



19 November 2014

Philippa Kelly
Planning – Major Projects
Forest Heath District Council
College Heath Road
Mildenhall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP28 7EY

Our Ref: 47069659
Your Ref:

Dear Philippa,

**Re. Planning Application Ref. DC/14/0585/OUT
Meddler Stud, Bury Road, Kentford**

Further to the recent Committee meeting and our subsequent conversations, I recognise that Members are keen to ensure that, if approved, the racehorse training establishment (RTE) element is constructed and operated as soon as possible. The applicant is committed to the delivery of the RTE and, to this end, this letter provides the applicants suggestions for potential S106 obligations which will hopefully provide Members with the assurances they require. I would be grateful if you discuss these with colleagues, as appropriate, and let me know whether you consider them to be appropriate and practicable.

Construction and Delivery of the RTE

We propose that the landowner is to be obliged to construct and complete the RTE element of the development prior to any of the new houses being occupied. For the avoidance of doubt, this is to include construction of the trainer's house, stables, barn, exercise ring and other ancillary elements, all of which will be subject to approval at detailed planning application stage.

We also propose that no more than 35 new dwellings are to be occupied until the RTE is either sold or rented to an equine operator. We do not consider it sensible for the RTE to be occupied/operated (i.e. with horses on site) prior to this point, as this would potentially raise issues of site safety and animal welfare during the construction period which should be avoided.

URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited
Building 7, Michael Young Centre,
Purbeck Road, Cambridge,
CB2 8QL, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)1223 275 730
Fax: +44 (0)1223 275 731
www.ursglobal.com

URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited
Place of Registration: England & Wales
Registered Number: 880328
Registered Office: Scott House, Alençon Link, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 7PP, United Kingdom

Marketing / Price

We propose that before the occupation of any house, a reputable firm of estate agents/chartered surveyors (or more than one), experienced in equine properties, is to be instructed to offer the property on the open market either for sale or rent, on attractive terms, based on the agent's advice and to use best endeavours to secure an appropriate equine operator.

As regard the choice of agent, the main firms in the area with specialist equestrian departments include the following, and it would be the intention to select a suitable firm (or firms) from this list: Savills, Strutt and Parker, Carter Jones, Windsor Clive International, Bidwells, Smiths Gore, Carter Jonas, Jackson Stops, Cheffins, Fine and Country.

We propose that the RTE should be actively marketed in accordance with a pro-active marketing strategy until such time as a suitable purchaser or tenant is identified.

All offers will be carefully considered, but so far as is reasonably possible, it is also important to identify a responsible and capable operator who is likely to make a success of the business. It is fully appreciated that small trainers are likely to have limited resources, but the landowner would seek to avoid those with CCJ's or who are involved in any sort of insolvency process. This is obviously in the interests of prudent estate management.

If appropriate, the landowner would also accept an obligation to ensure that prospective trainers provide comfort from the British Horseracing Authority (the governing body), that they will be granted a licence to train at the property to ensure that a quality operator is secured. We are very happy to consider further qualifications that the Council may wish to suggest so long as they do not preclude potentially suitable parties by being too onerous.

It is likely that the yard will be of most interest to start-up operations or small trainers and, in this context, if offers close to market value are not forthcoming, the landowners are prepared to discount the land value (or to reduce the required rental return in a similar way). More specifically, the landowners could (and would be prepared to) sell for a price of up to approximately £250,000 less than the market value, and similarly, that if the property is rented rather than sold, the rent would naturally be at a very competitive level as it would be based on this discounted RTE value. Either scenario can only be considered to be of benefit to the racing industry.

We propose that, if it proves difficult to attract a purchaser/tenant on the initial terms offered, such terms would be reviewed on a regular basis, as appropriate, and reduced in accordance with agent's advice until such time as an acceptable offer is received and the sale/letting concluded. It is appreciated that the legal agreement would need careful wording to capture this.

To be clear, should the Council wish it so, the landowners would be prepared to enter into an obligation to either sell or rent on the basis of a discounted price. This would be a direct monetary benefit being provided to the horse racing industry which, we are sure Members will agree, is beyond dispute.

The landowners are making the suggestion of formal obligations being imposed on them in respect of sale or rent level in the light of the unfounded accusations by William Gittus, among others, that the landowners have in the past deliberately refused reasonable offers for the property. Whilst there is no truth whatsoever in these accusations, the landowners wish to explicitly demonstrate their commitment to the property being brought back into meaningful use within the horse racing industry.

Maintenance

Once completed, the landowners are to be obliged to keep the RTE fully maintained and in good and marketable condition, to the satisfaction of the local planning authority, until such time as it is either sold, or rented, following which the new owner/occupier will be responsible for ongoing maintenance in the usual way. For the sake of clarity, this responsibility is to extend to the paddocks and external areas as well as the buildings themselves. In this way, it can be ensured that the property remains in first class condition, even if it takes longer than anticipated to attract an occupier. This requirement may be secured by legal obligation or planning condition.

I hope you find the above information helpful and that it demonstrates the applicant's clear commitment to securing the future of the RTE element. If you have any comments or further suggestions please let me know.

Yours sincerely
for **URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited**



Thomas Smith BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI
Associate – Town Planning
URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited

6-8 Greencoat Place, Victoria, London, SW1P 1PL, United Kingdom

Mobile: +44 (0)78 2730 1862
thomas.d.smith@urs.com
www.ursglobal.com