

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

APPLICATION BY MR & MRS WARREN

WENDY'S STABLES, WARWICK ROAD, RAYLEIGH, SS6 8XE

**CHANGE OF USE OF STABLE BUILDING TO SELF CONTAINED
HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION**

PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT

SPL REF: 13.2053

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The following is a Planning Support Statement. It is submitted in lieu of a Design and Access Statement (DAS) following the revocation of the requirement to submit a DAS with a planning application as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013.
- 1.2. The principal purpose of the statement is to ensure the development proposals are based on a thoughtful design process and a sustainable approach to access. It will relay the context in which the application is made and will consider planning policy as it relates to the proposal.
- 1.3. The following documents were used in the construction of the statement:
 - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)
 - Rochford District Council – Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2011)
 - Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (2006)
- 1.4. The application proposes the change of use of a stable building to one unit of self contained holiday accommodation. The only material changes to the building will be a small number of new doors and windows, many of which will utilise the existing stable doors.
- 1.5. The holiday accommodation unit will be accessed from Warwick Road at the rear of the site, utilising the existing access. There is sufficient space within the site for suitable amenity space and adequate parking provisions to be made.
- 1.6. The Site Development Assessment by Tourism South East (please refer to **SPL 1**) identifies a clear need for additional bed-spaces in the area, especially during the peak seasons. The report identifies the location of the site as one of its main advantages due to the close proximity to urban centres and open countryside. It also recognises the plethora of activities available within the Rochford District and surrounding areas which would attract visitors to stay at Wendy's Stables and support the existing rural economy.

1.7. The assessment concludes that there are opportunities for Wendy's Stables to benefit from a lengthened tourist season due to the proximity to Southend Airport and leisure facilities such as Golf Courses, Sailing Clubs, Horse Riding and Fishing. Visitors will be able to utilise the surrounding woodland and countryside for walking or cycling during their stay.

2.0 THE SITE AND ITS SURROUDINGS

- 2.1. The application site, Wendy's Stables, is located on Warwick Road, Rayleigh which sits in the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 2.2. In terms of immediate surroundings, to the north lies some residential development and large amounts of woodland, much of which is ancient woodland. Also to the north, and the east, a wildlife site and existing public open space are located. To the east and west lie large areas of existing residential development. Finally, south of the site Warwick Road and Rayleigh Garden Centre are located.
- 2.3. The application concerns the existing stable building to the south of the site as identified by the red line on the Location Map and Plan (drawing reference 13.2053/M001). To the north of the site a small shed is located.
- 2.4. In relation to landscaping on the site, the boundaries are defined by fencing or trees and hedges. A gate to the south western corner of the site provides vehicular access from Warwick Road. A number of trees and hedges are located on the site, most notably along much of the southern boundary, screening the building from Warwick Road.

Sustainability Credentials

- 2.5. The application site is sustainably located in close proximity to a variety of facilities and services, being well served by a number of convenience stores and a large Sainsbury's supermarket. These services can be easily reached by a range of transport modes, including bus, cycling and walking. A restaurant and bar are located within very short walking distance of the site. Rayleigh town centre is also located in close proximity, providing an assortment of other services and shops.
- 2.6. A number of recreational facilities are available nearby, including walking, horse riding and cycling. Hadleigh Farm, home of the 2012 Olympic Mountain Biking Course, is within easy access of the site, providing opportunities for cycling enthusiasts to cycle the course. This will also host a variety of high profile events, including the final of the 2013 British Cross Country Series, bringing thousands of visitors into the area, many of whom will require holiday accommodation.
- 2.7. In addition, Wat Tyler Country Park and Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park are located close to the site. Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park provides opportunities for fishing, walking, horse riding and cycling.

- 2.8. In terms of transport links, the application site is ideally located. The A127 lies in close proximity to the site, providing access to the M25 and Southend-on-Sea. Southend Airport is also easily accessible from the site via the private car and public transport.
- 2.9. The site is sustainably located in terms of public transport, with Rayleigh train station 1.7 miles from the site, providing links to Southend-on-Sea and London Liverpool Street. The nearest bus stop is 0.3 miles from site, with services running to Southend-on-Sea, Shoeburyness and Leigh-on-Sea.
- 2.10. It has been demonstrated that the site is sustainable and accessible by a range of transport modes, including cycling, walking, public transport and the private car. The site is also sustainably located in terms of services and recreational facilities likely to be utilised by occupiers of the proposed holiday accommodation.

3.0 PROPOSAL SPECIFIC INFORMATION

- 3.1. The application proposes the change of use of an existing stable building to self-contained holiday accommodation comprising one unit.
- 3.2. Due to the nature of the proposal, the size and amount of development are dictated by the size of the existing building. One unit of holiday accommodation comprising two bedrooms comfortably fits into the building. In the immediate area, existing buildings are a mix of one and two storeys.
- 3.3. The appearance of the existing stable building will be retained. The elevations are currently clad in brown horizontal featheredge boarding with a corrugated roof and can be seen in Photograph 1 at **SPL2**.
- 3.4. In terms of material changes to the building, six windows and three doors are proposed (please refer to the submitted Proposed Elevations plan, reference 13.2053/P203). One of the proposed doors will utilise the existing stable doorway, with the two remaining stable doorways replaced with windows designed to fit the existing door openings. The remaining new windows will be designed to replicate this appearance, ensuring the building is well designed.
- 3.5. The proposed new windows and doors to the building are in sensitive, appropriate positions and will not have a detrimental effect to the Green Belt. To the south of the site, there is existing vegetation between the building and the site boundary which is to be retained (see Photograph 2 at **SLP2**), ensuring that the windows cannot be seen from Warwick Road. The existing fencing along the western boundary is also to be retained, ensuring that there is no loss of amenity to neighbouring residents or future occupiers of the site. No overlooking from the site will occur.
- 3.6. The layout of the overall site will not change as a result of this proposal. The building is located to the south and east, with access to the site taken from Warwick Road (see Photograph 3 at **SPL2**).
- 3.7. Regarding the internal layout, the size of the building defines the scheme, leading to a two bedroomed unit (please refer to the submitted Proposed Floor and Roof Plan, reference 13.2053/P202). New internal partitions will be created to form the proposed rooms, which include a bathroom, two double bedrooms and a large combined kitchen and living space.

- 3.8. Through the provision of the new doors, external access to one of the bedrooms and the combined kitchen and living space will be available. The implementation of the new windows will ensure that there is at least one window in every room.
- 3.9. North of the site comprises grassland and some trees, which are to be retained as part of the proposal (see Photograph 4 at **SPL2**). This area will provide private amenity space for future visitors and ensure that the Green Belt is protected and enhanced in line with national and local policy.
- 3.10. The change of use to holiday accommodation will result in a change in traffic dynamics but of no consequence. Instances of horse boxes and deliveries of bedding and feed will be removed from the site. On the site itself, no further hardstanding will be required and parked cars will be shielded by the existing boundary treatments. There is adequate space within the site for suitable parking provision in line with the standards required by the Council.
- 3.11. Within the area there is a recognised need for holiday accommodation, as supported by the Site Development Assessment by Tourism South East (please refer to **SPL1**). The proposal will meet this need and will benefit from a lengthened tourist season due to the proximity of Golf Courses and Southend Airport.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1. Relevant planning policy documents include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012), Rochford District Council – Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2011) and the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (2006).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

- 4.2. The new NPPF, as published 27 March 2012, revokes previously published Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Mineral Planning Guidance Notes (MPGs) and replaces them with one overarching policy document.
- 4.3. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so.
- 4.4. From the outset it is important to stress that the NPPF represents a key directional shift away from more complicated planning policies and seeks to bring in a new simpler system where the emphasis is clearly placed around permitting development which achieves sustainable development.
- 4.5. LPAs are now charged to approve development which is considered sustainable, unless there are clear and unambiguous reasons why this should not be the case.
- 4.6. The NPPF goes on to clarify that "sustainable" development has three dimensions or roles to it, these being identified as:
- An economic role
 - A social role
 - An environmental role
- 4.7. The NPPF supports the sustainable growth of the rural economy through the conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings. To promote this strong rural economy, Paragraph 28 supports:

'sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside.'

- 4.8. The proposal will provide sustainable rural tourism, increasing footfall to local shops and businesses to the benefit of their financial viability. The proposal has been well designed to ensure that it respects and enhances the character of the countryside.
- 4.9. The application site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and is therefore subject to certain policy restrictions. The Government attaches great importance to the Green Belt. The re-use of buildings is not inappropriate provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction (paragraph 90). Such is the nature of the current proposal.
- 4.10. To the extent that the building is being altered, this is also comfortably within the definition of appropriate development. Paragraph 89 (bullet 3) allows:

'...the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building'.

- 4.11. The alteration of the building to provide new doors and windows does not introduce any additional visible built form or extend the foot print of the building to any degree, so is compliant with Paragraph 89.
- 4.12. It has been demonstrated that support can be found within the NPPF for the sustainable growth of the rural economy, particularly for tourism, and for the conversion, extension or alteration of existing buildings within the Green Belt in the manner proposed.

Local Planning Policy Context

- 4.13. The conversion of rural buildings for bed and breakfasts / small scale hotels is widely supported throughout the policies of Rochford District Council. With particular reference to the site's Green Belt location, Policies GB1 – Green Belt Protection and GB2 – Rural Diversification and Recreational Uses, in the Core Strategy encourage small-scale employment and recreation opportunities in the countryside in the form of Rural Diversification.

4.14. Paragraph 6.13, in the supporting text to Policy GB2, states that:

‘the Council feel it is appropriate in the interests of encouraging rural economic sustainability to encourage the conversion of existing rural buildings...the conversion of rural buildings for bed and breakfasts/ small scale hotels, where appropriate, is also considered appropriate as it would help to realise green tourism in the District.’

4.15. Within the Core Strategy, Policy CLT11 – Tourism reinforces the Council’s position on promoting existing rural buildings to bed and breakfast accommodation to encourage rural tourism, whilst protecting the character of the Green Belt (paragraph 9.49).

4.16. Finally, within the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan, Policy R9 – The Re-Use and Adaptation of Existing Rural Buildings and Farm Diversification, supports the reuse of existing buildings in the Green Belt for the purpose of rural diversification subject to the following eight criteria:

i) the proposal relates to a building with a form, bulk and general design in keeping with its surroundings;

ii) the proposal relates to a building of permanent and substantial construction, that is capable of conversion to the proposed use without major or complete reconstruction;

iii) the proposal involves no major extensions which would materially affect the openness of the green belt;

iv) the proposal involves no extension to the building, nor would any such extension be necessary in order to carry out the proposed use;

v) the proposed use of the building and associated land would not have a materially greater impact than the permitted / lawful use on the openness of the Green Belt or the fulfilment of its purposes;

vi) the proposed use would not introduce additional activity or traffic movements likely to materially and adversely affect the character of the Green Belt or place unacceptable pressures on the surrounding rural road network;

vii) in the case of a change to residential use, the applicant has first made every reasonable attempt to secure a suitable business re-use during the two years prior to the application; and

viii) there is no detriment to nature conservation interests.

4.17. The proposal is commercial in nature and supported by policies relating to small scale tourism, and as such complies with criteria vii. The proposal complies with all the criteria listed above and as such accords with Policy R9.

4.18. It has been demonstrated above that the proposal adheres to the NPPF and complies with all the relevant policies of the Core Strategy and Rochford District Replacement Local Plan.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. This statement has relayed the context in which the application is made. It has also considered planning policy as it relates to the proposal.
- 5.2. This application proposes the change of use of a stable building to one unit of self contained holiday accommodation, with the only material changes to the building being a small number of new doors and windows.
- 5.3. The proposal is supported by a Site Development Assessment undertaken by Tourism South East (please refer to **SPL1**) which identified a need for additional bed-spaces in the area and found that the site is likely to benefit from a lengthened tourist season due to the proximity to Southend Airport and leisure facilities. It also recognised the variety of leisure activities available within the Rochford District and surrounding area that the occupiers of Wendy's Stables could utilise.
- 5.4. The enduring theme of the proposal is a desire to respect and enhance the context of the site and the locality in which it sits. This aim has been reflected in the proposal which has been designed to fit seamlessly with the surroundings and hence to complement the local character and the Green Belt.
- 5.5. With regards to the planning merits of the proposal, significant national and local planning policy exists to support the extension or alteration of buildings in the Green Belt. The proposal accords with such national planning policies in the NPPF and local planning policies in the Core Strategy and Rochford District Replacement Local Plan.
- 5.6. National and local planning policy also supports the provision of sustainable small scale tourism related developments in the Green Belt, including the change of use of existing rural buildings to holiday accommodation. Within this statement it has been demonstrated that the proposal complies with such policies.
- 5.7. Furthermore, it has been detailed how the proposal adheres to the principle of sustainable development advocated by the NPPF.
- 5.8. The proposal therefore accords with relevant, up-to-date adopted planning policy and Rochford District Council are respectfully requested to grant planning permission subject to reasonable conditions.

SPL1

TOURISM SOUTH EAST SITE DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

SITE DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

**Proposed holiday accommodation at Wendy's Stables,
Warwick Road, Rayleigh, SS6 8XE**

July 2013

**TOURISM
SOUTH EAST**

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1. BACKGROUND

Tourism South East has been commissioned by Smart Planning to undertake a Site Development Assessment for the conversion of an existing stable building and change of use into one unit of holiday accommodation. The site is eligible for quality assessment although the developers have not specified at this early stage if they will apply for the assessment.

Wendy's Stables is located in Warwick Road, Rayleigh. This historic market town has a number of amenities including several public houses, restaurants, shops, and an indoor market, known as Rayleigh Lanes. Other local attractions include Rayleigh Windmill Museum, the Dutch Cottage and the National Trust owned Rayleigh Mount. Rayleigh is also home to a number of festivals and events, including Wild Woods Day, the Rayleigh Arts Festival and the Rochford Art Trail.

One of the main advantages of the proposed development is its location. Wendy's Stables is within easy access to urban centres and countryside locations. It has direct access to Lakeside shopping centre and central London for days out, shopping, cultural activities and attractions. It is within comfortable reach of the mainline railway and bus services and close to major transport links, including Southend on Sea airport and Tilbury Docks.

The new accommodation would be located in close proximity to a wide range of leisure opportunities, including country parks for walking, cycling, horse riding and wildlife and bird watching, golf courses and coastal areas for sailing and recreational activities. This is likely to attract visitors outside the main summer month periods, thus supporting a sustainable tourism performance with a constant volume of visits throughout the year.

Some of the more important countryside areas are the historic Hockley Woods (the remains of a royal forest), the island of Foulness and the Roach Valley Conservation Zone. Also nearby is Cherry Orchard Jubilee Park, a leisure facility of natural woodland walks, bridleways and lakes.

The Wat Tyler Park, which covers an area of 125 acres within the South Essex Marsh and attracts 350,000 visitors each year, is within close proximity to Wendy's Stables, being only a few miles south of the application site. The park includes a living museum with historic

buildings, community events, a café/restaurant and exhibition and conferencing areas. It is also home to a RSPB visitor centre.

Finally, the new establishment would also benefit from its proximity to Hadleigh Farm which offers rural walks, a medieval fortress and a Rare Breeds Centre. It was also home to the mountain biking competitions during London 2012 and is now a prime site for cycling enthusiasts.

2. SUPPLY

Currently, there is low supply of existing self catering accommodation within a 10 mile radius of the proposed development, with a total of 8 properties, 13 units and 48 bedspaces identified. Most properties are located to the south and east of the proposed development (shown in blue on Figure 1). Three out of the eight properties identified are quality assessed.

Table 1. Accommodation stock within 10 miles of the proposed development

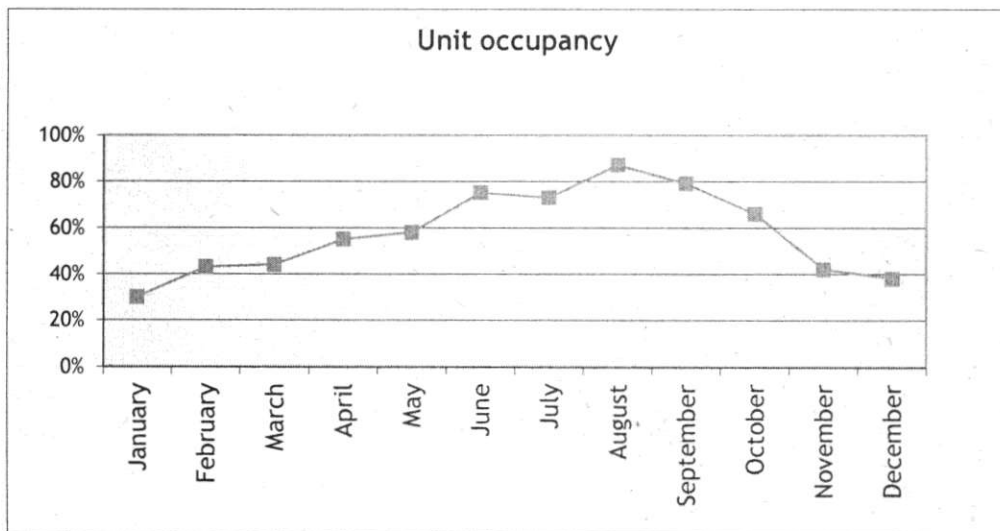
Location	Units	Bedspaces	Assessed
CM3 8	1	5	N
SS0 8	1	4	N
SS0 8	2	4	N
SS0 8	1	4	N
SS13 2	1	2	N
CM11 2	1	6	Y
CM3 6	5	19	Y
SS7 5	1	4	Y
TOTAL	13	48	

*Note: Properties in **Bold** are in close proximity to the proposed development*

3. NEED

Need is usually interpreted as the inability of current supply to meet demand and is measured using performance indicators such as levels of accommodation occupancy level. The Accommodation Occupancy Survey (2012) shows that Essex achieves average annual occupancy of 62%. The table below shows monthly trends for self catering accommodation and highlights the levels of seasonality affecting the area.

Figure 2 – Self catering accommodation occupancy monthly trends



The unit occupancy rates for the summer months, from June to September, fluctuate around the 80% occupancy mark. These high levels of occupancy would suggest a need for more accommodation in the county over this period. It would be fair to assume that the proposed unit is likely to perform better than average in the periods between high and low seasons (e.g. March and October), as it is located near a number of golf courses and Southend Airport. According to research published by research agency Mintel, properties located near golf courses are more likely to perform well during low season months, particularly due to golf related short breaks. Similarly, there is a year-round demand for accommodation near major commercial airports. Southend Airport predicts that passenger numbers will jump 40 percent to 1.15 million by mid-2014. The new development would therefore be in an ideal position to capitalise on this additional demand for accommodation from the growing number of travellers using the airport.

In summary, the supply and need analysis would suggest that Wendy's Stables would represent an important addition to the current supply of self catering accommodation in the local area. The additional accommodation would not only provide the bedspaces needed during the summer months, but due to its location, nearby amenities and leisure opportunities, it would provide the likely additional capacity needed throughout the year, thus helping to reduce the current inability of existing supply to meet demand for self catering accommodation.

4. DEMAND

The economic recession and public sector cuts will have an effect on tourism over a number of years, both in terms of visitor patterns and in the amount of investment from Local Authorities on tourism promotion and development. There are signs that people are resisting losing their holidays and instead are changing their travel patterns, providing opportunities for the domestic market. The latest results from the GB Tourism Survey (2012) for the East of England show significant year-on-year increases in visitor nights (+13%) and, especially, expenditure, up 13.5% on 2011, on top of a 15% rise between 2010 and 2011. These figures show encouraging results for the domestic market and suggest an increasing preference for breaks closer to home with visitors staying longer (from 3 nights per trip in 2011 to 3.5 nights per trip in 2012) and spending more during their trips (from £47.30 per night in 2011 to £52.90 in 2012).

Affluent pre-family and family consumers are shown to be the largest market segment for self-catering holidays. Self-catering agencies have also identified a growing interest from childless couples, often linked to activity focused breaks. According to GB Tourism Survey research undertaken by Visit Britain (2012), the self-catering market in the East of England accounts for about 20% of all domestic trips. Although generally used less frequently than serviced accommodation and friends and relatives' homes, self-catering trips normally last longer and are slightly above average in spending, accounting for 26% of all spend in the region.

Current trends show that a significant and growing number of tourists are looking for richer holiday experiences and higher quality products and services. As a result of the economic uncertainty consumers' attitudes have changed, demanding more for their money. Their

expectations are also higher, looking for destinations that can offer a sense of distinctiveness and memorable experiences.

Research conducted by DCMS (Sustainable Tourism in England: a Framework for Action, 2009), Visit England (Sustainability – Consumer research, 2010) and East of England Tourism (2008) all converge in a set of positioning guides as well as identifying the motivations and purchase drivers of consumers as well as their choices in relation to tourism.

Current consumer trends and drivers for change in the tourism sector, based on the above research, include a requirement for richer engagement with destinations and host communities. Whilst seeking memorable experiences, visitors are also looking for holidays that are authentic, original, sincere and genuine. Often defined as responsible tourism, this trend is partly about respecting and benefiting local people and the environment. It acknowledges the demand visits place on communities. At the same time it expects local businesses to act responsibly too, by providing a quality product, promoting local suppliers and improving staff motivation and development as key to enjoyable experiences.

4.1 LOCAL AREA

TSE Research would argue that the proposed unit would play an important role in supporting existing leisure activities taking place in and around the Rayleigh area. The need for self catering accommodation for visitors on staying trips in the district has been highlighted in the previous section.

The developers would be in a position to target a mixture of audiences that will be defined by the multiple leisure options available nearby. This may include bird watching, walking, cycling, golfing breaks and horse riding, as well as family/business functions nearby. The new Southend Airport, together with the nearby Channel Tunnel and the port of Tilbury, all provide important international gateways to the UK.

Sailing enthusiasts can find much scope on the Roach and Crouch rivers, and there is a marina at Wallasea Island with a foot passenger ferry across to Burnham-on-Crouch. Golf at nearby golf clubs, numerous public countryside footpaths in the immediacy, horse riding, cycling routes and bird watching are all available in the local area. An important direct

economic impact of these activities relates to the close contact with local communities, meaning richer visitor experiences. Promoting the distinctiveness of the countryside experience encourages direct expenditure in the local area (e.g. pubs, community and local shops), thus helping local employment growth and extending the tourism season beyond the summer months.

According to latest research from England Leisure Visits, walking, rambling and hiking are the most popular activities in the countryside accounting for 36% of all activities. Couples and over 45's are the most predominant market, visiting mainly throughout the spring and summer months. In the region walking is a particularly popular activity, with 26% of visitors planning to participate in walking as a leisure activity during their trip. The historic character of the destination, followed by great places to eat and drink and beautiful countryside and coastal areas are the top drivers for attracting visitors.

Again, the local area can offer visitors a range of woodland and countryside sites. Some of the more important countryside areas are the historic Hockley Woods (the remains of a royal forest), the island of Foulness, internationally famous as a haven for wildlife, and the Roach Valley Conservation Zone.

The 100 acre Cherry Orchard Jubilee Park is a leisure facility of natural woodland walks, bridleways and lakes. A new bridleway through the park connects existing routes and allows horse riders to enjoy the area. This will soon be complemented with the creation of new car parks, toilets, picnic areas and self guide trails.

The Wat Tyler County Park, less than 7 miles away, covers an area of 125 acres within the South Essex Marsh, attracting 350,000 visitors each year. The park includes a living museum with historic buildings brought from around the area to form a backdrop for community events such as the Basildon Festival. In addition, the Wat Tyler Centre houses an exhibition area, classrooms, café/restaurant, sports area and conferencing and event hire facilities.

The Park includes an RSPB visitor centre and discovery zone that attracts visitors all year-round. It contains a variety of habitats and a rich diversity of species which includes a

number of locally and nationally rare species, such as the green winged orchid, redshank, the scarce emerald damselfly, shrill carder bee and the roesels bush cricket.

In addition, the Park is central to the Vange Marsh, a rich wetland habitat. The fresh and saltwater lagoons attract breeding avocets, common terns, little ringed plovers lapwings and reed buntings. In winter, wigeons, teals and shovelers visit the site and bearded tits thrive in the reedbeds. As such, the site could provide a focal point for visitors staying at the new holiday establishment.

With regards to cycling holidays, according to Sustrans the total UK leisure cycling market is estimated to be worth £635 million a year, with cycle tourism in general contributing £285 million. Cycling holidays, where cycling is the main purpose of the holiday, account for £142 million of the annual total. The majority of UK cycling short breaks are thought to be centre-based i.e. based in a particular location for 2/3 days and going out for day cycle rides during the stay. Independent cycle touring breaks and packaged cycling holidays form the rest of the market. The average length of stay for cycling short breaks is 2 nights.

Hadleigh Farm offers rural walks and a medieval fortress with views over Hadleigh Marshes, Canvey Island and beyond. It is also home to a Rare Breeds Centre and the London 2012 Mountain Biking site. In light of this, there is the potential for the site to attract cycling enthusiasts and benefit from the established cycling market within the UK.

4.2 GOLF TOURISM

The following golf courses are also located near Wendy's Stables (additionally see Figure 3):

Golf In One, Rayleigh, SS6 7AE

The Rayleigh Club, Rayleigh, SS6 9QS

Boyce Hill Golf & Country Club, South Benfleet, SS7 1PD

Rochford Hundred Golf Club, Rochford, SS4 1NW

The Essex Golf Complex, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 4FA

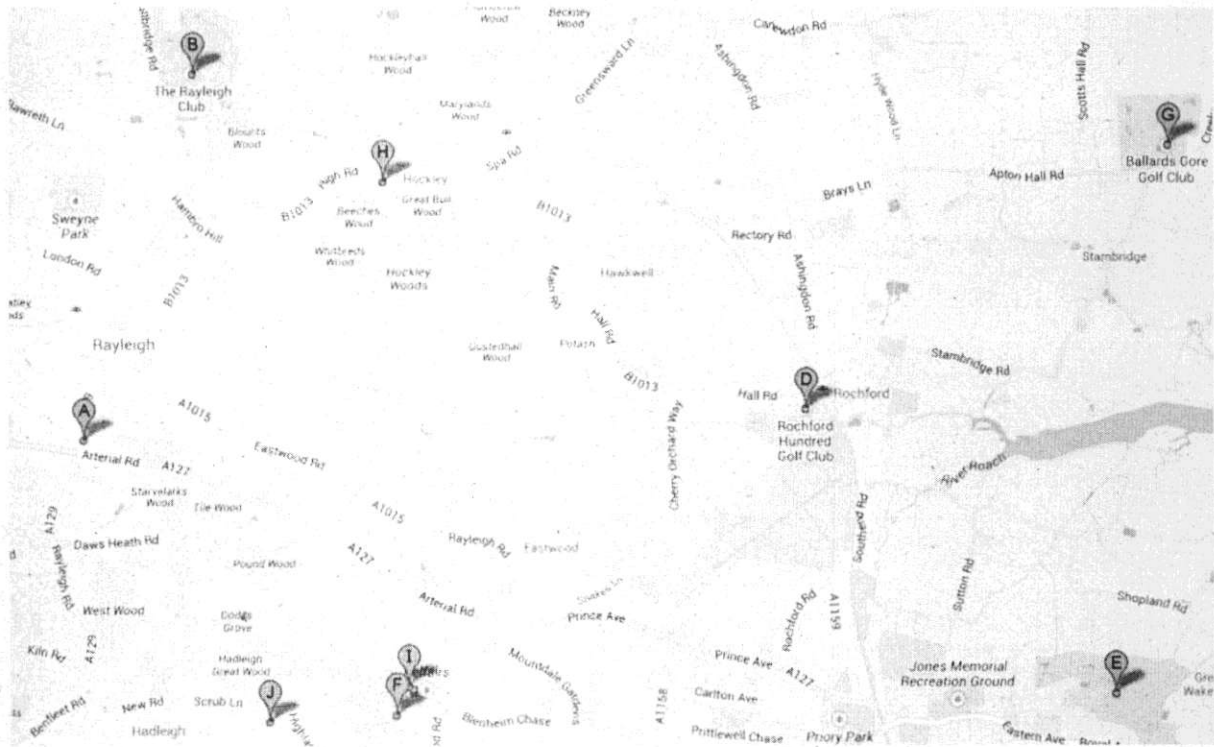
Belfairs Golf Club, Southend-on-Sea, SS9 4LR

Ballards Gore Golf Club, Canewdon, SS4 2DA

Hockley Golf Range, Hockley, SS5 4RP

Belfairs Golf Course, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 4LR

Figure 3 - Golf courses and ranges near Wendy's Stables



According to research agency Mintel and our research, golf tourism is dominated by the growing ABC1 socio-economic grouping (75%). 62% of golfers are aged 35 - 60 and are predominantly male (78%). Membership income generates circa £550m in the UK per annum.

A recent report by Mintel on the Golfing Market states 'Today golf is considered to be one of the chief activities which can determine the choice of holiday both in this country and abroad. The main pull of golf as part of a holiday lies with the link between amateur and professional players'. Research also shows that golf holidays incur higher spending, are more likely to be taken outside the high season and make heavy use of accommodation. This reaffirms the assumption made on the need section of this report that the proposed development is likely to perform better than the average occupancy achieved by other self catering accommodation providers in Essex as it is likely to be let throughout the year. In the current economically challenging times, any tourism development that can attract additional visits to the area, particularly out of season, should be considered as a major opportunity to revitalise the local economy and one that TSE Research wholly supports.

5. QUALITY & MARKETING, SUSTAINABILITY AND BEST PRACTICE

5.1 QUALITY

It is worth noting that, in general terms, properties that do not participate in a quality assurance scheme achieve lower occupancy rates than those establishments taking part, indicating an overall consumer preference for quality-graded accommodation. TSE Research recommends that all accommodation developments participate in quality assurance schemes. A quality assurance rating provides an independent assessment of what a guest can expect to find and an invaluable guarantee that a guest's stay will meet their expectations. If the developers intend to achieve a high quality grading, TSE Research would recommend aiming for 4 stars. Visit Britain Quality Assurance Standards consider all of the following aspects as part of the self-catering quality assessment:

Table 2 – Quality assessment criteria

Quality Categories	Assessment
Exterior	Appearance of buildings; grounds and gardens
Cleanliness	Cleanliness
Management efficiency	Bookings and prices; welcome and arrival; guest and tourist information
Public areas	Guest comfort; flooring; furniture, furnishings and fittings; heating and ventilation; lighting
Bedrooms	Flooring, furniture, furnishings and fittings; beds and bedding; heating and ventilation; lighting
Bathrooms and WC	General requirements; flooring; heating and ventilation; lighting
Kitchen	Kitchen inventory; flooring and ventilation; lighting

Star rating quality indicators:

3 star self catering establishments should indicate a quality level commensurate with three star entry requirements. Items may be described as good to very good. Not necessarily expensive, but of good quality and showing that some care has been taken. There must be a

good standard of maintenance and decoration. This level will be presented to the consumer as a "Very Good standard".

4 star self catering establishments should indicate a quality level commensurate with four star entry requirements. Items may be described as very good to excellent. May be brand new, but not of the highest intrinsic quality and not necessarily in the best condition. This level will be presented to the consumer as an "Excellent standard".

5 star self catering establishments should indicate a quality level commensurate with five star entry requirements. Items may be described as excellent and a high quality specification will be evident in all areas of the establishment. There will be attention to detail in design, both internal and external, with exemplary standards of care and maintenance. This level will be presented to the consumer as "Excellent standard".

For further information on self-catering accommodation quality standards, visit: www.qualityintourism.com

5.2 MARKETING

The internet has become an essential tool for marketing with the industry adapting in response to market demand. As such, many self catering establishments can now be booked online. With this in mind, the developer should ensure a tailored website is up-to-date at all times in order to promote the site to prospective customers, and may also consider advertising in specialised fishing and golfing magazines to generate wider exposure within this niche market. The growth of travel networking websites and social media have important implications for customer feedback, reviews and broadening the scope of 'word of mouth' marketing. In particular, the following is recommended:

- Design / maintain a bespoke website to provide a one-stop information point as well as feedback tools for the wide range of prospective visitors (cultural / shopping trips, visitors on their way to or from Southend airport and golfers, as well as nature enthusiasts)
- Online mapping of golfing locations, particularly suited to rural areas.

By participating in a quality assurance scheme, the development can also enjoy a wide range of marketing benefits including entries in the local, regional and national tourism websites, such as visitessex.com, visiteastofengland.com, enjoyengland.com and visitbritain.com.

5.3 SUSTAINABILITY & BEST PRACTICE

TSE Research would encourage the developer to use cleaner technologies whenever possible, such as rain water harvesting, solar panels and ground source heat pumps, and develop a sustainable corporate philosophy which will help to reduce the development's environmental footprint, raise the profile of sustainable accredited businesses in the region, lower running costs and improve well-being and customer satisfaction.

Similar to the ethos of the Green Tourism Business Scheme, sustainable development has been heavily promoted at national, regional and local levels to ensure it is ingrained in all policies and activities, as it affects businesses and individuals.

Sustainable development aims to enable people to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the wellbeing of future generations. Consumers are becoming more environmentally aware and keen to find ways to reduce their carbon footprint. According to the Office for National Statistics, visitors are willing to pay a little extra to reduce their impact on the environment. It is therefore advised that whenever possible new developments should embrace an environmentally friendly approach to their visitors.

There are a number of simple measures that could add value and possibly present additional market opportunities, improve site reputation and service quality and reduce running costs. These may include: employ and train locally, promote local produce, promote local activities and attractions, use low-energy light bulbs, aim for A+ (reduced energy consumption) if buying new appliances, recycling and incorporate reduced waste and water consumption management measures.

6. POLICY

Within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012), Section 3 - Supporting a prosperous rural economy states: *'Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.'*

Specifically, it suggests that in order to promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood developments should: *'Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside, and;*

'Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.'

The NPPF also states, under section 156, that: *'local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan'*. This should include strategic policies to deliver – amongst other elements - *'the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development.'*

The Rochford District Core Strategy is the main document of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and sets out the overall strategy for the future development of the District.

The Core Strategy makes reference to past initiatives in relation to small scale tourism projects. Paragraph 3.16 states: *'Green tourism initiatives and rural diversification have provided sustainable opportunities for rural businesses whilst maintaining a high quality environment. These initiatives have encouraged small-scale tourism projects sensitive to the local environment which help to sustain the rural economy without contributing to climate change. Acceptance of greater flexibility towards rural diversification has resulted in the development of a number of bed and breakfasts and hotels, facilitating stays in the countryside for visitors to the area [...].'*

Chapter 6 - The Green Belt covers policy relating to developments in the green belt areas of the District. The following two paragraphs from chapter 6 make reference to the need for diversification and conversion of redundant buildings in order to encourage economic sustainability in rural area:

'6.12 Whilst the District is predominantly Green Belt, only 3% of its VAT registered businesses are agricultural – less than the regional and national averages. It is recognised that diversification into other forms of economic activity is necessary if rural enterprises are to remain viable.'

'6.13 [...] Existing rural buildings already have an impact on the Green Belt, in particular its openness, and so the Council feel it is appropriate in the interests of encouraging economic sustainability to encourage the conversion of existing rural buildings for small-scale employment uses. The conversion of rural buildings for bed and breakfasts/small-scale hotels, where appropriate, is also considered appropriate as it would help to realise green tourism in the District. Outdoor recreation and leisure activities which are considered appropriate rural uses and would not have a detrimental impact on the Green Belt are also encouraged. However, the Council will seek to restrict the agglomeration of similar businesses (for example bed and breakfasts/small-scale hotels) to protect the character of the countryside.'

Policy GB2 – Rural Diversification and Recreational Uses describes when diversification in the Green Belt will be favoured: *'The Council will maintain a restrictive approach to development within the Green Belt, but with some relaxation for rural diversification. Forms of rural diversification that may be considered acceptable in appropriate circumstances in the Green Belt include:*

- Conversion of existing buildings for small-scale employment use;*
- Green tourism which is small-scale and sensitive to the local natural environment (e.g. walking or bird watching);*
- Conversion of buildings to bed and breakfasts/small-scale hotels; and*
- Outdoor recreation and leisure activities.'*

Finally, under Chapter 9 - Community Infrastructure, Leisure and Tourism the Core Strategy includes the following policy on tourism, and in particular, reference to public transport links; Policy CLT11 – Tourism states: *'The Council will promote the development of green tourism projects and the conversion of appropriate rural buildings to bed and breakfasts/hotels which do not adversely impact upon character of place or biodiversity.'*

Whilst priority will be given to areas which are accessible by alternative means to the car, schemes that are in locations with limited public transport links will also be supported if such proposals are able to make a positive contribution to rural regeneration or the well-being of rural communities.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The evidence presented in this report indicates that the proposed holiday accommodation at Wendy's Stables has the potential to be commercially viable and would supply the local area with needed extra self catering accommodation.

The additional accommodation would provide bedspaces needed during the summer months, a shortage that is highlighted in the need analysis. In addition, with the potential for operating as a year-round tourism business, the new development could help lengthen the tourist season and reduce the high seasonality that affects local tourism. The proposed development would also support rural employment.

The new development could target a wide range of visitors to reflect the variety of leisure activities available nearby. This report has identified many options available, including golf, walking, cycling, bird watching and other nature related activities. The proposed site is also strategically well located to benefit from both business and leisure tourists using Tilbury Port and Southend-on Sea airport as a gateway. It is also near attractive market towns and other tourism destinations. This is likely to further encourage visits even when not all the members of the visiting party are interested in specialist activities, such as golf or bird watching holidays.

Special mention should also be given to the excellent transport links both by road and public transport, with links to Central London and the seaside resorts of Leigh on Sea and Southend on Sea.

The evidence presented in the report indicates that from a tourism point of view the development would be commercially viable provided it is well marketed, developed to high quality standards and complies with all relevant planning policies.

Finally, TSE Research would make the following recommendations:

- Provide quality accommodation whilst maintaining and enhancing the unique character of the buildings and the surrounding environment, TSE Research recommends Quality Assessment in particular;
- Develop flexible accommodation and services to suit a range of needs;
- Consider green business accreditation, recycling schemes, energy saving measures, etc;
- Take into consideration all current and forthcoming planning policies that may be relevant to the development;
- Take advantage of information and communication technology (ICT), including the promotion of local attractions and other activities available in the local area that guests may want to enjoy.

TOURISM SOUTH EAST

Tourism South East

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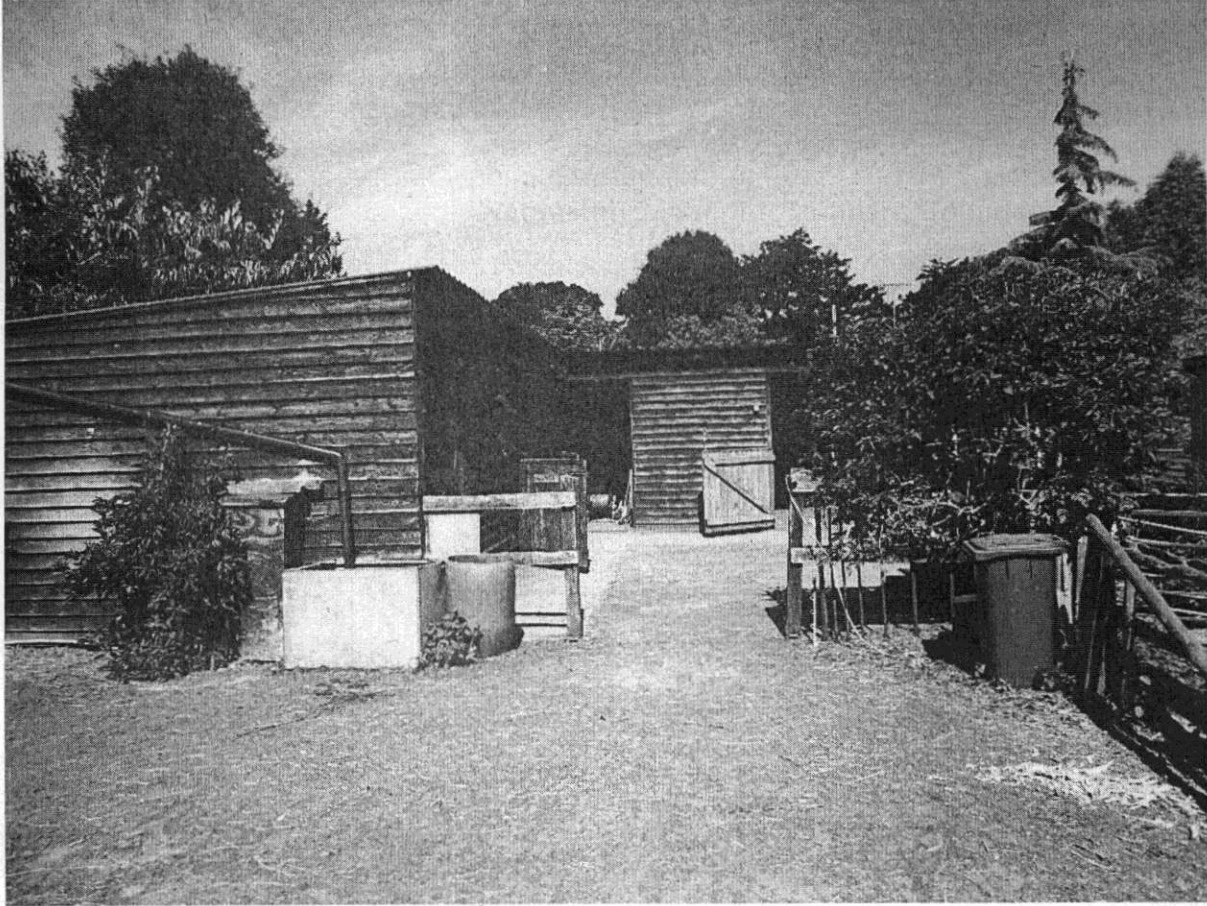
sjarques@tourismse.com

<http://www.tourismsoutheast.com/>

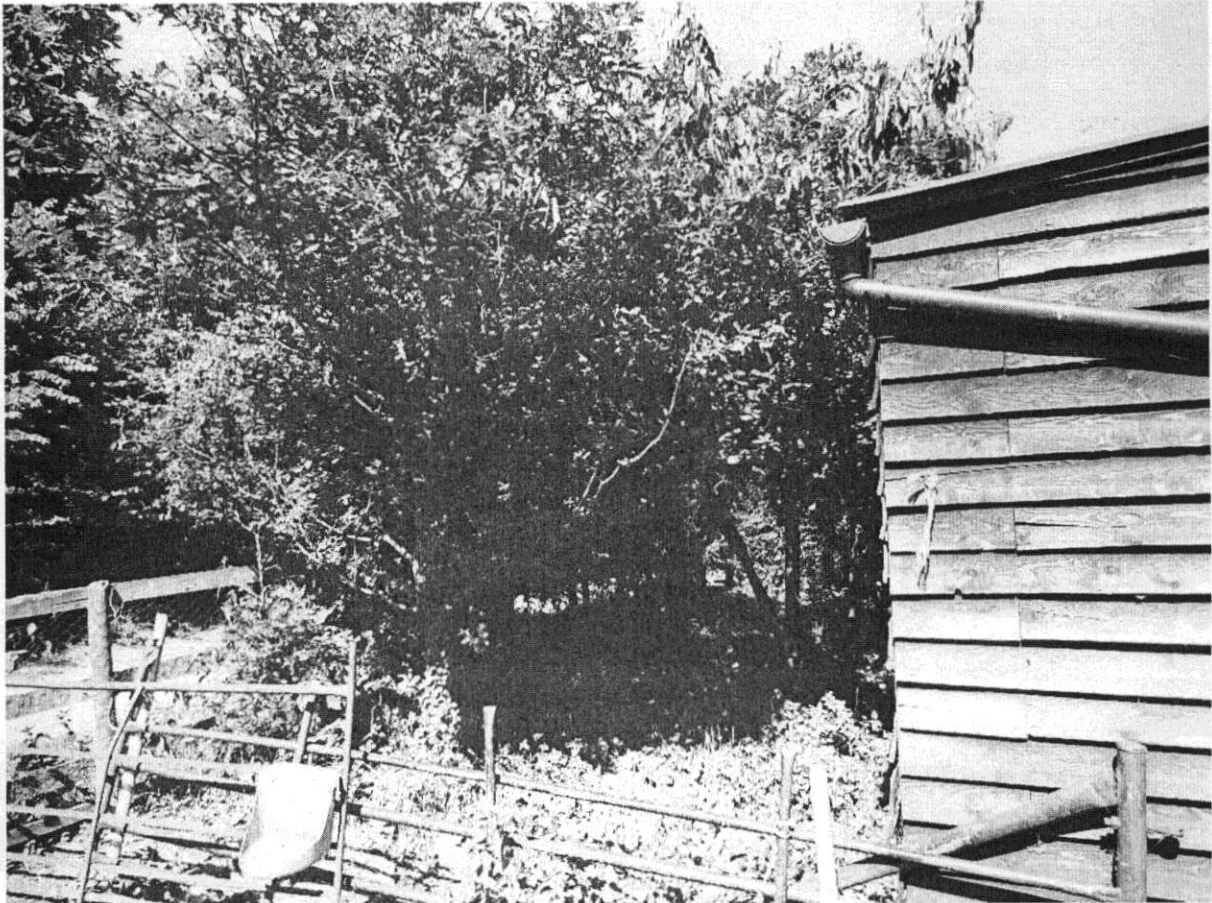
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PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SITE

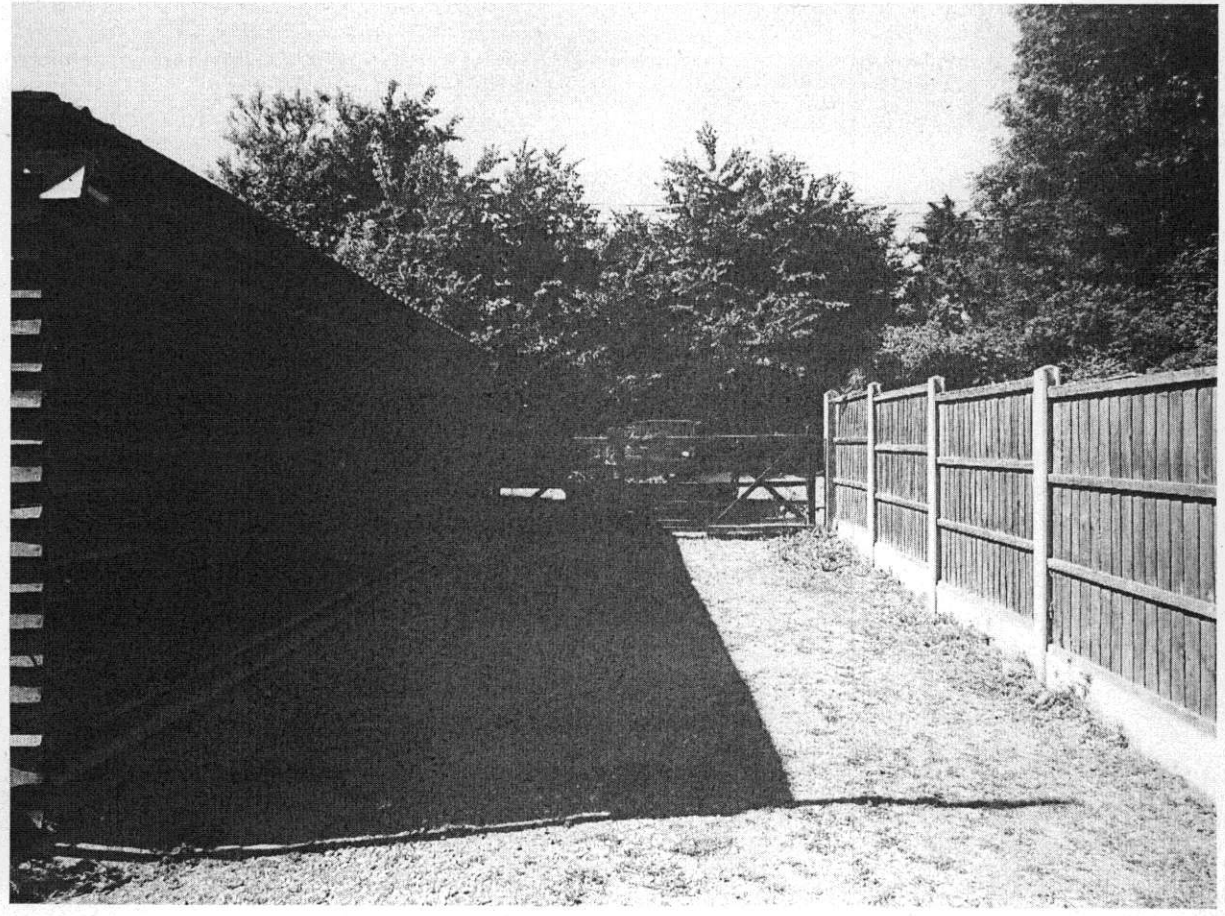
Photograph 1: Stable Building



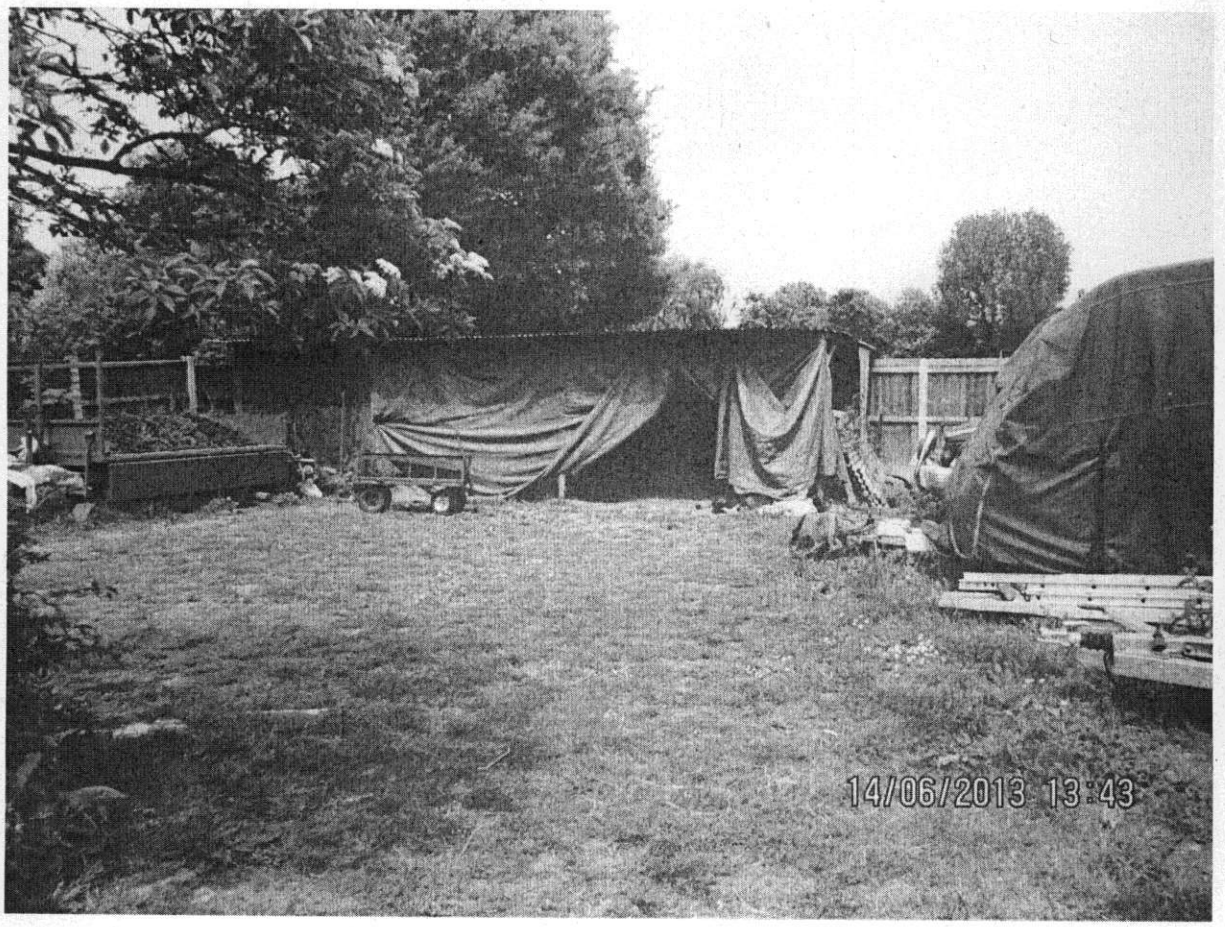
Photograph 2: Existing Vegetation along the Southern Boundary



Photograph 3: Existing Access



Photograph 4: Amenity Space



Date:	7 August 2013
Our Ref:	EG/MW/13.2053
Planning Portal Ref:	PP-02783050
Applicant:	Mr & Mrs Warren
Application Site:	Wendy's Stables, Warwick Road, Rayleigh, SS6 8XE
Proposal:	Change of Use of Stable Building to Self Contained Holiday Accommodation

Schedule of Planning Application Documents

1. Online LPA Submit Letter and this Schedule of Application Documents
2. Online Application Forms including Certificate A
3. Fee £385 (cheque 022053)
4. Online Drawing Register and Plans as set out on Register
5. Online Planning Support Statement with Appendices



Distribution List:	No. of Copies	Full Submission	Purpose
Rochford District Council	1	Yes	P
Mr & Mrs Warren	1	Yes	I
SPL (<i>Internal use only</i>)	1	Yes	F

A – Appeal; C – Certificate of Lawfulness; F – File; I – For Information;
LBC – Listed Building Consent; P – Planning Application; N – Article 7 Notification