

Officer Report

Application No.	25/1467/FH
Site Address	LAND REAR HODDIFORD BUNGALOW, SOUTHENAY LANE, SELLINDGE
Officer Name	Robert Allan
Proposal	Change of use from agricultural to equestrian to include a stable.

Recommendation

Report Number	RD-438505
Recommended Decision	Recommended to be Approve with Conditions
Recommendation Date	10 October 2025

Report

SITE

The application site is outside of the defined settlement boundary and therefore in the open countryside, in planning policy terms. It is accessible from Southenay Lane and is 0.1275 Ha in size. To the southwest is the residential dwelling of Hoddiford Bungalow. The site is outside of the North Downs Special Landscape Area (SLA) which starts on the northwestern side of the road. PROW HE366 starts to the northeast of the application site but does not pass through it.

RELEVANT HISTORY

25/0746/FH - Change of use from Agricultural to Equestrian to include a stable. Returned Invalid.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the use of the land for the private keeping of up to two horses, together with the erection of a stable building. Access will be via the existing field entrance. The proposed stables would be located at the north eastern end of the site.

CONSULTATIONS

Sellindge Parish Council: Support

KCC Ecological Advice Service: no objection subject to conditions.

KCC PROW: No comment received

PUBLICITY

Neighbour letter. Expired: 09.09.2025

Site notice. Expired 12.09.2025

REPRESENTATIONS

No representations received.

RELEVANT POLICY

The Development Plan comprises the Places and Policies Local Plan 2020 and the Core Strategy Review 2022.

Places and Policies Local Plan: HB1, NE2, NE3, NE4, NE5

Core Strategy Review 2022: SS1, SS3, CSD4

NPPF: paragraphs 11, 39, 48, 135, 187, 193

APPRAISAL

Visual Amenity

The site is located within the North Downs SLA and in the open countryside, so the impact upon the landscape character and appearance is a principal consideration. The keeping and grazing of horses is a relatively common and traditional activity within the countryside and is (to a degree) synonymous with landscape character within the countryside and SLA.

The field is at the top of a valley, with views into it restricted by the roadside hedgerows and trees, until the access is reached, where expansive countryside views are possible. The PROW starts next to the field entrance also, where there would be expected to be a number of visitors to the site.

Whilst the equestrian use would introduce a new field boundary, separating it from the wider field, with control of the fencing type via condition, this would not impact detrimentally upon the visual character of the open countryside. It would also be reasonable to impose a condition restricting outdoor storage, the stationing of jumps etc. and controlling the use of external lighting to prevent harm to the landscape also.

The introduction of the stable building at the location shown would intrude upon the undeveloped vista that exists and would be detrimental to the views across the open countryside for both passing members of the public and those using the PROW. Consequently, it has been moved to a location closer to the boundary with the roadway, to maximise the screening from the existing hedgerow and move it out of the views at the field entrance. No materials are listed on the application form for the external surfaces. The use of additional lighting could reasonably be controlled by condition also.

The British Horse Society guidelines recommend a ratio of one horse per 0.4-0.6 hectares on permanent grazing. Two horses are proposed at the site, which measures 0.1275 hectare, with stabling for both. The figures from the BHS can only be taken as a guide, with many additional factors such as:

- Size and type of horse
- Fat score/weight of horse
- Length of time spent stabled or off the pasture
- Time of year
- Quality of the pasture and type of soil
- Number of animals on the pasture
- How well the pasture is managed and cared for

The concern is that over-grazing and poor management could result in the pasture appearing 'horse-sick' with areas of bare ground and/or 'poaching' where the surface becomes churned due to overuse in a specific area. Whilst this could be countered with a grazing management plan, this is considered disproportionate and unreasonable for a private use, especially on a field area that has limited visual presence and, consequently, would not be detrimental to the visual character of the

wider countryside. Any issues of sufficient grazing would have to be considered in light of matters such as feed being brought into the site, specific nutrient requirements for horses, etc. and would be more appropriately managed through other legislation to ensure animal welfare standards.

Consequently, subject to the securing of appropriate materials, which can be done via condition, it is considered that the proposed use and stable block would have no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the open countryside.

Amenity

The field is to the side of a residential dwelling that fronts Southenay Lane. The keeping of horses and grazing are generally quiet uses with limited potential for noise and disturbance. Access is via the existing entrance to the northeast, which is well away from the residential use, with limited vehicle movements as the use is not commercial and consequently limited potential for associated noise and disturbance therefrom. The location of manure storage could be controlled via condition to ensure it is away from the residential use. The proposed structure would not give rise to any concerns of overshadowing, etc.

Overall, it is considered that there would be no unacceptable impacts on residential amenity.

Biodiversity

The site is not designated for the presence of protected/notable species or habitats and although there was no requirement for additional ecological information, a preliminary ecological appraisal, has been submitted, which identifies no likely impact upon protected species.

In relation to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), the proposal involves development in the form of the stables, which the plans show to have a footprint less than 25 sqm, so would be considered a de minimis exemption, despite the submission of BNG information.

Subject to conditions regarding precautionary working methods and biodiversity enhancement, the proposal is considered acceptable on biodiversity grounds.

Highways

Given the non-commercial nature of the proposed use, together with the use of the pre-existing field entrance, which could be utilised by all manner of farm equipment, there are unlikely to be any significant detrimental highway implications in terms of safety or amenity.

Heritage

The application was advertised as affecting the setting of a listed building. The structure in question is the Grade II listed Stone Hill Farm House, which is located on the opposite side of the road, approximately 90 metres away. In this regard, given the minor nature of the application, the separation distances involved and the vegetation running along the field boundaries and roadway, there would be no harm to the significance or setting of the designated heritage asset.

Environmental Impact Assessment

In accordance with the EIA Regulations 2017, this development has been considered in light of Schedules 1 & 2 of the Regulations and it is not considered to fall within either category and as such does not require screening for likely significant environmental effects.

Local Finance Considerations

Section 70(2) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that a local planning authority must have regard to a local finance consideration as far as it is material. Section 70(4) of the Act defines local finance considerations as a grant or other financial assistance that has been, that will, or that could be provided to a relevant authority by a Minister of the Crown (such as New Homes Bonus Payments), or sums that a relevant authority has received, or will or could receive, in payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Human Rights

I have also taken into account the human rights issues relevant to this application. In my view, the Assessment section above and the Recommendation represents an appropriate balance between the interests and rights of the applicant (to enjoy his land subject only to reasonable and proportionate controls by a public authority) [and the interests and rights of those potentially affected by the proposal (to respect for private life and the home and peaceful enjoyment of their properties)] and the wider public interest.

Public Sector Equality Duty

In determining this application, regard has been had to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set down in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, in particular with regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. It is considered that the application proposals would not undermine objectives of the Duty.

It is considered that the application development does not conflict with objectives of the Duty.

Duty to cooperate

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019 the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and creative way by offering a pre-application advice service and, where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome and as appropriate, updating applicants / agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application. In this instance the proposal was acceptable as submitted.

Recommendation

Taking the above into account, the proposal is considered to be a sustainable development that complies with development plan policy and the NPPF and is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommended Conditions (11)

1

The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the permission is granted.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2

The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the following approved drawings and documents:

Proposed Block Plan 25.109 SOUT 03 Rev. A

Proposed Stable Plan 25.109.SOUT 04

Proposed Stable Elevations 25.109.SOUT 05

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in order to ensure the satisfactory implementation of the development in accordance with the aims of Places and Policies Local Plan.

3

No development beyond the construction of foundations shall take place until details of the external finishing materials to be used on the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

4

No floodlighting, security lighting or other external lighting shall be installed or operated at the site, other than in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:

- A statement of why lighting is required, the proposed frequency of the use and the hours of illumination.
- A site plan showing the area to be lit relative to the surrounding area
- Details of the number, location and height of the lighting columns or other fixtures.

- The type, number, mounting height and alignment of the luminaries.
- The beam angles and upwards waste light ratio for each light.
- An isolux diagram showing the predicted illuminance levels at critical locations on the boundary of the site and where the site abuts residential properties.

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity.

5

No development beyond the construction of foundations shall take place until details of a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The plan shall include full details of biodiversity enhancements including durable and suitably-placed bird boxes (at least 2 x woodcrete house martin cups).

The Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: To protect and enhance biodiversity.

6

The stables hereby permitted shall only be used for the stabling of horses or ponies for private use and for no other purpose, including any commercial use.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and highway safety and convenience.

7

No external storage of materials or items of any kind including jumps, caravans, mobile homes, vehicles or trailers shall take place on the site.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

8

Prior to first use of the stables, full details of the means of storage prior to disposal and the method of disposal of waste arising from the animals housed within the development shall have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Such waste shall only be disposed in accordance with the approved details and no waste shall be burnt.

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity.

9

The use of the site for the keeping of horses/ponies hereby permitted shall be for no more than two horses/ponies at any one time.

Reason: To prevent over-grazing.

10

The sensitive working methods as outlined within section 4 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (KB Ecology, July 25) shall be in place throughout the duration of the construction period.

Reason: In the interests of safeguarding biodiversity.

11

Within twelve months of first use of the development hereby approved, photographic evidence of the implementation of the approved biodiversity enhancement measures as required by condition 5 (the BEP condition) shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval. The approved measures shall be thereafter retained.

Reason: To protect and enhance biodiversity.