05/0036 | Status: Application Permitted
- Conversion of barn to ancillary accommodation
  Ref. No: DC/05/0358 | Status: Application Permitted
- Removal of conditon 3 of planning permission DC/05/0358 (Limiting occupation of the dwelling)
  Ref. No: DC/07/0195 | Status: Application Refused
- Permission for the removal of conditions 3, 4 and 5 of planning permission DC/05/0358, which relate to occupation as staff accommodation or purposes ancillary to the occupation and enjoyment of Warnham Lodge

Farm and not used as a separate unit of accommodation as well as parking of vehicles on site and vehicular access.

Ref. No: DC/08/0026 | Status: Application Refused

- Prior approval for a proposed change of use of an agricultural building and land within its curtilage to a single residential dwelling falling within class C3 with associated building operations

  Ref. No: DC/17/2591 | Status: Permit Prior Approval

- Demolition existing residential accommodation and barn. Erection of 1No. dwelling.

  Ref. No: DC/20/0667 | Status: Application Permitted

- Variation of condition 1 of planning permission DC/20/0667 (Demolition existing residential accommodation and barn. Erection of 1No. dwelling). Amendment to siting of dwelling and provision of related levels and landscaping.

  Ref. No: DC/21/0436 | Status: Application Permitted

- Approval of details reserved by conditions 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 on application DC/21/0436.

  Ref. No: DISC/21/0230 | Status: Application Permitted

- Erection of a self-build dwelling with associated landscaping

  Ref. No: DC/25/2100 | Status: Application Refused

4. Planning Policy

4.1. The site is located outside of the Built up area boundary. Applications for development will be assessed against policies contained within the Horsham District Plan 2015 and Warnham Neighbourhood Plan 2019 having regard to the emerging District Plan and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026 as material considerations.

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

4.2. Chapter 3 concerns Decision-making policies with Policy DM3: Determining development proposals requiring local planning authorities to:

"a. Work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner where necessary seeking solutions to problems arising from initial proposals, to enable a timely decision;

b. Take a proportionate approach to the consideration of the planning matters raised by the proposals, in a way that reflects their scale, complexity and potential impact;

d. …Decisions on development proposals should not be delayed in order to secure advice from a statutory or internal consultee beyond their statutory deadlines…

f. Not refuse applications for development which should clearly be approved, having regard to their accordance with the development plan, the policies in this Framework and any other material considerations."

4.3. DM6: Use of planning conditions and obligations states that:

"1. Planning conditions should only be attached to planning permissions and other associated consents for development where they are: a. Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; b. Relevant to the development and to planning considerations generally; c. Sufficiently precise to make them capable of being complied with and enforced; and d. Reasonable in all other respects." Part 3 reiterates that

"Conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided, unless there is a clear justification."

4.4. Chapter 4 Achieving sustainable development Under Policy S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development states that ***"Decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means: …***

b. Outside settlements, policy S5 should be applied; and

c. In all locations, development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in this Framework should be approved without delay."

4.5. Policy S5 sets out that the following ***"development should be approved outside settlements… unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework:***

a. Development for: … outdoor sport and recreation…

4.6. Chapter 14 is entitled 'Achieving well-designed places' and primarily focuses on ensuring that high quality buildings and places are created. More specifically, Policy DP3: Key principles for well-designed places seeks at part 2 g. to ***"create visually attractive, distinctive and characterful development to establish or maintain a strong sense of place and pride, including through the use of a coherent palette of materials, design features and planting".***

4.7. Chapter 19 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' includes Policy N2: Improving the natural environment where proposals should consider ***"habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced"***… and to ***"Conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible; and use appropriate landscaping to help***

create a well-designed place and integrate the development into its surroundings"*.*

4.8. Annex A confirms at part 2 that ***"Development plan policies (or parts of those policies) which are materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies in this Framework should be given very limited weight."***

Horsham District Planning Framework 2015

4.9. Policy 24 relates to 'Environmental Protection' and aims to ensure that the developments minimises the exposure to and the emission of pollutants including noise, odour, air and light pollution.

4.10. Policy 25 relates to 'The Natural Environment and Landscape Character' and seeks to protect against inappropriate development. Where proposals are considered, the onus of the policy is to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape character when taking into account its significance.

4.11. Policy 26 concerns the protection of the countryside location with proposals needing to be essential to its countryside location in addition to providing for quiet informal recreational use of the land and enable sustainable development of the area. Proposals must also be of a scale appropriate to the countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead to a significant increase in overall activity when also having regard to the characteristics of the landscape and the landform of the area.

4.12. Policy 29 specifically deals with equestrian development whereby this will be supported provided the following is met:

"1. It can be demonstrated that the re-use of existing buildings on site for related equestrian use is not appropriate; before new or replacement buildings are considered.

2. The proposal would be appropriate in scale and level of activity, and be in keeping with it's location and surroundings, and where possible is well related to existing buildings;

3. The proposal should where possible be well related to a bridleway network."

4.13. The amplification to policy 29 states that **"Equestrian related development is important to the rural economy of the District. Development of this nature needs to be of high quality and appropriate to its location, particularly in designated areas such as the High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)."** The site is not however within a National Landscape/AONB.

4.14. Policy 31 is entitled 'Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity' and states that development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. The policy promotes mitigation and compensation of any loss to existing green infrastructure.

4.15. Policy 32 concerns the quality of new development stating that "High quality and inclusive design for all development in the district will be required based on a clear understanding of the local, physical, social, economic, environmental and policy context for development."

4.16. Policy 33 provides the development principles with the main aim being "to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment". The policy encourages the efficient use of land and retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. It seeks to ensure that buildings are designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbours and that a high standard of design and layout is applied to ensure that the character of the area is also preserved.

4.17. Policy 41 is relevant to parking where there is an expectation to provide adequate parking and facilities within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users.

<u>Emerging Horsham Local Plan</u>

4.18. The Council formally submitted their new Local Plan to the Inspectorate for examination on 26th July 2024. Despite a number of delays and concerns raised

by the Inspector it is suggested that some weight can be given to the policies of the document, particularly where there are no unresolved objections to them.

4.19. Consideration has been given to policy 33 which is of particular relevance and expands upon policy 29 of the adopted plan and reads as follows:

Policy 33 – Equestrian Development

Equestrian-related development will be supported provided that all of the following are met:

1. It can be demonstrated that the re-use of existing buildings on sites for related equestrian use is not feasible before new or replacement buildings are considered;
2. The proposal is suited to its surroundings in scale and level of activity, and is in keeping with its location and the landscape;
3. The proposal is well related to any existing buildings, utilities and transport infrastructure, including vehicular and field access;
4. The proposal can demonstrate that the stables can be suitably managed without the need for new on-site residential accommodation; and
5. The proposal should, where possible, provide safe access and connections to the local bridleway network for equestrians using the facilities provided.

Warnham Neighbourhood Plan 2019

4.20. Policy W1: Built-Up Area Boundary states that proposals outside of the built up area will not be permitted unless they conform to the policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework. Equestrian development however typically requires a countryside location which the HDPF provides for. Development in visually-intrusive locations will not be supported unless mitigated with appropriate landscape screening.

5. Analysis

5.1. The proposal concerns an application for the erection of a horse walker, lunging pen and associated hardstanding for the private use by the occupiers of the household.

5.2. It is suggested that the following issues are of most relevance in this case and are addressed in detail below:

- Principle of development
- Visual amenities
- Residential amenities
- Flood risk
- Ecology
- Access and parking

Principle of development

5.3. Both the District Plan and NPPF make specific provision for equestrian development and facilities for sport and recreation in the countryside. Policy S5 is clear that these should be approved "unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects". The Warnham Neighbourhood Plan also provides for development outside of the built up area where it complies with the District Plan. The principle of development is there acceptable, subject to the specific criteria of the development plan policies.

5.4. The policies that cover new equestrian development are Policy 29 of the adopted plan and Policy 33 of the emerging plan, as set out in the previous section. The criteria of Policy 33 of the emerging plan are considered in full below (with the criteria of Policy 29 being carried forward into the new policy and therefore not requiring separate consideration).

1. *It can be demonstrated that the re-use of existing buildings on sites for related equestrian use is not feasible before new or replacement buildings are considered;*

The proposed horse walker is a purpose built structure and it is not possible to re-use an existing building for this purpose. The proposed lunging pen does not require a building.

2. *The proposal is suited to its surroundings in scale and level of activity, and is in keeping with its location and the landscape;*

The proposed horse walker and lunging pen are appropriate to the site and would only generate a modest level of activity which is compatible with the location and landscape. Parking and turning is provided which can accommodate the applicant's horsebox. The visual impact on the landscape is considered in further detail later in this statement.

3. *The proposal is well related to any existing buildings, utilities and transport infrastructure, including vehicular and field access;*

The proposed development is well related to the existing development being sited immediately adjacent to the sandschool and the hedge to the south. This is area is also accessed directly from the driveway where access can be gained by horse boxes through an existing field gate. The stables are nearby to the south of the driveway.

4. *The proposal can demonstrate that the stables can be suitably managed without the need for new on-site residential accommodation; and*

The application does not concern new stables. The existing stables are appropriately managed with existing residential accommodation existing on site.

5. *The proposal should, where possible, provide safe access and connections to the local bridleway network for equestrians using the facilities provided.*

Whilst there are bridleways within the surrounding area, particularly to the west off of Northlands Road, the equestrian use is existing and the proposals do not concern an increase in horses. Mayes Lane connects directly to Northlands Road.

5.5. Given the above, the proposal is compliant with all the criteria within policies 29 and 33 in particular. The principle of development should therefore be acceptable.

Visual amenities

5.6. The site is within the countryside but significantly it is not within a National Landscape (formerly AONB). The proposed horse walker is a relatively low level structure which would be expected within the grounds of an equestrian facility and will not therefore appear out of place within the landscape. Both the horse walker and lunging pen are reasonably required for the exercise of horses stabled at the property, noting that there are 12 stables currently.

5.7. A dedicated parking and turning area for horseboxes is also reasonably required. The horsebox is large and measures 10.02m in length and 2.55m in width and therefore requires a dedicated hard surfaced area for turning. The parking area would be surfaced in type 1 MOT with timber post and rail fencing around it. Bollards are proposed inside the fencing. The positioning of the parking area adjacent to the hedge bounding the sandschool and access drive ensure that the visual impact is limited as far as possible. The existing hedgerows will be retained with the development having an appropriate offset to ensure no impact.

5.8. Additional hedge planting could be created around the northern and eastern boundaries, however this is not considered necessary with the timber fencing providing an appropriate boundary treatment. The fencing does not require permission and would constitute permitted development. The application therefore primarily concerns the proposed surfacing and horse walker.

5.9. A small pathway bounded by post a rail fencing links the facilities to the parking area. The levels of activity would be minimal with horses already grazing the fields. Existing boundary vegetation screens the site from the road and the public footpath to the north, with the development not being visible from outside of the site. Therefore no adverse landscape impact is considered to arise from

the proposals. The proposals are considered to comply with polices DP3, 25, 26, 32 and 33 of the adopted plan.

Residential amenities

5.10. In terms of the amenities of neighbouring residents, the nearest dwellings outside of the property are over 130m away on Mayes Lane. This distance, in conjunction with the limited scale of the development and intervening landscaping will ensure that there would be no impact on this property. The facilities would not generate any additional noise or disturbance which could harm neighbour amenities, given the established use and the fact that the horses are already on site. The application would not lead to any additional vehicular movements or disturbance with adequate parking proposed. The proposal therefore complies with policy 33 of the adopted plan.

Flood risk

5.11. The Flood Map for Planning (extracts within section 2) show that the proposed siting of the facilities are free from flooding from rivers and surface water issues. The proposal therefore satisfies the objective of policies to locate development to areas with the least risk of flooding.

5.12. The application site itself is below the threshold of 1 hectare, and therefore a flood risk assessment is not required.

Ecology

5.13. Both the horse walker, lunging pen and parking area would be sited on land which is currently amenity grass which is also actively grazed. The area provides limited suitability for habitats for protected species due to the way the land is currently grazed. The development would not involve any impact upon trees or other ecological features. As existing habitats and natural features would be retained it is not anticipated that there would be any harmful effect upon biodiversity at the site in line with policies N4 and 31. Biodiversity Net Gain will not be required as the site is below 0.2ha.

Access and Parking

5.14. The application includes utilising the existing vehicular access from the Mayes Lane which is safe and appropriate for the existing use. The property offers plenty of space for off-street parking for cars to park and turn. However, there is no space for horseboxes. The application therefore proposes a dedicated parking and turning area for horseboxes adjacent to an existing field gate leading off of the driveway in line with policy 41.

6. Conclusion

6.1. The proposed development is for the erection of a horse walker and lunging pen with associated hardstanding. The development is provided for by planning policy with all criteria of polices 29 and emerging policy 33 met, as confirmed in this statement. The facilities are for the private use of the household.

6.2. The proposals are reasonably sized and sited near to the existing facilities and access. There would be no adverse landscape impact. All existing trees and hedgerows adjacent to the site will be retained.

6.3. For the above reasons, it is respectfully requested that the Local Planning Authority support this planning application and grant permission under delegated powers.



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