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Construction of a detached stable block to the rear of the residential dwelling to provide 2 No. loose boxes, a tack/feed store and a hay/straw store, with associated landscaping of yard area for private equestrian use.

"Swift Farm"

Dean Lane

Harvel

Gravesend

Kent

DA13 0BS

Design and Access Statement

19 August 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

This application is for permission to construct a stable block, comprising two loose boxes, a hay/straw store and a tack and feed/store, with associated landscaping of the yard area. The stabling will be for the private use, ancillary to the occupation of the existing dwelling.

Grazing will be provided on the adjacent land to the north-west of the site, which is owned by the applicant's brother, Mr Brian Marshall. The boundaries of the land are comprised of protected priority hedgerow and will be retained.

2. LOCATION & SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 Dean Lane runs roughly north-south, parallel to the A227, in the rural area to the south-east of Meopham. "Swift Farm" lies to the north-east of Harvel, on the western side of the road.
- 2.2 The local landscape is partly determined by the topography, tree cover and dispersed settlement pattern. Dean Lane is relatively narrow and in parts lower than adjoining land. The landscape consequently feels enclosed, with few opportunities for views.
- 2.3 Residential development is characterised by detached properties, in mostly large plots, separated by informal gardens and wooded areas. There is no consistency in design, form or size of domestic buildings or out-buildings. Timber outbuildings and sheds are present within almost all sites.
- 2.4 The adjacent site is wooded to the south of "Swift Farm," beyond which lies "Four Acres/Azila." Verbal agreement has been made for the long term retention of the trees within the wooded area between "Four Acres" and "Swift Farm" in order to retain privacy and natural screening.
- 2.5 To the north of Swift Farm lies "Dean Lodge" (formerly "Yvette"); permission for the redevelopment of which was granted in 1998 (19980270). Permission to construct a substantial double garage/log store was awarded in 2005 (20050803). These projects were completed. The boundary between Swift Farm and Dean Lodge is a natural hedge.
- 2.6 Opposite "Swift Farm," to the east, lies "Strawberry Wood" (formerly "Clevedon"), which is fronted by open grassland. Permission to demolish and redevelop the property was achieved in 2011 (20000347), providing permission for the construction of a substantial dwelling, with garaging.
- 2.7 The site of "Swift Farm" is 19.9m wide and 92.4 metres long, with a total area of 1,929.52m³ and slopes gently to the east.
- 2.8 Three large trees had grown within the site of the proposed stable block. Having grown within an area which had been previously excavated, they had fallen and the roots of which were exposed. These trees were removed, with the roots used as natural enhancement to the rear garden.
- 2.9 Up to the 1980s there was no piped water supply to properties in the lower end of Dean Lane. Domestic water was drawn from wells. In the early 1980s the area where the stable yard is proposed, had been excavated and a large concrete base had been laid to form the base of proposed water tanks.

Southern Water subsequently agreed to provide households in Dean Lane with a piped private water supply, negating the benefit of water storage. The exercise of providing a storage area for water storage was therefore abandoned and the excavated hole gradually

filled with general waste, including glass, timber window frames, scrap metal and extensive amounts of rubber hydraulic hosing.



FRONT GARDEN FACING EAST

3. THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is to construct a stable block, on the north-west corner of the plot, comprising a loose box for a horse, a loose box for a pony, a tack/feed store, a hay/straw store and a fenced yard area.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

Applications for Planning Permission have previously been submitted at this location, as summarised in the table below:

Reference	Validated Date	Summary of Proposed works	Planning Status	Outline of Works Completed
GR/81/253	18/5/81	Erection of a single storey rear extension to form 3 bedrooms, bathroom and WC and the erection of a porch and covered way to the side	Permitted	Completed
GR/82/346	27/7/82	The erection and formation of a utility and storeroom in the sub floor area of the dwelling	Permitted	Completed
20000711	4/10/2000	Demolition of existing lounge and erection of a 2 storey front extension to form a garage at lower ground floor level with lounge	Withdrawn	N/A
20010024	23/1/2001	Demolition of existing lounge and erection of a 2 storey front extension to form garage at lower ground level with lounge and balcony over.	Permitted	Partial completion
20150506	12/6/15	Erection of a 2 storey front extension to form entrance hall, living room with balcony and kitchen over a lower ground-floor double garage and demolition of a corrugated metal faced garage/garden shed and replace with a timber garden shed relocated on the site	Permitted	Partial completion
20221116	8/3/23	Construction of a detached stable block to the rear of the residential dwelling to provide 2 No. loose boxes, a tack/feed store and a hay/straw store, with associated landscaping of yard area for equestrian use.	Withdrawn	N/A

5 ACCESS STATEMENT

Access to the property is off Dean Lane, with vehicular access to a driveway. Pedestrian and horse only access to the stable yard will run from the south-west side of the dwelling, across to the north corner of the site.

The pedestrian and horse path will be top-dressed with flint excavated during the preparation of the stable yard site.

The horses will be used by the householder for private local leisure and no horse trailer or horsebox will be retained at the property. Should vehicular transport be required, a suitable vehicle would be hired.

Additional on-site parking will therefore not be required or provided.



DRIVE VIEW FROM EAST



DRIVE VIEW FROM SOUTH EAST
copse



DRIVE VIEW FROM EAST

6. PLANNING POLICY

6.1 The development plan for the area comprises the policies of the South East Plan and the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 (saved policies).

6.2 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), other designations relevant to the Local Plan are referred to below. The National Planning Policy Framework

6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) replaces former Government advice set out in PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development, PPG2 Green Belts, PPS3 Housing and PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.

6.4 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, in respect of decision making, paragraph 14 advises that this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay;

and

- Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole;

or

- Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

6.5 In respect of the Green Belt the NPPF provides guidance in Section 9: 87. As with previous Green Belt Policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 88. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. "Very special circumstances" will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reasons of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. 89.

6.6 A Local Planning Authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- Buildings for agricultural and forestry;
- Provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, recreation ...;
- The extension or alteration of a building ...;
- The replacement of a building, provided the building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- Limited infilling in villages
- Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continual use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development."

6.7 It is submitted that the construction of the stable yard falls within the second exception set out in paragraph 89 in that it is the provision of an appropriate facility for outdoor sport and recreation.

- 6.7 Paragraph 115 of the NPPF provides broad guidance on development in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and confirms that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the AONB. This proposal will retain the mature vegetation on this site which contributes to the attractive character and appearance of the AONB.

The stable yard will be built extensively within an existing man-made hollow and will be screened from the east by mature trees and from the west by a mature hedge.

A copse was planted to the north-west of the boundary of the rear of Swift Farm, consisting of hazel, hawthorn, dog rose, holly and wild cherry. This 20 metres long and is set 5 metres. It will provide additional natural screening and protection to buildings from high winds.



COPSE CREATED
NORTH-WEST OF
THE PROPOSED
STABLE YARD
LOCATION
(20/8/23)

The design and materials are appropriate for this location.

- 6.9 The provision of equestrian facilities is in character with the local area and a map is provided at Appendix A showing the location of other properties nearby which have equestrian facilities.
- 6.10 The most recent application for stables applied for in Dean Lane was approved by Gravesham Borough Council. This was Reference 20150275 for the retention of donkey stable building comprising two stables, tack room and sheltered area, at Suva, Dean Lane, Harvel, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0BS. This was approved retrospectively

on 5 November 2015. It is also noted that this site was not registered as a charity supporting the welfare of animals.

- 6.11 The existing or proposed site drainage and means of soil and waste disposal must be satisfactory.

Rainwater harvested from gutters on the south east and north east elevations will be used to subsidise the requirements of water for the stable yard use and to support the growth of newly planted trees. Rainwater from the gutters on the south west and south east elevations will be piped to the centre of the existing man-made chalk mound to the south east of the proposed stable yard, to create a source of water for wildlife. A large shallow ceramic sink will be used.

The stable yard area will be laid with Grasscrete, with a chalk sub-base, providing free drainage.

7. DESIGN & MATERIALS

	Aspect	Proposed Stable Yard
7.1	Specifications	All aspects of construction and material used in the construction of the stable yard will be in line with guidance provided by The British Horse Society. These aspects include roof height, ventilation, dimensions of doors, internal dimensions of stables, social interaction, water supply, lighting and suitability of materials.
7.2	Boundaries	Existing boundaries to Swift Farm will be retained as mature natural hedges. A timber fence will surround the stable yard, with the provision of a timber gate. A new timber gate will be installed in the existing gap to the end of the property, providing access to the grazing area beyond.
7.3	Stable yard surfacing	A Grasscrete surface will be laid forming the stable yard, on an existing chalk sub-base. This is a free draining solution, through which green vegetation will grow.
7.4	External walls	The building will be constructed of cast concrete and concrete block walls. External finishes will be of dark-stained timber weatherboarding, to match the existing domestic accommodation and the shed.
7.5	Internal walls	The internal walls between the loose boxes and the storage areas will be solid to roof height, to reduce risk to equines from spores and dust from stored bedding and forage. The upper section of the internal wall between the two loose boxes will be formed of a metal grill, providing horses with social interaction.
7.6	Doors	External doors will be of dark-stained timber. Split doors will serve the loose boxes.
7.7	Windows	Windows will be dark-stained timber, with PVCU glazing.
7.8	Lighting	An electric supply has been connected to the site which will provide electric lighting. Lighting will be installed within the loose boxes and storage areas. Warm coloured lighting will be installed beneath the overhang to the north-east and south east elevations, focused towards the ground. Lighting will be switchable, rather than on sensors, so that it will not turn on in response to movement from the horses or wildlife.

		It is estimated that external lighting will only be used in winter months, between the hours of 06:30 and 07:30 and between the hours of 18:00 and 19:00. This will reduce the impact on wildlife and neighbouring properties.
7.9	Roofing	Eternit slate tiles will be used for the roof, with roof lights to the south-west and north-west elevations. A hipped roof to the south-east elevation will reduce the visual impact of the building from neighbouring properties.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- 8.1 In line with guidance within the Kent Downs publication: Managing Land for Horses – A guide to good practice in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a separate area will be created for the storage and composting of manure. This will be sited in consideration to neighbouring properties and away from the stable yard.

It is the experience of the applicant that the waste created by two horses can be adequately utilised within a garden of the size on which the stable yard is proposed.

- 8.2 The property will **not** be used for the purposes of hire for riding, or kept for the purpose of their being used in return for payment of instruction for riding.
- 8.3 In line with the Code of Practice on Construction and Demolition, consideration will be given to nearby premises during the groundworks and construction. Machinery and powered tools will only be used between the hours of 08:00 to 18:00 weekdays and 08:00 and 13:00 on Saturdays.
- 8.4 Lighting will be installed within the loose boxes and storage areas. Warm coloured lighting will be installed beneath the overhang to the south east and north east elevations, focused towards the ground. Lighting will be switchable, rather than on sensors, so that it will not turn on in response to movement from the horses or wildlife.

It is estimated that external lighting will only be used in winter months, between the hours of 06:30 and 07:30 and between the hours of 18:00 and 19:00. This will reduce the impact on wildlife, the horses natural cycle of day and night and neighbouring properties.

9. BIODIVERSITY

A preliminary Ecological Appraisal is provided as a document attached to this Planning Application. This is based on a survey carried out on 10 August 2023, by Megan Knapp BSc (Hons), Consultant Ecologist, reviewed by Lizi Pimlott (BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIEEM, MRSB, Principal Consultant, on behalf of Arbtech Company Limited.

In reflection with the advice and guidance within this Report, and that provided within 'Managing Land for Horses – A guide to good practice in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' the following measures have and will be implemented to protect and enhance the biodiverse nature of the site.

Feature	Planned Action to implement Recommendations
Designated Sites	All waste which was located within the man-made hollow within which the stable yard is to be constructed were disposed of correctly. Waste, including bags and bulk bags in which building materials are delivered will disposed of correctly
Habitats and Flora	All trees remaining on site will be retained. Overgrown hedges have been reduced in height and will be cut back on a 3-year cycle, as recommended within guidance provided within 'Managing Land for Horses – A guide to good practice in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.' Without maintenance, hedge plants become trees. Sympathetic maintenance is therefore essential to protect their character and for them to function as a natural boundary. Additional natural trees have been planted to the east of the site of the construction, including chestnut and crab apple. This area had been covered by invasive species, including dogwood, privet and brambles. In 2020-2021 the area was dug over, by hand, and all roots of invasive shrubs removed. NEWLY PLANTED CRAB APPLE TREE TO THE SOUTH OF THE EXISTING MAN-MADE MOUND 20/8/23



HAZEL TREE PLANTED IN THE REAR GARDEN (20/8/23)



REAR GARDEN RESTORED TO WILD FLOWER MEADOW (TAKEN FROM EAST)
8/5/23)



DIAGONAL PATH UP REAR GARDEN, TO BE TOP DRESSED WITH FLINT TO PREVENT POACHING OF GROUND (20/8/23)

The area has been restored to it's natural state through the self-seeding of dormant wild flowers from within the soil. Wild poppies were absent from the site and have been introduced.

Within all hedged boundaries, where gaps have been created by dead trees, new natural hedging plants will be planted. These will include field maple, dog-rose, hawthorn, hazel and holly.

A barrier is under construction around the protected woodland, preventing horses from entering that area and causing damage to trees.



NATURAL BARRIER BEING CREATED AROUND PROTECTED WOODLAND (20/8/23 – WITH 1 METRE SPADE FOR SCALE)



NATURAL BARRIER BEING CREATED AROUND PROTECTED WOODLAND (20/8/23 – WITH 1 METRE SPADE FOR SCALE)

An area of compact gorse will be created along the south-east boundary of the woodland, to provide a refuge for birds in harsh weather, as well as attracting pollinators, such as bees.

Over recent years the field to be used for grazing has been affected by invasive scrub. If left unmanaged, these area are likely to overtake the entire field. This is particularly noted to the area north of the public footpath.



INVASIVE SCRUB, TO NORTH OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH 20/8/23 (WITH 1 METRE SPADE FOR SCALE)

Areas of invasive woody scrub is being hand-dug from around the boundary of the field. This will allow access to the boundaries for the replacement of rotten and fallen fence posts to which existing wire mesh fencing will be attached.



INVASIVE SCRUB OVER FENCE NOW HAND CLEARED FROM WEST SIDE OF FIELD
(8/5/23)



PARTIAL CLEARANCE OF INVASIVE SCRUB TO ENABLE ACCESS FOR REPLACEMENT
OF FENCE POSTS (8/5/23)



FENCE LINE CLEARED OF INVASIVE SCRUB TO ENABLE ACCESS FOR REPLACEMENT OF FENCE POSTS (20/8/23 WITH 1 METRE SPADE FOR SCALE)



FENCE LINE CLEARED OF INVASIVE SCRUB TO ENABLE ACCESS FOR REPLACEMENT OF FENCE POSTS (20/8/23 WITH 1 METRE SPADE FOR SCALE)



INVASIVE SCRUB HAND CLEARED FROM SOUTH EAST SIDE OF FIELD (8/5/23)



NATURAL HEDGE SYMPATHETICALLY CUT BACK AT WEST CORNER OF FIELD (8/5/23)

The proposed type of fencing is noted as being preferential within 'Managing Land for Horses – A guide to good practice in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty,' within which document the timber post and rail fencing is regarded as unsightly and out of character.

Existing scrub areas, beneath which little wild-flower growth currently exists, will be cleared by hand. These areas and the areas cleared around boundaries will be allowed to regenerate via windblown wild flower seeds and those which currently lie dormant within the soil.



GROUND AREA BENEATH INVASIVE SCRUB 20/8/23



INVASIVE SCRUB HAND DUG FROM PUBLIC FOOTPATH (20/8/23)

It is estimated that the field will not be used for a period of 12 months following remedial land-works, allowing this regeneration to complete a full 12-month cycle.

The following grazing plan will be followed:

	The field will be subdivided into two areas, by solar powered electric fencing, enabling all areas of the field to be rested. The field will be used by one small horse and a companion pony (of native type). Estimated grazing turn-out times will be ... January/February/March: One hour daily April/May: Two hours daily May: Two hours daily June/August: Turnout between the hours of 18:00 and 06:00 September/October: Two hours daily November/December: One hour daily The field will not be used for ridden exercise of horses. Horses will get additional exercise through local hacking. Each horse will have the freedom to go in and out of their stables to access the Grasscrete stableyard, except in icy conditions. Natural flint has been collected during excavation and digging up invasive shrubs, which will be used around gateways, to prevent poaching of ground. Horses will be fed within the stable yard, to prevent the creation of areas of bare ground. Manure will be cleared from the field, weekly, and will be composted with stable yard manure, for garden use.
Foraging & commuting bats	A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted both during construction and when the stable yard will be operational.
Protected species	A precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians and reptiles during construction, including • No site clearance work or remedial work to hedgerows will be carried out within the amphibian hibernation season • All vegetation will be removed by hand • No chemicals or pollutants will be used • Any common amphibians found in the working area will be allowed to disperse of their own accord, or, if at immediate risk, will be moved by and to a sheltered, vegetated area, away from disturbance. A log pile and garden compost area has been created pre-emptively within the garden, for this purpose. • If a great crested newt is identified, works will cease and a suitably qualified ecologist will be consulted.



**LOG PILE AND COMPOST HEAP PROVIDED AS A SANCTUARY FOR WILDLIFE
(20/8/23)**



TREE ROOTS PROVIDED AS A SANCTUARY FOR WILDLIFE (20/8/23)

Roosting bats	One bat box will be provided on the stable block, 3-5 metres above ground level, in a south or south-westerly direction, with a clear flight path to and from its entrance and away from artificial light.
Foraging & commuting bats	A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted during and post development, in line with Section 7 of this report, item 7.8, Design & Materials – Lighting.
Badgers	The site is open to the wider landscape, therefore badgers can commute and forage throughout the field and garden. Badgers will benefit from the provision of harvested rainwater, directed to a small shallow reservoir to be created in the centre of the existing man-made mound to the south of the stable yard.

	 HISTORIC MAN-MADE CHALK MOUND FROM SOUTH-WEST (1980s) ON TO WHICH A RAINWATER FED WATER RESERVOIR WILL BE INSTALLED FOR LOCAL WILDLIFE (8/5/23 NOW COVERED IN WILD FLOWERS)
Hazel dormouse	Site clearance and remedial work to natural hedges will be undertaken outside of the dormouse hibernation period. If a dormouse, or evidence of dormice, are identified, work will cease and advice will be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
Hedgehog	Site clearance and remedial work to hedgerows will be carried out during the hibernation season (November to March). • Vegetation will be removed by hand. • A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted during and post development, in line with Section 7 of this report, item 7.8, Design & Materials – Lighting. • No chemicals or pollutants will be used. • If hedgehogs are found in the working area will be allowed to disperse of their own accord, or, if at immediate risk, will be moved by and to a sheltered, vegetated area, away from disturbance. A log pile and garden compost area has been created pre-emptively within the garden, for this purpose. • Hedgehog brush piles will be created in shady areas, such as the north-west corner of the garden. Birds will benefit from the provision of harvested rain water, directed to a small shallow reservoir to be created in the centre of the existing man-made mound to the south of the stable yard.
Birds	Vegetation removal will only be undertaken outside of birds nesting season. A bird box has been provided in the large field maple tree in the rear garden. This is used each year by great tits. Further bird boxes will be provided on in trees and on the outside of the building, at least 3 metres above ground level and suitably protected from direct sunlight and wind.

	Nesting shelves will be installed within the loose boxes, providing useful safe nesting opportunities for birds such as robins, house martins and blackbirds. The upper doors of the loose boxes will be fixed open to allow easy access to these areas for wild birds. Birds will benefit from the provision of harvested rainwater, directed to a small shallow reservoir to be created in the centre of the existing man-made mound to the south of the stable yard.
Invertebrates	In anticipation of the proposed development, a compost heap and log pile has been created to create a suitable habitat for invertebrates. No pesticides or chemical fertilizers will be used on the site.

10 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 It is submitted that the construction of the stable yard falls within the second exception for Greenbelt development in that it is the provision of an appropriate facility for outdoor sport and recreation.
- 10.2 Horse riding is a popular leisure activity in the local area, with many roads and bridleways close the site, suitable for hacking. The building is therefore entirely in character with the local area.