



Planning Design and Access Statement

The erection of a storage building and installation of
hardstanding (part retrospective)

at

Beckley Stud
Reeds Lane
Southwater
RH13 9DQ

On Behalf of
Equine America

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared on behalf of Equine America in support of a planning application for the following:

Erection of a storage building for the storage and distribution of equine related products at Beckley Stud, Reeds Road, Southwater.

- 1.2 This Planning Statement sets out the relevant background to assist the Planning Authority in its determination of the planning application.

- 1.3 The statement includes a description of the site and its surroundings, relevant planning history, details of the proposed development, a summary of the planning policy context, and an appraisal of the scheme against all relevant planning considerations.

The application is supported by the following documents and plans:

- Application form and Ownership Certificate
- CIL Forms
- Site Location Plan
- Block Plan
- Proposed Plans and Elevations
- Protected Species Walkover (Leith Ecology)
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Leith Ecology)
- Contaminated Land Assessment (Land Science)

- 1.4 The application is made following an enforcement investigation made by Horsham District Council on 21 March 2023 and relates to Horsham District Council (HDC) reference EN/23/0124.

2 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 Application Site

- 2.1.1 The site is located close to the settlement of Southwater (approximately 0.4km away on the opposite side of the A24). Whilst there is a cluster of development at and around Beckley Stud, the site is located outside of a defined settlement boundary and therefore is located within the countryside. The site comprises approximately 11 acres of land that has a lawful equestrian use. The wider site comprises paddocks, a sand school, lunge arena, a brick built stable building, a mobile home and a dark green coloured, steel clad building with lean-to which has a lawful use for the storage and distribution of Equine America UK products.
- 2.1.2 The dark green steel-clad barn building with lean-to is positioned adjacent to a modern stable block which is currently applying for the change of use to offices via planning reference DC/25/1444, and is used for the storage and distribution of Equine America (EA) products (primarily nutritional supplements for horses).
- 2.1.3 To the west of the existing storage building lies an area of hard standing with up to eight storage containers, which are used for the overflow of the EA products and which are subject to the enforcement notice EN/23/0124. A temporary structure has been erected to enable weather proof storage of the contents of the containers so that they can be removed off site whilst this application is determined. Once determined the temporary structure will then be removed.
- 2.1.4 To the north of the site lie a number of residential buildings, Kings Farm and Equine Sports Vets. To the east of the site beyond Reeds Lane lies Newfoundout Copse.

Figure 2.1 – Site Location Plan

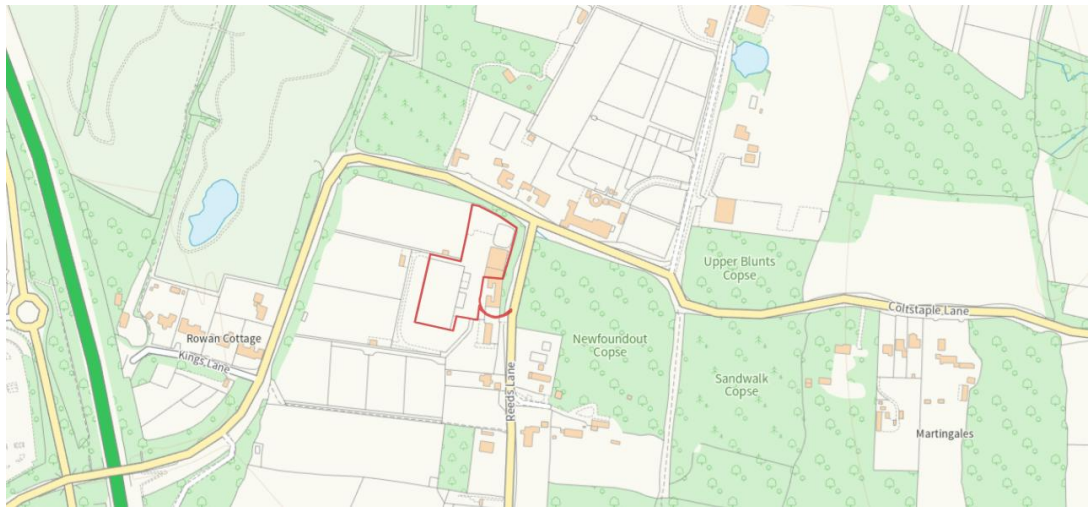
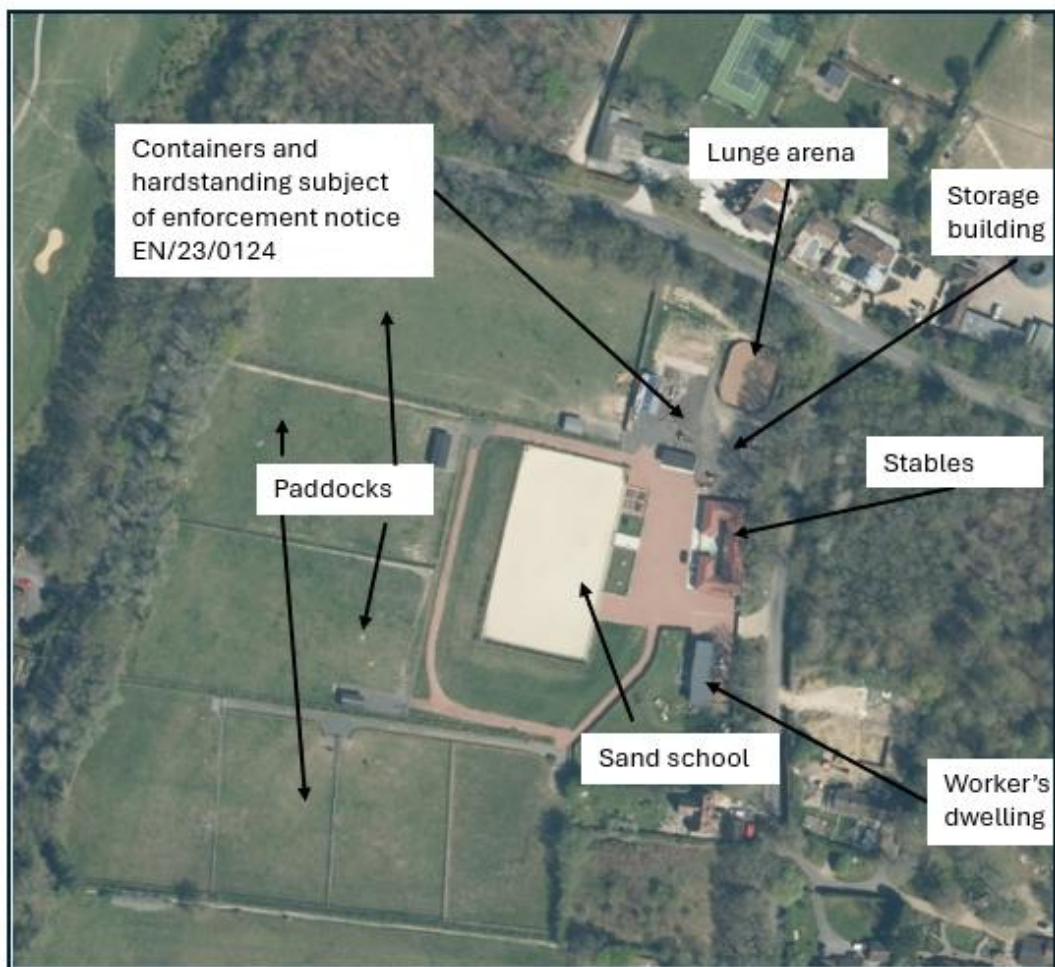


Figure 2.2 – Aerial Plan



- 2.1.5 The application site comprises an area of hardstanding immediately adjacent to a lawful storage building, stables and sand school that form part of the Beckley Stud enterprise. The site is accessed directly off the main access leading directly to Reeds Lane to the east.

2.2 Site Photographs

- 2.2.1 Appendix A shows recent photographs of the site (taken in May 2025). The storage containers and hard standing are shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3 – Site photographs of storage containers and hard standing





2.3 **Background**

- 2.3.1 The applicant is the owner of EA, who are based at Beckley Stud and provides EA with a bespoke research and development facility to test and improve their products as well as a storage and distribution facility for the equine products that are only available through EA.

2.4 **Access**

- 2.4.1 The site is accessed directly from Reeds Lane via an established entrance that leads onto a surfaced track with a parking area. This track provides direct access to yard, storage building, and sand school (application site). As detailed in the accompanying transport assessment, the access is suitable for larger vehicles and adequately accommodates the trips associated with the commercial activities carried out on-site.

2.5 **Environmental and Heritage Designations**

- 2.5.1 The site lies within Flood Zone 1, and outside an area of flood risk. Therefore, a flood risk assessment is not required. The site lies outside of the National Park, or any locally designated sites and is therefore within the Countryside. Kings Farm House is the nearest Listed building, which lies some 65m to the north of the application site. Newfoundout East is some 200m south east of the application site. Both are Grade II Listed residential dwellings. There are no other constraints on site.

2.6 **Planning History**

- 2.6.1 A review of Horsham District Council's online planning records has been undertaken for the site. The most recent, DC/22/0388, relates to the storage building that was allowed at appeal. The Decision Notice for the appeal is attached in **Appendix A**.

Reference	Description	Decision
DC/25/1444	Change of Use of Equestrian Stables to Offices (Class E), including the enclosure of the existing stable roof overhang	Pending
DISC/25/0217	Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions 3 & 10 to approved application DC/22/0388 (Appeal allowed - APP/Z3825/W/23/3324019)	Pending
DC/25/1494	Retention of an outbuilding for incidental domestic storage (Retrospective)	Pending
DC/22/0388	Retention of existing green steel-clad building and mono-pitch lean-to for storage and distribution use by Equine America UK and resulting mixed use of Beckley Stud as a whole for equestrian, residential and commercial purposes	Application Refused Wed 15 Mar 2023 Appeal Allowed 07 May 2025
DISC/20/0278	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 2 on DC/20/0615	Application Permitted Thu 03 Dec 2020
DC/20/0755	To confirm the works of boundary fencing, brick piers and gate benefited from the General Permitted Development Order (Certificate of Lawful Development - Existing)	Split Decision All lawful except for the brick piers Wed 04 Nov 2020
DC/20/0615	Retention of bund	Application Permitted Wed 05 Aug 2020
DC/20/0613	Retention and completion of horse walker with barn shelter and adjacent turnout pen	Application Permitted Wed 05 Aug 2020
DC/19/0278	Demolition of existing stable and erection of stables	Application Permitted Fri 09 Nov 2018
DC/18/1826	Erection of a 60m x 30m sand school	Application Permitted Fri 09 Nov 2018

Reference	Description	Decision
DC/18/1622	Removal of existing mobile home and positioning of new mobile home. Construction of 1.8m fencing along eastern/southern boundaries along with brick pillars and gates to entrance (retrospective). Proposed construction of 1.5m high fence along eastern/northern boundaries	Application Permitted Mon 17 Feb 2020
DISC/18/0186	Approval of details reserved by condition 11 on DC/17/2048	Application Permitted Fri 09 Nov 2018
DISC/18/0158	Approval of details reserved by condition 10 on DC/17/2048	Application Permitted Wed 08 Aug 2018
DC/17/2048	Proposed change of use of existing equestrian facilities to combined equestrian and charitable use.	Application Permitted Thu 08 Mar 2018
DISC/17/0348	Approval of details reserved by condition 4 on DC/16/1069	Application Permitted Thu 02 Nov 2017
DC/16/1069	Retrospective application for the erection of 4 stable blocks forming 10 stables and creation of hard standing	Application Permitted Wed 27 Jul 2016
DC/14/2407	Proposed creation of a small scale private equestrian yard - Five stables and sand school, revised application further to DC/14/1645	Application Refused Mon 20 Apr 2015
DC/14/1645	Erection of stable building comprising 8 stables and 2 foaling boxes, feed hay and tack rooms with wash down and store areas and a sand school for private use	Application Refused Mon 06 Oct 2014

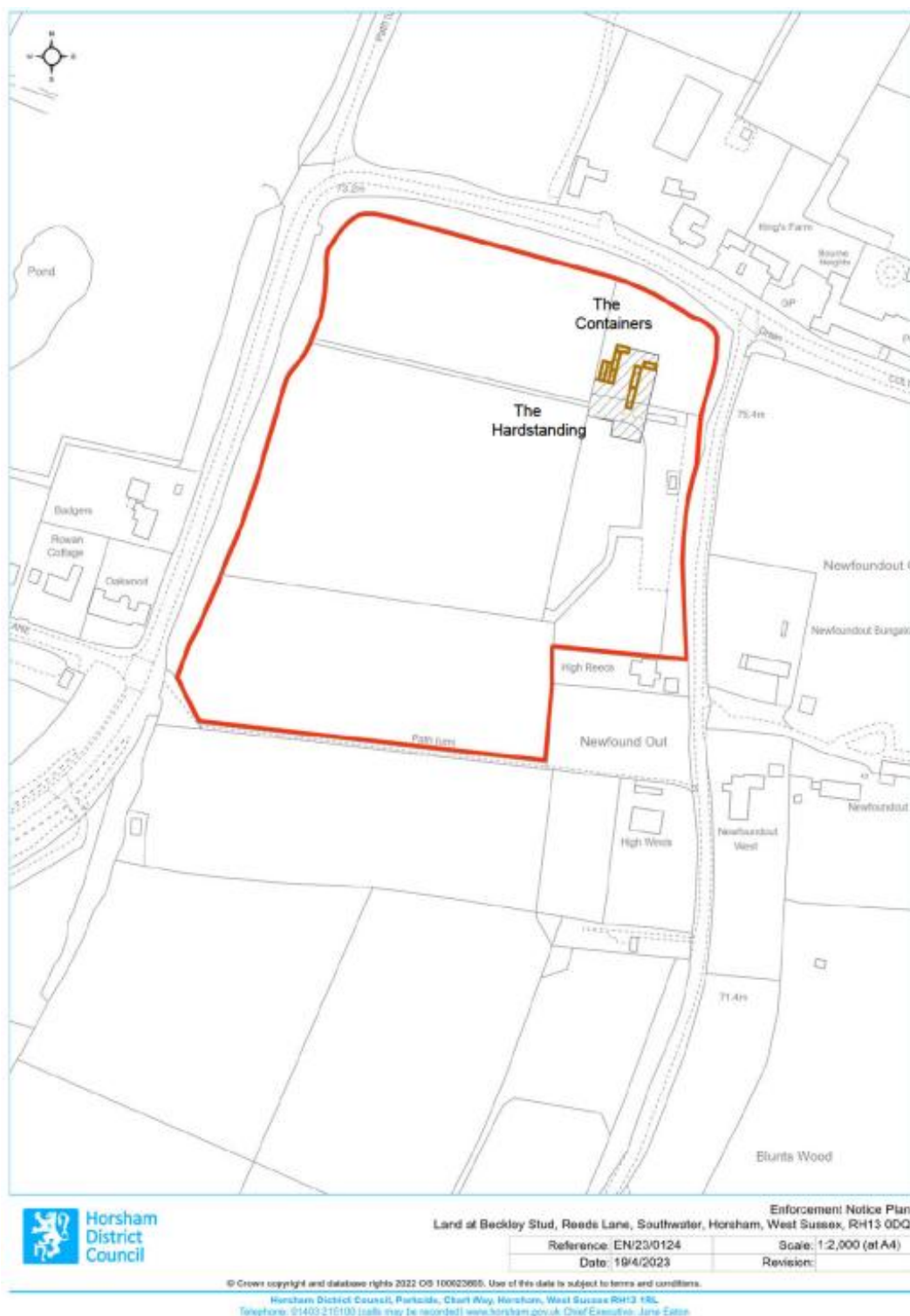
- 2.6.2 Enforcement reference EN/23/0124 is relevant to this application. It relates to the construction of a hardstanding and the erection of 8 No. metal storage containers in the location as shown below in Figure 2.4. The notice was issued on 17 May 2023. However, the PINs decision to allow the retention of the large green storage building was not issued until 7 May 2025. As such HDC Compliance Officer Reg Hawks issued an email dated 22 September 2025 stating the following:

'Re: EN/23/0124 – noted and you are currently preparing an application for a replacement storage building in the location of the sand school. For the avoidance of doubt, the EN requires removal of the unauthorised container storage devt. The period for compliance is 12 months and technically speaking this should have been complied with by May 2024, but with the tardiness of PINS, the appeal decision relating to the construction of the storage and distribution of equine related products building was not determined until May 2025...

*...Thus it is not unreasonable to take the view that the enforcement notice (EN/23/0124) should take effect from that date i.e. 07 May 2025 and so would advise your client has 12 months to comply with the EN by **07 May 2026**. This would coincide with the submission and determination of an application for a replacement building/the purpose-built storage building on the footprint of the sand school and then its implementation in the event planning permission is forthcoming. You could consider missing out the step of the pre-app submission to speed things up.*

- 2.6.3 As such this application seeks to regularize EN/23/0124. Figure 2.4 shows the HDC map showing the location of the enforcement notice.

Figure 2.4 – Location of storage containers and hard standing under EN/23/0124
(source: Horsham District Council)



3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Proposal

- 3.1.1 The applicant seeks to erect a storage building and hardstanding (part retrospective) to serve the existing use of the site under the umbrella of EA in direct support of the continuing growth of the facility. The building will be located over the existing sand school currently located on site.
- 3.1.2 EA, which is owned by the proprietor of Beckley Stud, previously operated from a commercial unit elsewhere within the district. However, due to business expansion and the operational challenges posed by COVID-19 restrictions, the company was unable to continue operating efficiently from that location. As a result, the business was relocated to the facilities at Beckley Stud, a move that was subsequently approved on appeal under reference DC/22/0388.
- 3.1.3 Since relocating to Beckley Stud, EA has experienced significant growth and plans to continue expanding in the coming years. As a result, a new storage facility is required, one that can accommodate both the current storage needs currently undertaken within the storage containers on site and future expansion.
- 3.1.4 EA supplies products globally, and purchasing patterns vary significantly between countries. In the UK, customers typically buy 1 kg tubs, whereas in the USA and Europe the same products are commonly purchased in much larger 5–10 kg tubs. This difference is largely due to the scale of overseas stables, which often accommodate 40 to 100 horses, compared with the one or two horses typically owned in the UK. As a result, international customers tend to buy in bulk, creating a need for increased storage capacity to meet this demand.
- 3.1.5 The proposed additional storage facility will necessitate an increase in staffing levels, with employee numbers expected to rise from 12 to 19. Given the site's rural location, this growth represents a meaningful contribution to local employment.

- 3.1.6 The hard standing relevant to this application has been present on the site since at least June 2021. The proposed development would facilitate the removal of the existing storage containers which together comprises of a footprint of 357 sqm and have been in situ since 2020 with their contents to be consolidated within the building that is the subject of this application.

3.2 **Appearance and Layout**

- 3.2.1 The proposed building will be cited over the existing sand school that is no longer required as the horses use the 11 acres of land associated with the site for exercising and grazing purposes.
- 3.2.2 Given that the sand school constitutes previously developed land and lies in close proximity to the existing built form, it represents the most appropriate and practical location for the proposal. It is also situated furthest from the site boundaries, which themselves are already heavily screened, as noted in the Inspector's appeal decision for the site.
- 3.2.2 The building will be clad in green steel sheeting with a grey corrugated roof. Plans and elevations of the building are shown in Figure 3.1. A block plan is shown in Figure 3.2. The building would be of the following dimensions:

Width	45m
Depth	35m
Height to eaves	5.5m
Height to Ridge	8.47m
Gross External Area (GEA)	1575m ²

Figure 3.1 – Proposed elevations and plans

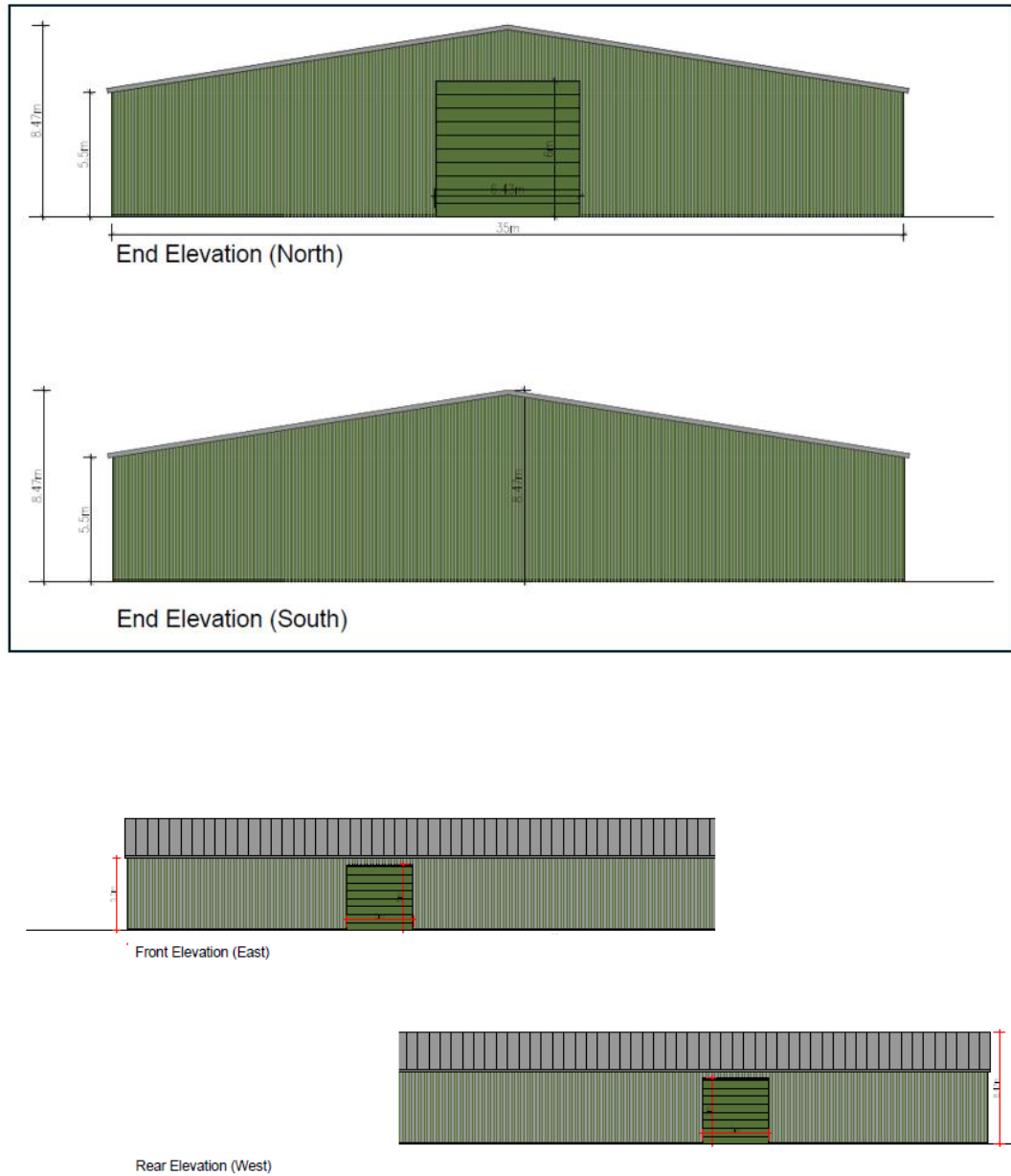


Figure 3.2 – Block Plan



3.3 Access and Parking

- 3.3.1 Vehicles would continue to access the site via the existing entrance on the eastern side along Reeds Lane, with no change to the current arrangement. However, vans would now be loaded to full capacity rather than partially filled, as the additional on-site storage would allow stock to be held in advance to fulfil deliveries. This may even reduce the total number of vehicle trips required. The access also benefits from good visibility in both directions, allowing drivers to clearly see oncoming traffic to the north and south.
- 3.3.2 The West Sussex Guidance on Parking (2020) confirms that one parking space is required per 100sqm of B8 floorspace, which necessitates a need for 16 spaces on site. Given the building would be only for the storage and distribution of EA products, it is not anticipated the site would require this many parking spaces. Notwithstanding, figure 3.3 demonstrates that the site can comfortably accommodate this requirement, given the existing hard standing surrounding the site. Figure 3.3 below displays the proposed parking arrangement, with 16 spaces

on the existing hard standing. Further parking can be made available on the wider site, which falls entirely within the applicant's ownership.

Figure 3.3 – Parking Plan



4 PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the provisions of the statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 In this instance the Development Plan comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Warnham Neighbourhood Plan (2019). The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration.
- 4.3 Horsham Local Plan is in the process of being reviewed. The Council formally submitted the Horsham District Local Plan 2023–2040 to the Secretary of State on 26 July 2024 for independent examination. Examination hearings began in December 2024 but were paused after just a few days by the Inspector due to concerns about soundness, meeting housing needs, sustainability appraisal, and duty to co-operate compliance. As such the adopted plan remains the old HDPF (2015) until adoption of the new plan.
- 4.4 Whilst limited weight can be attached to the draft Local Plan, it does provide an indication of the future direction of policy and has therefore been considered below.

Development Plan

- 4.5 The Horsham District Planning Framework was adopted in November 2015. This provides both the strategic and development focused policies for the District.
- 4.6 The accompanying policies map shows the site located within the Countryside outside the Built-Up Area Boundary. Countryside policies therefore apply, specifically Policy 10, 26 and 27.
- 4.7 Policy 10 relates to rural economic development and states that sustainable rural economic development and enterprise within the district will be encouraged in order to provide economic, social and environmental benefits for local communities. Development that maintains the quality and character of the area whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity will be supported in principle.

- 4.8 Any development should be appropriate to the countryside location and (inter alia) must contribute to the wider rural economy. New buildings in the rural area will be acceptable, provided that it supports sustainable economic growth and has considered the use of existing buildings beforehand. The proposal must result in substantial environmental improvement and reduce the impact on the countryside particularly if new or replacement buildings are involved
- 4.9 Policy 26 states that outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location and (among others) enable the sustainable development of rural areas. Proposals must be of a scale appropriate to their character and location and should not lead to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside. It should also protect, conserve and/or enhance the key features and characteristics of the local landscape character
- 4.10 Policy 27 seeks to prevent settlement coalescence and will resist new development unless it can be demonstrated that:
- i. There is no significant reduction in the openness and 'break' between settlements
 - ii. It does not generate urbanizing effects within the settlement gap, including artificial lighting, development along key road corridors, and traffic movements.
 - iii. It contributes to the conservation, enhancement and amenity of the countryside, including where appropriate enhancements to the Green Infrastructure network

4.11 Other policies of relevance to the proposal are shown in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1 – Development Plan Policies

Policy	Title
Policy 7 Economic Growth	Sustainable employment development in Horsham district for the period up to 2031 will be achieved by (inter alia) identifying additional employment areas to meet the need for appropriate new business activity.
Policy 9 Employment Development	States that the provision of small, start-up and move-on business units will be supported to enable them to reach their fullest potential.
Policy 24 Environmental Protection	The high quality of the district's environment will be protected through the planning process. Developments will be expected to minimize exposure to and the emission of pollutants including noise, odour, air and light pollution.
Policy 25 Landscape Character	The Council will support developments that protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape character.
Policy 29 Equestrian Development	Supports equestrian related development where it is appropriate in scale and in keeping with the countryside character
Policy 33 Development Principles	Requires proposals to be appropriately located and to protect amenity and the environment.

Policy	Title
Policy 36 Appropriate Energy Use	All applications for commercial development must include an Energy Statement demonstrating and quantifying how the development will comply with the Energy Hierarchy.

Emerging Local Plan

- 4.12 Draft Policy 8 states that outside of built-up areas, economic development that maintains the quality and character of the area whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity, will be supported in principle.
- 4.13 Any development should be appropriate to the countryside location and will be supported provided that it does not prejudice a farming enterprise; contributes to the sustainable custodianship of the countryside; or contributes to the wider rural economy. As first preference, proposals should be contained within existing buildings or where this is not feasible proposals for new buildings will be supported where it contributes to sustainable rural economic growth.
- 4.14 Further, draft Policy 28 states that the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to and justify its countryside location, and must meet one of the following criteria;
- Support the needs of agriculture or forestry
 - Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;
 - Provide for quiet informal recreational use; or
 - Enable the sustainable development of rural areas.

4.15 It should be noted that Policy 28 does not preclude new buildings where they are clearly justified and meet the broader aims of sustainable rural economic development. The proposed storage building is essential to support the operational needs of an established and growing equine business that is intrinsically tied to its countryside location. In accordance with Policy DC28, the development represents appropriate rural economic development, contributing to the vitality and viability of the rural economy.

4.16 The proposed storage facility is considered to comply with the aims of these policies by supporting the continued viability and growth of an existing rural equestrian enterprise that will also provide new employment opportunities to the area.

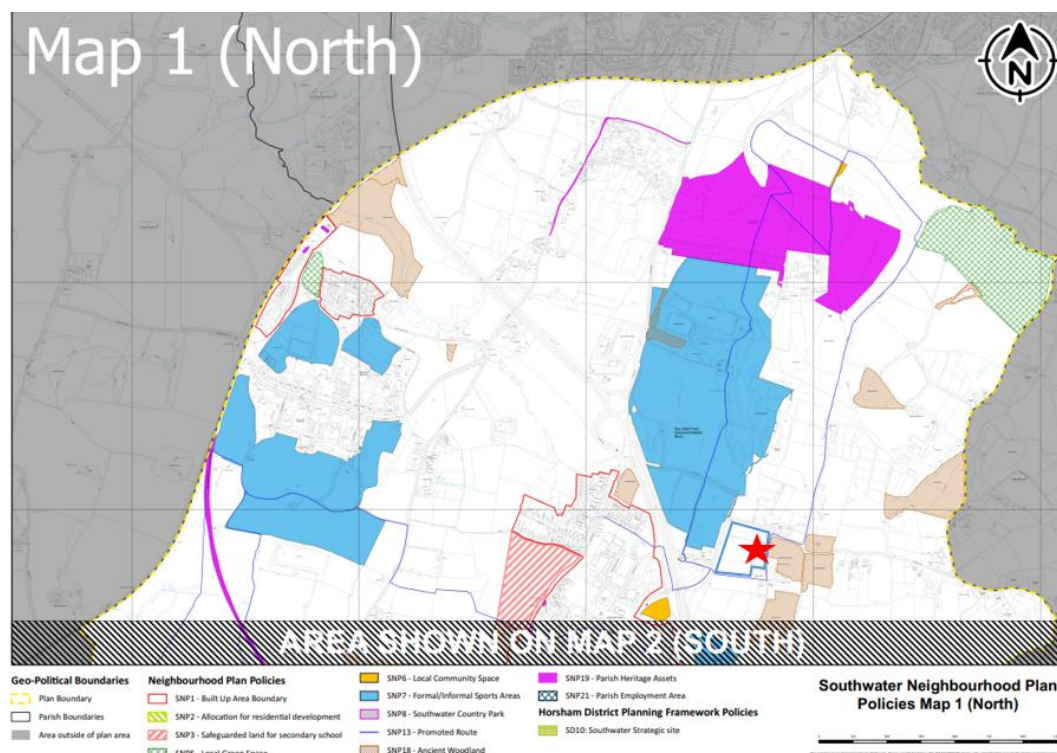
Neighbourhood Plan

4.17 The site lies within the Parish of Southwater. Southwater Parish Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) was adopted on 23 June 2021. The following Policies are relevant to this application:

Policy	Summary
Policy SNP1 Core Principles	Encourages development to take into account existing and proposed facilities, infrastructure, and resources.
Policy SNP16 Design	Encourages development of a high-quality design.
SNP21 A Growing Economy	Supports small scale business units where they are in accordance with the Development Plan.

4.18 The SNP map is shown below in Figure 4.1 with the location of Beckley Stud indicated by the red star.

Figure 4.1 – Southwater Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map



Material Considerations

The NPPF

- 4.19 The presumption in favour of sustainable development seeks to balance the environmental, social and economic impacts of the planning system and enabling net gains where possible.
- 4.20 Section 6 seeks to build a strong and competitive economy. Paragraph 85 states that “Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity”.
- 4.21 Paragraph 88 supports a prosperous rural economy stating that planning policies and decisions should enable the following:
- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;

- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses;
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”

4.22 Paragraph 89 recognises that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable. The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

4.23 Paragraph 124 states that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously developed or ‘brownfield’ land.

Biodiversity Net Gain

4.24 In advance of the production of a new Local Plan and with biodiversity net gain requirements in force, the Council has produced the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Planning Advice Note which will be a material consideration when determining planning applications. It sets out clear expectations and a transparent approach with regard to how applicants are to demonstrate compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirement for ‘measurable net gains for biodiversity’. It also sets out the approach for the statutory requirements, promoting the provision of 10% biodiversity net gain within development. The Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Planning Advice Note was endorsed at Full Council on 19 October 2022.

5 PLANNING APPRAISAL

5.1 The considerations of relevance in the determination of the application are as follows:

- Principle of the Proposal
- Impact on the Countryside
- Impact on Amenity
- Traffic and Access
- Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

5.2 These have been discussed in turn below

5.3 **Principle of the Proposal**

5.3.1 The site benefits from a recent and directly relevant appeal decision ref: APP/Z3825/C/23/3324026 (enforcement appeal) & APP/Z3825/W/23/3324019 (s78 planning appeal) which allowed the retention of a similarly sized storage building associated with the existing equine enterprise. In allowing the appeal, the Inspector accepted that the building was functionally related to the rural business, appropriately scaled, and did not give rise to any material harm to the character or appearance of the area. The decision confirms that the provision of storage infrastructure to support the lawful equestrian use of the site is acceptable in principle, and that such development can be accommodated without conflict with local or national planning policies.

5.3.2 The current proposal is of a larger size and scale as the building allowed at appeal but mirrors the function of the building allowed at appeal, reinforcing the acceptability of such development in this location. Accordingly, the principle of development is now established on site, and the proposed building should be considered consistent with both the development plan and the findings of the Planning Inspectorate.

- 5.3.3 The existing storage buildings on site have reached full capacity, which historically necessitated the need of the storage containers. The proposed building will provide the required additional space, allowing for the removal of the containers which are currently subject to an enforcement notice. The new facility will also future proof the needs of this expanding rural business.
- 5.3.4 The increase in storage capacity will also generate further employment opportunities, with staff numbers expected to grow from 12 to 19. This expansion will help support local employment by offering new positions to people within the surrounding area.
- 5.3.5 In line with Policy DC28 of the Horsham District Local Development Framework, the proposal represents an appropriate form of rural economic development that is essential to the functioning of an established countryside-based business. There are no material changes in planning policy or local context that would indicate a different conclusion should now be reached.
- 5.3.6 Further, the National Planning Policy Framework states in paragraph 85 that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. It goes on to note in paragraph 86 that planning policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices, and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.
- 5.3.7 More specifically, paragraph 87 states that planning decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors, and this includes making provision for the expansion or modernisation of other industries of local, regional, or national importance to support economic growth and resilience.
- 5.3.8 This paragraph is considered to be particularly relevant to Horsham District, being a primarily rural local authority. The North-West Sussex Employment Growth Appraisal undertaken for the Local Plan Review, and therefore most up to date for the purposes of identifying key trends and demand, describes Horsham District as having a largely rural character where 32.7% of businesses are located outside of settlement boundaries, compared to 23.5% in Mid Sussex and a primarily urban

based employers in Crawley. More specifically, it notes a very high proportion of micro businesses - 90.5% - which is higher than regional and national levels, with small scale businesses making up 8.1% of business.

5.3.9 The equine business remains active and requires modern facilities to expand and ensure the continued operations of the business. Providing additional dedicated storage space on-site will improve operational efficiency, business resilience, and staff welfare. Appendix D provides a letter from the applicant stating how the Equine America seeks to develop business operations.

5.3.10 It is therefore considered that the proposal comprises sustainable development having regard to the three objectives advocated within the NPPF namely;

- An Economic Role: By contributing to the local economy by providing jobs in its new use as an equestrian storage facility associated with EA. The proposed change of use will help support the local rural economy and support a rural business.
- An Environmental Role: The proposal makes efficient use of previously developed land and positions the building to minimise its impact, consistent with the NPPF's objectives of sustainable development and appropriate integration with existing on-site built form.

5.3.11 As a consequence of the above, and to the advice given within the NPPF, it is considered that a presumption in favour of approval applies to the proposals.

5.3.12 In light of the above context, the application proposal can be assessed against the adopted policies of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan whilst also acknowledging that further support has been given through national policy for rural commercial development.

5.4 **Impact on the Countryside**

5.4.1 The application site is located within the rural area of Horsham District, outside of any defined settlement boundary. As such, careful consideration has been given to the potential impact of the proposed building on the countryside, in accordance with the Development Plan and national planning policy.

- 5.4.2 The proposed storage building is sensitively located adjacent to existing buildings and areas of hardstanding. This siting ensures that the building is well-related to the existing developed envelope of the site and does not appear as isolated or intrusive development within the open countryside.
- 5.4.3 The building has been designed to utilise materials consistent with existing structures on site. The visual impact is therefore limited, and the building is capable of being absorbed into the wider landscape with minimal effect on openness or rural character.
- 5.4.4 A combination of existing hedgerows and trees on the northern and eastern borders further reduces the building's visibility in longer-range views, and additional landscaping can be provided if necessary to reinforce this containment.
- 5.4.5 The proposal also complies with Policy 10 (Rural Economic Development) of the Horsham District Planning Framework, which supports proposals that enable the sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses, including through the erection of well-designed new buildings where appropriately located. The proposed storage building is directly related to an established equine enterprise and is necessary for the efficient operation and expansion of the rural business.
- 5.4.6 In line with Policy 10, the development supports the rural economy, respects the character of the countryside, and is proportionate to the scale and nature of the enterprise it serves. The proposal therefore aligns with both the strategic aims of Policy 10 and national guidance in the NPPF (2024), which encourages sustainable rural development that contributes to the vitality of the countryside (para. 88–89).
- 5.4.7 The development is considered to accord with Policy 25, as it conserves the character of the surrounding landscape and does not result in harm to identified landscape features. It meets the requirements of Policy 26, as the building is essential to the operation of an established rural business, is appropriately sited and designed, and avoids adverse impact on the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
- 5.4.8 Importantly, the proposal does not contribute to settlement coalescence, nor does it erode the identity or openness between settlements. It therefore complies with Policy 27.

5.4.9 At the national level, the proposal aligns with the NPPF in recognising and respecting the intrinsic character of the countryside, while supporting the sustainable growth of a rural business. The location of the building adjacent to existing development ensures that it is sympathetic to the surrounding built and natural environment, in accordance with paragraph 182.

5.4.10 It is therefore deemed that the proposal meets the policies regarding development within the Countryside.

5.5 **Impact on Amenity**

5.5.1 There are residential properties located close to the site on Coltstaple Lane and Reeds Lane, and therefore the area remains a noise sensitive environment in which the potential for and effect of any additional noise and disturbance must be carefully considered.

5.5.2 The proposed building will not result in any material harm to the amenity of neighbouring residential properties in terms of noise, disturbance, or general activity on the basis that:

- **No intensification of use:** The building is intended solely to support the established equestrian business and will not result in activity beyond that already associated with the lawful use of the site. By enabling orders to be fulfilled in full, it is expected to reduce the number of partially loaded van trips and, consequently, may decrease overall vehicular movements to and from the site.
- **Contain built form:** The additional structure would replace the existing shipping containers which have existed on site for several years with built form located adjacent to surrounding buildings and hardstanding
- **Retained rural and equine character:** The activity remains low-key and consistent with the site's historic equine use. The storage operations would be inherently low-noise in nature and would take place during normal working hours.

- **Separation distance and screening:** The building would be located at a reasonable distance from the nearest residential properties, with, boundary planting and intervening land uses (e.g. paddocks, road) providing a natural buffer. This physical separation will prevent any perceptible increase in noise or disturbance.
- **No impact on residential outlook or privacy:** As the building is without facing windows and well separated from neighbouring dwellings there will be no new opportunities for overlooking or loss of privacy for nearby dwellings.

5.5.3 In light of the above, it is concluded that the proposed change of use will not result in harm to the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, and fully accords with Policy 33 (Development Principles) of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), which requires that developments do not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of nearby users and residents.

5.6 **Traffic and Access**

5.6.1 The application site is accessed Reeds Lane and the intended use of the new building is a storage space relating to the existing use. The anticipated increase in traffic movements would have a negligible impact on the safety and operation of the local highway network.

5.6.2 The proposed development would not give rise to any adverse impacts on the local highway network or site access arrangements. The proposal does not involve the creation of a new access or intensification of a sensitive or unsuitable junction, and visibility from the access is considered to be acceptable.

5.6.3 The storage building is intended solely for the on-site storage and distribution of equine-related food nutrition products, used in direct connection with the applicant's existing equine activities. It is not intended to serve as a retail outlet. As such, the proposal would not result in a material increase in vehicle movements to or from the site over and above the existing baseline. Any trips generated would be limited to those already associated with the operation of the business.

5.6.4 Parking provision is included within the site in accordance with the West Sussex County Council Parking Standards and Transport Assessment Guidance (2020), ensuring that the development is appropriately serviced and does not lead to overspill onto local roads or create highway safety concerns.

5.6.5 The residual cumulative impacts of the proposal will not be severe on the local highway network, and therefore under the guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework, planning permission should not be resisted or refused on traffic and transport grounds.

5.7 **Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain**

5.7.1 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken by Leith Ecology and is attached to this application. The report confirms that no further surveys are required and that the proposal meets the de-minimus

5.8 **Appeal Decisions and Precedents**

5.8.1 A directly relevant and recent appeal decision supports the acceptability of the proposed storage building:

- (i) **Beckley Stud, Southwater** – Appeal refs APP/Z3825/C/23/3324026 (enforcement appeal) & APP/Z3825/W/23/3324019 (s78 appeal), decision 7 May 2025 (Inspector R. Satheesan) (Appendix B). The Inspector quashed an enforcement notice and granted retrospective planning permission for the retention of a green steel-clad storage building and lean-to at Beckley Stud used for the storage and distribution of equine products. The Inspector accepted that the use was intrinsically linked to the established equine operation on the site and imposed conditions limiting the use to equine-related storage/distribution, capping employees, restricting delivery numbers/hours, prohibiting external storage, and requiring drainage and biodiversity enhancements. This decision is a clear precedent that equine-related B8 storage and distribution uses at Beckley Stud can be acceptable when appropriately controlled by condition.

5.8.2 Other relevant decisions include:

(ii) **Marricotts Equestrian Centre, Romford (APP/B5480/C/20/3249235, Feb 2021)** (Appendix D) – Enforcement case involving B8 uses at an equestrian centre, showing Inspectors accept that equestrian and storage uses can coexist if properly controlled.

(iii) **Oak Tree Farm, East Hampshire** (Appendix E) – In this case, the Inspector confirmed that the lawful use of the site had become a *mixed equestrian and B8 storage use* due to the long-standing combination of activities. This demonstrates that Inspectors are willing to acknowledge and regularise mixed equine and storage operations in rural areas where evidence supports such a link, providing a useful precedent for Beckley Stud.

5.8.3 Together, these decisions demonstrate that Inspectors consistently support proportionate, equine-related development in the countryside where it is functionally justified, well-sited and conditioned to mitigate impacts.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an application for the erection of a storage building and associated hardstanding (part retrospective).
- 6.2 The proposal will allow for the removal of the existing storage containers (currently the subject of an enforcement notice) and provide the essential storage capacity required on site.
- 6.3 The new storage building will also strengthen a well-established rural enterprise and help to future-proof its continued growth.
- 6.4 The development will have no adverse effect on the site's appearance and will represent an efficient use of previously developed land in a manner appropriate to the local context.
- 6.5 The proposal is consistent with national and local planning policies that support the rural economy and acknowledge that the operational needs of rural businesses may necessitate facilities outside defined built-up areas. It will enhance the overall appearance of the site and deliver a more effective use of previously developed land.
- 6.6 It is therefore respectfully requested that the Council supports this application

Appendix A - Site Photos







Appendix B – Appeal Decision APP/Z3825/W/23/3324019

Appendix C – Enforcement Notice EN/23/0124

Appendix D – Equine America Letter of Support

Appendix E - Marricotts Equestrian Appeal Decision 3255216

Appendix F - Oak Tree Farm Appeal Decisions