

PLANNING STATEMENT

RELOCATION OF APPROVED OFFICE/RECEPTION BUILDING AND MEETING ROOM

TYRRELL'S EQUINE CLINIC, COOMBE ROAD, KELSHALL, ROYSTON SG8 9SA

1.0 INTRODUCTION

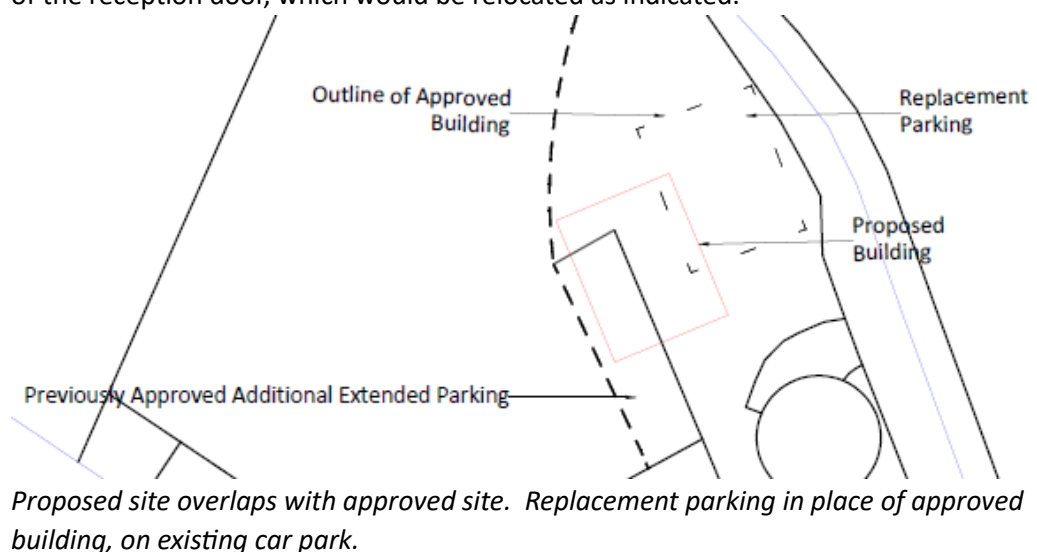
- 1.1 Planning permission 24/00752/FP for 'Erection of two-storey building to provide office/reception and meeting room' was granted 22 May 2024.
- 1.2 It is proposed to relocate the approved office/reception building and meeting room approximately 10m to the south-west, to improve the layout of the site.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is a veterinary practice originally established in 1999, providing equine veterinary care to horses, ponies and donkeys. It is sited on the west side of Coombe Road, around 1km from the junction with A505. It is on rising ground with the neighbouring property to the south, Upper Coombe Farm, being on higher ground and the land then levels off until climbing steeply again further south towards the crest of the hill beyond.
- 2.2 The site comprises the full range of equine veterinary needs including stable yard and paddocks, weigh bridge, treatment room, surgical theatre suite, lunge pen and arena, and laboratory.
- 2.3 The business provides a team of 7 equine-only vets together with nursing and office staff, employing a total of 11 full-time and 2 part-time workers.

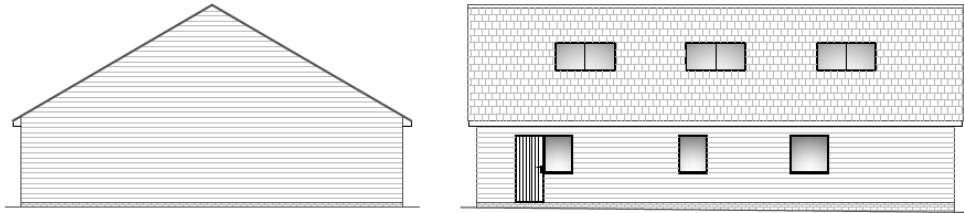
3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 It is proposed to relocate the approved building approximately 10m to the south-west of the approved siting, on part of the existing car park. The approved site of the building, which is already car park, would then provide replacement parking area. Relocating the building as proposed would enable improved layout of the site in relation to access, car parking and existing buildings.
- 3.2 It would overlap with the approved siting. There are no changes whatsoever to the size of the building. The design would remain as approved other than for the location of the reception door, which would be relocated as indicated.



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- 3.3 External materials of the building would be as approved: timber weatherboarding to walls on a brick plinth, slate tiles to roof, with rooflights to light the meeting room in the roof space.



Proposed Side (SE) Elevation

Proposed Rear (NE) Elevation

Proposed building as approved under 24/00752/FP, to be relocated 10m to the south-west of approved siting, with relocated entrance door.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 Planning permission 22/02653/FP for 'Extension to existing stable block, erection of additional reception/office building and store/feedroom. New vehicular access.' was granted 25 January 2023.
- 4.2 Planning permission 24/00752/FP for 'Erection of two-storey building to provide office/reception and meeting room' was granted 22 May 2024.

5.0 PLANNING POLICIES

- 5.1 The North Herts Local Plan (November 2022) provides local planning policies. Policy SP1 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and SP3 seeks to encourage sustainable economic growth, supporting new and existing businesses. SP5 states that a general policy of restraint will operate in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt, through application of detailed policies. SP9 supports good design and sustainable development.
- 5.2 CGB1 specifies the types of development that will be acceptable in the rural area and includes:
'...a modest proposal for rural economic development or diversification...'
- 5.3 ETC2 states that employment development outside defined employment areas will be supported, where, if beyond defined settlement boundaries, the proposal is 'for small scale offices or other small employment development', and it is appropriate to the location, and there would be no significant adverse impact on living conditions.
- 5.4 Policy T1 seeks to ensure that there would be no resultant highway safety problems or unacceptable impacts on the highway network and T2 requires provision of adequate parking.
- 5.5 D1, together with the associated Design SPD, ensures sustainable design and D3 seeks to protect living conditions. NE2 requires landscape character to be taken into account in development proposals.
- 5.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Dec 2023) is a material consideration. Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In order to build a strong, competitive economy, the Framework states that '[s]ignificant

weight' should be afforded the need to support economic growth and productivity¹. Paragraph 88 supports a prosperous rural economy, and requires the support of '*sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas*' including provision of new buildings, and the development of land-based rural businesses.

5.7 It notes that sites meeting local business needs in rural areas may be in more remote locations, not well-served by public transport (paragraph 89) and that development should only be refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or impacts on the road network would be severe (paragraph 115).

5.8 Section 11 promotes effective use of land and encourages use of previously developed land. Section 12 requires a high standard of design, ensuring that developments function well, are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character (paragraph 135).

6.0 PLANNING ANALYSIS

6.1 PRINCIPLE. The principle of the new building has been established by the recent planning permission for the proposed building, granted 22 May 2024. The new building is for a waiting room, reception, pharmacy, lab and vet room, staff room, library, office, store and WCs. Use of the roof space would enable provision of a meeting room.

6.2 Current lack of space for these necessary functions means that meetings are held in the applicant's kitchen in his house and clients need to wait in their cars while their horses are in clinic. The proposal would provide an improved working environment for staff and better facilities for clients.

6.3 Being a modest proposal that would support the economic viability of the existing, established rural business, and being small scale employment development outside settlement boundaries which is appropriate to its location, it complies with SP3, CGB1 and ECT2 of the Local Plan.

6.4 It supports the rural business, maintaining rural employment and important rural services, and contributes towards a prosperous rural economy, to which significant weight should be afforded according to the NPPF. It makes effective use of land and reuses previously developed land. The proposal thereby complies with paragraphs 85, 88 and section 11 of the NPPF.

6.5 The officer's report on 24/00752/FP noted that '*equine uses are by their nature acceptable in the rural area*' which further supports the principle of the proposal.

6.6 It is therefore suggested that the principle of the proposal is acceptable.

6.7 DESIGN & SCALE. The design and scale of the proposal are also already established by planning permission 24/00752/FP, granted 22 May 2024. The design is of simple plan form, typical profile and uses traditional materials, and is appropriate to its rural location. The scale is modest and in keeping with existing buildings and surroundings.

6.8 The proposed location overlaps with the approved siting. The fact that the proposed location includes part of the footprint of the approved siting, means that if the current proposal were approved and implemented, the existing planning permission could not also be implemented.

¹ NPPF paragraph 85

- 6.9 The proposed location is on part of the existing car park. The displaced parking would be relocated to the approved siting of the building, which is already part of the car park, thereby resulting in no loss of car parking compared with the approved scheme.
- 6.10 The building would be set back a further 10m from the road than approved, thereby reducing even further any visual impact.
- 6.11 It is therefore suggested that the proposal would appear in keeping and is of appropriate design, scale and appearance in compliance with SP9 and D1 and section 12 of the NPPF.



Site of proposed building on existing car park. Replacement parking to be provided at approved site of building.

- 6.12 **LANDSCAPE.** According to the Landscape Character Assessment for the area, the site is within the scarp slopes south of Royston. It is characterised as a '*chalk scarp slope incised by dry water cut valleys*'. The undulating landform, large scale arable fields and occasional farmsteads are noted. The proposed siting of the approved building would be grouped with existing buildings, sited further from the road than the approved siting, and located within the slope of the land, with rising land to the south. It would not be prominent from the highway, or on ridge lines or in wider views. Its modest size, traditional design and materials and siting set back from the road, would make it blend into the surroundings and it would not be conspicuous in the landscape setting. It reuses previously developed land. It thereby complies with NE2 of the Local Plan.
- 6.13 **HIGHWAYS.** The proposal, being for an amended siting of the approved building, would not result in increased traffic compared with the permission 24/00752/FP. New access, landscaping and additional parking are approved under the extant planning permission (22/02653/FP). The proposal would not result in loss of parking, displaced spaces being relocated to the approved siting of the building. The existing access serves the business until the new access is complete. The proposal is thereby compliant with T1 and T2 and paragraph 115 of the NPPF.

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- 6.14 IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURS. The distance between the proposal and the presence of existing intervening buildings mean that it would not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring properties, and the proposal would not result in a significant increase in traffic. The amenities of neighbours would therefore be protected, as required by D3.
 - 6.15 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN. The proposed site is an existing hard-surfaced car park with zero biodiversity value. The approved site of the building, which is to provide replacement parking space in the current proposal, is already a car park with zero habitat. The proposal does not impact a priority habitat and does not impact any on-site habitat. It is therefore exempt from the general Biodiversity Gain Condition.
- 6.0 CONCLUSIONS
- 6.1 The NPPF states that achieving sustainable development has 3 over-arching objectives: economic, social and environmental. The proposal meets the economic objective by supporting the existing rural business and continued employment at the site, making an important contribution to the local rural economy. It satisfies the social objective by providing a vital service to the rural community, providing specialist equine veterinary care. It is in keeping with the surrounding rural environment and makes effective use of land, meeting the environmental objective.
 - 6.2 The proposal meets local and national planning policy requirements and it is requested that planning permission be granted.

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