

**Retention of Horsebox hire business,  
mobile home, office/staffroom  
and an area of hardstanding  
at Longreach, Eastergate Lane, Eastergate,  
Nr Chichester, West Sussex, PO20 3SJ**

## **Planning, Design and Access Statement**

**Town and Country Planning Solutions Ref No: TCPS 479A  
April 2012**

| <b>Contents</b>                               | <b>Para Nos.</b> | <b>Page</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1. Introduction                               | 1.1 – 1.4        | 3           |
| 2. The Horsebox Hire Business                 | 2.1 – 2.6        | 4           |
| 3. Planning, Design and Access Considerations | 3.1 – 3.12       | 6           |
| 4. Reasons for Granting Planning Permission   | 4.1 – 4.4        | 10          |

## **Appendices**

1. Site photographs

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement accompanies a full planning application submitted to Arun District Council by the owners and occupiers of land and a residential property known as Longreach, which is located to the north of Eastergate Lane and to the west of the settlement of Eastergate near Chichester, West Sussex (see site location plan drawing no. TCPS 479A/1).
- 1.2 On 27<sup>th</sup> June 1997, the District Council granted an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness (no. EG/9/97/CLE) for an existing use – *“use as a single dwelling, together with adjoining livery yard and paddocks”*. On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2000, the District Council also granted full planning permission (no. EG/36/00) that included an existing sand-school and an extension to an existing stable block (which has since been implemented). Subsequently on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2003, the Council granted full planning permission (no. EG/30/03) for a detached dwelling and garage (which has also been implemented) in place of the original dwelling (a mobile home) the subject of the Certificate granted in 1997.
- 1.3 Thus, the authorised mixed use of the site comprises a livery yard, sand-school, stables, paddocks and a residential dwelling together with associated parking and turning areas.
- 1.4 Since April 2010, a horsebox hire business has also been operating from the site. This planning application seeks retrospective planning permission for the continued operation of the horsebox hire business as part of the mixed use of the site. In addition, the planning application seeks to retain the original dwelling (mobile home) to provide key worker/staff accommodation, to retain an office/staffroom facility (together with an area of associated decking) and to retain a extended area of porous hardstanding that has been required to increase the space available for the turning and parking of vehicles.

## **2. The Horsebox Hire Business**

- 2.1 The horsebox hire business provides a service for those who need to transport a horse or horses. The business offers self-drive horsebox vehicles that range in size from 3.5 tonnes to 7.5 tonnes. Examples of the horsebox vehicles available for hire are illustrated in photographs 1 and 2 contained in appendix 1 attached.
- 2.2 The business operates 7 horseboxes for self-drive hire and the period for hire can vary depending upon customers needs. This may be just hire for a few hours, a day, a week-end, or a longer period extending over a number of months. The Company's website ([www.okehurst.com](http://www.okehurst.com)) provides details of the terms of business and range of horsebox hire vehicles available for hire.
- 2.3 Most bookings are made via the internet or over the phone and then arrangements are made to collect and return the hired vehicle. This can be at any time during the day, working week or week-end, depending upon the customer's requirements.
- 2.4 The business is operated from a small office building on the site (shown in photograph 4), which is also used as a staffroom. In addition, the office/staffroom serves the equestrian livery business operated from the site.
- 2.5 During storage or following their return from being hired out, the horsebox vehicles are cleaned and parked on an existing area of hardstanding forming part of the central yard area, part of which is enclosed by existing stables and a workshop/storage building (see photographs 1 and 2). The planning application also seeks the retention of an extended area of the porous hardstanding shown on drawing no. 479A/2. The hardstanding has a sub-structure of crushed brick and is surfaced with road planings to match the surfacing of the rest of the open yard hardstanding area.

- 2.6 For the reasons explained in the following section, the proposal also includes the retention of staff accommodation that has been being occupied by a key worker for the past 6 years (see photograph 3).

### **3. Planning, Design and Access Considerations**

#### **i) Planning Policies**

- 3.1 The recently published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that *"The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth"* (paragraph 19) and that *"Planning Policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity"* (paragraph 28). In addition, paragraph 28 states that the promotion of a strong rural economy includes the diversification of agriculture and other land based rural businesses.
- 3.2 The horsebox hire business, although small scale, generates employment and provides diversification of a closely related equine livery business use that is also operated from the site. There is an essential need for a rural key worker to live permanently on the site in the existing staff accommodation and this is in accordance with paragraph 55 of the NPPF.
- 3.3 At the local level, the planning application site is located within an area covered by Inset F (Fontwell) of the adopted Arun District Local Plan's Proposals Map. In being located outside any built up settlement boundary, the area is covered by countryside restraint policies. It is not however, located in any part of the District that is either designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or as a strategic or local gap between settlements. Although it forms part of the wider 'Barnham Rife Catchment Area' where special development control consultation procedures apply in relation to land drainage (paragraph 1.45 of the Local Plan), this is not relevant to the planning application.
- 3.4 Outside settlement boundaries, 'saved' Local Plan Policy GEN3 seeks to protect the countryside for its own sake and to generally resist development proposals. The policy provides an exception for development that would help diversification of the rural economy (part iii

of the Policy) and saved Policy DEV5 states that planning permission will be granted for 'Horse Related Development' subject to this meeting various criteria. The horsebox hire business, although run separately, is closely associated with the established livery use that also operates from the site. Indeed, both uses take place within the rural part of the District, which has a distinctive equestrian character which includes the nearby Fontwell Park Race Course facility.

- 3.5 In 2004, the previous Government introduced a system of Local Development Framework (LDF) documents to replace the older system of Structure Plans (now revoked) and Local Plans. As part of the LDF, the Council aims to publish a draft replacement Local Plan in the summer of 2012, but for the time being no weight can be attached to any emerging policies.

## **ii. Amount and Scale of Use**

- 3.6 Okehurst Horsebox Hire is a small scale rural business that creates employment for 3 people. Having started in April 2010, it has operated successfully and now has 7 horsebox vehicles available for hire in a range of sizes. If retrospective planning permission were to be granted for this rural business use, then the scale of the operation could be controlled by imposing a planning condition to require that no more than 10 horsebox hire vehicles are to be kept on the site at any one time.
- 3.7 One of the 3 employees is a key worker who has lived in a dwelling (mobile home) that has been on the site since October 1999. This is shown in photograph 3 contained in appendix 1. This replaced a previous mobile home on the site that was the subject of a Lawful Development Certificate granted for a dwelling in 1997.
- 3.8 The key worker is essential to the day-to-day running of the rural enterprise as a whole. Duties include receiving hired vehicles that are returned outside normal operating hours and during the week-end. Duties also include preparation of vehicles for hire, assistance with the

management of the land as a whole and to provide the 24 hour, 7 days a week on-site cover for the continuous care of the horses kept on the site. At any one time there can be up to 20 horses kept on the site.

- 3.9 If planning permission were to be granted to retain the mobile home on the site, a planning condition could be imposed to the effect that it is only occupied by a member of staff/key worker associated with the horsebox hire business and the keeping of horses at the site. The mobile home is well screened and is contained among other buildings on the site. It does not appear out of character within the surrounding area, as approximately 200m - 300m to the east of the site are a group of about 10 mobile homes that form a travelling showman site.
- 3.10 It is also proposed to retain the office and staffroom accommodation (together with its associated decking area with steps leading up to the building) shown in photograph 2 contained in appendix 1. The office/staffroom accommodation has been on the site for about 12 years, but was previously located on a different part of the site until it was relocated to its current position in May 2011. The decking area to the front was also constructed in May 2011. The office/staffroom is used jointly in association with both the horsebox hire business and the commercial enterprise involved in keeping horses on the site.

### **iii. Layout, Appearance and Landscaping**

- 3.11 No change is proposed to the existing layout of the site, although retrospective consent is sought for the retention of an extended area of hardstanding shown on drawing no. TCPS 479A/1, which took place sometime before 2007. This additional area of porous hardstanding has been required to provide more space for the parking and turning of the horsebox hire vehicles. The vehicles that are parked on the hardstanding are generally within the central part of the overall site area and are not visible from any public viewpoints. Likewise, the staff living accommodation and office/staffroom accommodation is located among the central group of buildings and do not detract from the wider rural

landscape appearance of the area. No further landscaping is needed or proposed.

#### **iv. Access**

- 3.12 No changes are proposed to the existing access arrangements, which are adequate in order to serve the site and its mixed use.

#### **4. Reasons for Granting Planning Permission**

- 4.1 Okehurst Horsebox Hire is operated in conjunction with a separate horse livery business associated with the keeping of horses on the site. A sand-school, paddock, stabling and a separate residential dwelling adds to the mixed use nature of the site. Although the site is located within the countryside, it forms part of a wider area that is largely characterised by uses associated with the keeping of horses and the extensive Fontwell Park Race Course facility is situated a short distance away.
- 4.2 Okehurst Horsebox Hire provides a relatively unique self-drive facility for those who need to transport horses. It generates employment and helps to diversify the income derived from the keeping of horses on the site and as such, helps to contribute to the rural economy within this part of Arun District. The use is supported by the recently published NPPF and as the business use helps the diversification of the rural economy, it is supported by part iii of saved Local Plan Policy GEN3. The business use is also in accordance with saved Local Plan Policy DE5, which states that planning permission will be granted for horse related development subject to meeting various criteria.
- 4.3 The small scale nature of the business can be controlled by a planning condition limiting the number of horse boxes available for hire that are kept on the site at any one time and the retention of the mobile home is required to continue to provide essential key worker staff accommodation on the site. The retention of the office/staffroom facility is also justified in order to meet the wider needs of the rural business enterprise being undertaken on the site and the retention of a relatively small area of extended vehicle hardstanding would not give rise to any visual harm or other harm in terms of drainage, as it is constructed of porous materials.
- 4.4 As the planning application meets National and Local Plan policy requirements without giving rise to any demonstrable harm, the presumption should be in favour of granting planning permission.

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