

MME PLANNING SERVICES

Erection of 1no single-storey detached self-build /
custom-build dwelling with associated works.

at

Land at Rowlands Road, Horsham, West Sussex,
RH12 4LH

Planning Statement

Ref: P-073

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Version 1

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Figure 1: Site Location

Contents

Contents	
1. Introduction	1
2. Site, Surroundings and Background	1
3. Planning History	2
4. Proposals	2
5. Planning Policy	4
6. Planning Considerations	6
7. Summary and Conclusion	13
8. List of Appendices	14

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are instructed to prepare and submit this full planning application for the erection of a single-storey detached 3-bedroom self-build / custom-build dwelling on Land at Rowlands Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 4LH.
- 1.2 This statement sets out the proposed scheme in detail with regard to the following aspects: the planning history of the site, the development proposals, the relevant planning policy, the planning merits of the scheme and how the proposals comply with the Council's policies.
- 1.3 The application is submitted following receipt of a pre-application response from Horsham District Council (HDC) in July 2024 under reference PE/24/0042. This application takes into account the points raised by the Council and seeks to address any concerns raised.

2. Site, Surroundings and Background

- 2.1 The application site relates to an area of grass located to the north of Rowlands Road, within the defined built-up area boundary of Horsham. The site is located within a dense residential area, with neighbouring properties located directly to the south, east and west. Amberley Close playing field is located directly to the north of the site. The playing field is owned by North Horsham Parish Council, with the application site forming an entirely separate entity to the playing fields / community facility, as detailed at Appendix A and expanded upon later in this statement.
- 2.2 The proposed red line area, as indicated on the submitted plans, extends to approximately 525sqm, with the site sloping down gently from south to north. The site is served by pedestrian walkways to the south, east and west with no vehicular access present. It is noted that Rowlands Road and the surrounding areas are unrestricted in terms of parking controls.
- 2.3 Horsham is identified as a settlement with a large range of employment, services and facilities and leisure opportunities, including those providing a district function. Horsham also has strong social networks, with good rail and bus accessibility. The settlement meets the majority of its own needs and many of those in smaller settlements. Given the location of the site and its setting within the built-up area of Horsham, it is therefore considered that the site is in a highly sustainable location.

2.4 Neighbouring and surrounding residential dwellings are generally characterised by a mix of two-storey and single-storey dwellings, with similar external materials consisting of brick and tile hanging to walls, and tiled roofs. The surrounding properties also consist of a mixture of plot sizes, however, it is noted that the majority of properties within the vicinity have relatively modest garden areas.

3. Planning History

3.1 N/A

4. Proposals

4.1 As detailed above, planning permission is sought for the erection of a detached 3-bedroom bungalow. The proposed dwelling would have a rectangular shape, with an overall width of approximately 12.7m, a depth of approximately 8.4m and an overall height to the ridge measuring approximately 5.2m. However, the height would vary due to the gradual slope of the site, with the dwelling partially set into the ground.



Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan

4.2 The proposed dwelling would have a gabled roof design, with a gabled roof feature to the rear. The proposal has been designed to be in keeping with neighbouring properties within the vicinity, and would consist of brick to the external wall with a small area of render, and a tiled roof. The proposal would be commensurate with the prevailing character of the area, including existing bungalows located to the south. The proposed dwelling would have a GIA of approximately 92sqm.

4.3 The proposed design is considered to be in keeping with the setting and the overall scale would be comparable to existing development within the immediate vicinity, and appropriate in terms of the size of the plot. The single storey design is considered to have a minimal impact on the surroundings, and the development would be contained within the prevailing northern boundary lines of the properties to the east and west which also adjoin the Amberley Close playing field.

4.4 It is proposed to enclose the site with mature hedging to provide soft boundaries to the majority of the site, with a modest retaining wall proposed to the southern boundary, again owing to the topography of the site. This is considered to be appropriate in this location where it is evident that there is a mixture of boundary treatments to properties within the vicinity.

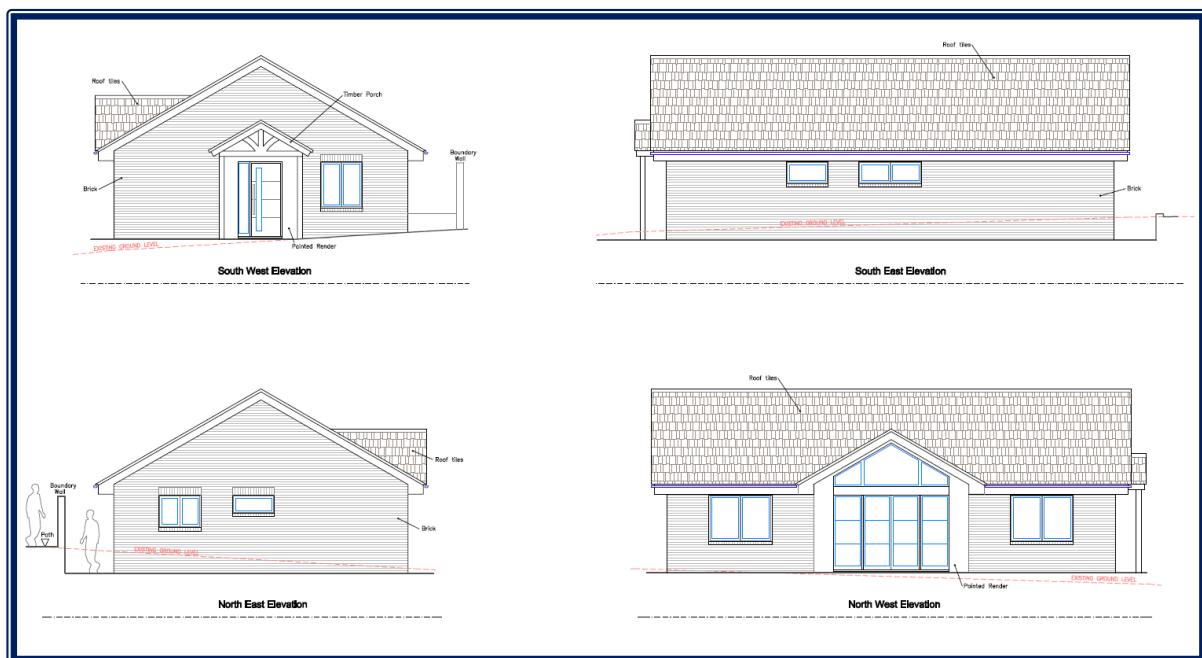


Figure 3: Proposed Elevations

4.5 The layout of the proposed dwelling has been developed to ensure minimal impact on future occupiers, with appropriate distances preserved to neighbouring properties. Given the single storey design and overall form, the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity.

4.6 As detailed above, the site is only served by pedestrian accesses from Rowlands Road and does not benefit from a vehicular access. Rowlands Road and surrounding streets do not have any parking controls covering them and the site is considered to be in a highly sustainable location with good access to public transport links. The parking requirement for a dwelling of this size is less than 1no space.

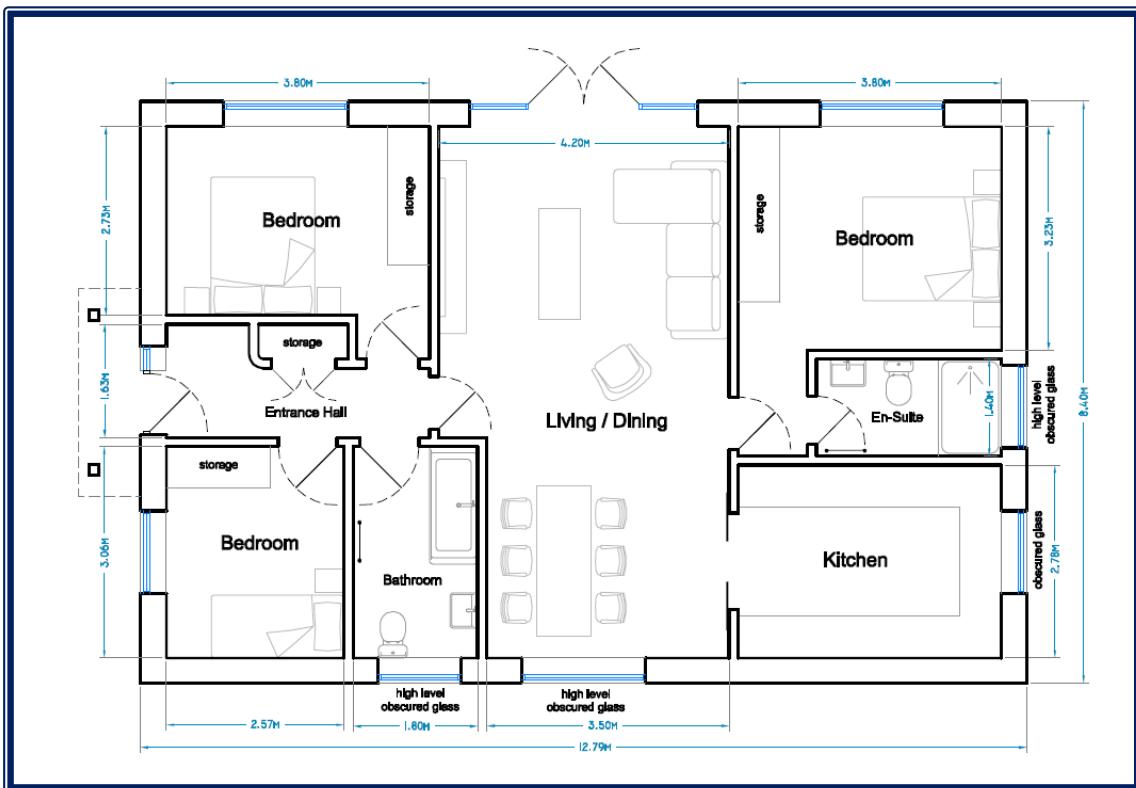


Figure 4: Proposed Floor Plan

5. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and National Guidance

5.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework for the preparation of local plans for housing and other development. The NPPF should be read as a whole.

5.2 Running throughout the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development is achieved through three main objectives which are – economic, social and environmental.

5.3 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that for decision-taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless the policies of the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or, any adverse impact of doing so would ‘significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits’ when assessed against the policies of the NPPF when taken as a whole (NPPF paragraph 11 d).

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015)

5.4 Paragraph 34 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council has submitted its new local plan for examination, however at this stage, the emerging policies carry limited to no weight in decision making.

5.5 A Local Development Scheme (LDS) was published in February 2025 by the Council. The LDS sets out the production timetable for the New Local Plan anticipated to be adopted April 2026. Notwithstanding the above, as the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for determining this application are now considered to be ‘out of date’. This position is further highlighted given that the Horsham District Local Plan examination hearing meetings scheduled for January 2025 were cancelled by the appointed Inspector, and in April 2025 has advised that the Plan is withdrawn due to concerns about its legal compliance.

5.6 The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing development within the District, with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying limited weight in decision making.

5.7 While considered to be out of date, the main HDPF policies relevant to this application are as follows:

- Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
- Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
- Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
- Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
- Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs
- Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33 - Development Principles
- Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
- Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
- Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
- Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41 - Parking

Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

5.8 There is no 'made' Neighbourhood Plan covering North Horsham Parish.

Planning Advice Note(s) (PAN)

5.9 Relevant PAN's to this application are as follows:

- Shaping Development in Horsham District
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

6. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

6.1 Policy 3 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states that development will be permitted within towns and villages which have defined built-up areas. Any infilling will be required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale to maintain the characteristics and function of the settlement, in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.

6.2 The application site is located within the built-up area of Horsham. There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within built-up areas. It is also considered that the proposed infill development would be of a nature and scale which maintains the characteristics of the settlement. It is therefore considered that the development of the site is acceptable in principle, subject to all other material considerations.

6.3 In addition to the above, it is noted that in the pre-application response from the Council, concerns are raised that the proposed residential use of the site would result in the loss of a community facility, contrary to Policy 43 of the HDPF. Clarification and further information is provided in this regard.

6.4 Firstly, while it is acknowledged that the site adjoins the Amberley Close playing field, Appendix A shows that the application site is and has been in separate private ownership, under separate titles. North Horsham Parish Council, as detailed within Appendix B, have confirmed that they do not own the application site. The applicant purchased the site in November 2023 and has a separate title number, WSX443993 and was previously part of title number SX83824, as detailed within Appendix A. Given this evidence, it is contended that the application site has never been a part of the community facility to the north, and therefore there would be no conflict with Policy 43 of the HDPF.

6.5 Indeed, the applicant and current owner of the site would be able to enclose the site using hard and soft boundary treatments without the need for planning permission, restricting and altering its current physical connection to the Amberley Close playing field to the north.

6.6 Notwithstanding this, even if the site was considered to be part of Amberley Close playing field, the residential use of the site, which measures approximately 525sqm, would not result in a significant loss of land when compared to the size of the playing field, which measures approximately 1.73ha. Given the size comparison and the presence of the playing field adjoining the site and available for residents to access and use via the public paths on either side of the site, the loss of the small site area would be negligible.

6.7 The Horsham District Open Space Report (2021), states a recommended quality standard of 43.9sqm per person of Multi-Functional Greenspace (MFGS) is available. This document confirms that Horsham Town has an existing provision of 49.8sqm per person of MFGS available, which significantly exceeds recommended standards.

6.8 The application site would therefore be considered surplus to requirements with regard to the need for open space, given that a large existing facility is located essentially in the same location. The needs of the community would therefore not be compromised or prejudiced as a result of the development of the site.

6.9 While it is again highlighted that there would be no conflict with Policy 43 of the HDPF as the site is not considered to be a community facility, this policy does not specifically refer to loss of open space. Given that the site is privately owned, this also provides appropriate justification, as it would no longer be, and has never been, feasible for the site to be used as a community facility.

6.10 It is noted that the Council in further correspondence following their formal pre-application response state that regardless of ownership, they considered the site to be open space and therefore a community facility. However, it is highlighted that the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) under 'Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space', provides specific guidance and criteria on open and local green space which would be relevant in this instance.

6.11 Specifically, formal designation is required for an area to be classified as open space. Paragraph 006 of the above PPG states that – "Local Green Space designation must follow a formal Local or Neighbourhood Plan process". Paragraph 017 of the PPG states that – "Designation does not in itself confer any rights of public access over what exists at present. Any additional access would be a matter for separate negotiation with land owners, whose legal rights must be respected". Lastly, Paragraph 019 of the PPG states that – "A Local Green Space does not need to be in public ownership. However, the local planning authority (in the case of local plan making) or the qualifying body (in the case of neighbourhood plan making) should contact landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate any part of their land as Local Green Space".

6.12 None of the above steps or processes have been taken or followed in relation to the application site. It is therefore evident that the site has never been designated as open space or a community facility. In addition, the site has never been listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV); is not publicly accessible, with the lack of access and public use weakening its basis for designation; has no history of community use; and has always remained private land, distinct and separate from the playing field to the north.

6.13 As such, it is considered that the Council's assessment of the site as being open space and reference to Policy 43 is not relevant or accurate. The site is not designated as open space and is therefore not a community facility.

6.14 To provide context in this regard, attention is drawn to application reference DC/19/1382, which sought permission for the erection of a dwelling on an area of underdeveloped land.

6.15 While it is acknowledged that the site context of this example is different from that of the application site, as it was located closer to the centre of Horsham and in a Conservation Area, and this application was refused for other reasons, no reference is made within the delegated report of this application to any conflict with Policy 43 of the HDPF. It is considered that the same consideration should apply to the application site at Rowlands Road and that the principle of residential development is acceptable.

6.16 In addition to the above, it is noted that the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, with the latest Authority Monitoring Report (April 2025) detailing a supply of only 1 year. The provision of 1 no additional dwelling would therefore make a valuable contribution to the Council's deficient housing supply. This is considered to be of significant weight in the consideration of this application, and would outweigh any policy concerns raised within the pre-application.

Design, Appearance and Character

6.17 Policy 25 of the HDPF seeks to protect the natural environment and landscape character of the District, including the landform, development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats. Development will be required to protect, conserve, and enhance landscape and townscape character, taking account of areas or features identified as being of landscape importance, individual settlement characteristics and settlement separation. In addition, development will be supported where it maintains and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network.

6.18 Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF require development to be of a high standard of design and layout. Development proposals must be locally distinctive in character and respect the character of their surroundings. Where relevant, the scale, massing and appearance of development will be required to relate sympathetically with its built-surroundings, landscape, open spaces and to consider any impact on the skyline and important views.

6.19 As detailed within the submitted plans, the current proposal has been considered and developed with regard to the overall context of the site and immediate surrounding character. As set out above, the proposed development and curtilage would follow an existing build line, with the northern boundary matching that of the northern boundaries of the neighbouring properties to the east and west which also adjoin the Amberley Close playing field.

6.20 Given the size of the proposed dwelling and the plot, the proposal is considered to sit comfortably within the site and would not result in a cramped form of development or an overdevelopment of the site. The layout of the dwelling has been formulated to enable an appropriate size garden area to be created for the proposed dwelling. The provision of 1no dwelling would be in keeping and would be commensurate with the prevailing character of surrounding dwellings and would be appropriately sited and scaled, taking into account the dense residential character of the area.

6.21 Given the positioning of the site to the north of Rowlands Road and set behind existing neighbouring properties, and taking into account the single storey design of the dwelling, it is considered that the proposed development would not be visible from this vantage point and would be acceptable in terms of impact on the street scene and the overall character of the area.

6.22 As detailed above, the site adjoins a large area of open space to the north. Taking into account this context and the size of the application site, the proposal for 1no single storey dwelling would not result in any harmful loss of openness in this area. The proposal would be in keeping with overall dense residential nature that characterises the immediate vicinity and surrounding area.

6.23 Mature hedging would be planted along the majority of the site boundaries which would soften the appearance of the proposed dwelling and enhance the landscape character, particularly when viewed from the north. This is with particular reference to the fact that the properties to the east of the site have solid close boarded timber fencing to their respective northern boundaries, which is clearly visible when viewed from the Amberley Close playing field. The proposal is considered to be an enhancement in this regard when compared to the immediate neighbouring properties.

6.24 It is noted that no concerns were raised in this regard by the Council within their pre-application response. In addition, as the dwelling would be partially set into the site owing to the topography, this would also help to reduce its impact on the setting.

6.25 Overall, the proposals would represent appropriate development within this setting and would be in accordance with Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF.

Neighbouring Amenity

6.26 Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

6.27 The points raised by the Council within the pre-application in relation to impact on future occupiers have been factored into the development of the current scheme. As detailed within the submitted plans, the main windows serving the habitable rooms of the proposed dwelling would be located either to the northern elevation, away from neighbouring properties, or at least 21m away from the closest neighbouring properties.

6.28 Windows to the south and east elevations would be a combination of high level and obscure glazed units, and would therefore not result in any amenity issues for future occupiers. The layout of the proposed dwelling and associated features would therefore be acceptable. Furthermore, the site topography and retaining wall to the southern boundary would also help to ensure that there would be minimal impact on the amenity of future occupiers of the proposed dwelling. The garden area associated with the proposed dwelling would also be of an appropriate size.

6.29 In addition, given the single-storey design of the proposed dwelling, there would be no opportunities for harmful overlooking, and taking into account the overall height, no other issues with regard to overbearing impact or loss of light or outlook to neighbouring residential properties. The topography of the site would also reduce the impact on neighbouring amenity as the proposed dwelling would be partially set into the site, appearing at a lower level compared to the level of the path running to the south of the site.

6.30 It is contended that there would not be any issues in terms of noise or disturbance as a result of the proposed development, and the resulting context and relationship between dwellings would be similar to that of the existing properties within the immediate vicinity. The provision of 1no dwelling would not result in a marked increase in activity on the site which would be detrimental to neighbouring properties.

6.31 Overall, the proposed development would not result in demonstrable harm to neighbouring amenity and would therefore be in accordance with Policy 33 of the HDPF.

Parking and Highways

6.32 Policies 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework relates to transport and parking, and states that more transport choice including community transport where appropriate will be encouraged, as well as a reduction in private car use and greater accessibility to more sustainable modes of transport.

6.33 The district has a good rail network so the increased use of stations will be encouraged through better pedestrian and cycle links. Adequate parking and facilities must be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users.

6.34 The proposed development would not include any on-site parking provision due to the fact that the only access to the site is via pedestrian pathways from Rowlands Road, as well as the Amberley Close playing field. Notwithstanding this, the site is located in a highly sustainable location, with the closest bus stop located on Lambs Farm Road within a 5-minute walk of the site. Unrestricted on-street parking is available within Rowlands Road and the surrounding area. There would also be opportunities for cycling to local facilities and the proposal includes cycle parking facilities.

6.35 It is considered that the addition of a single dwelling in this location would not result in either a nuisance for occupants of surrounding properties or a severe impact on the highway network. Any additional parking demand could be comfortably accommodated on surrounding streets, where there is no evidence to suggest any that any existing parking issues would be exacerbated.

6.36 Details for the proposed construction management process can be secured via a suitable condition. With this provision in place and taking the above considerations into account, overall, the proposal is considered to be acceptable on highway and transport grounds, in accordance with Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF.

Ecological and Biodiversity Considerations / Enhancements

6.37 Policy 31 of the HDPF states that –

“Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and/or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks”.

6.38 While the site only consists of modified grass, to ensure that this material consideration is appropriately addressed, the application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Screening Report (Desk-Based Assessment).

6.39 This assessment sets out that no habitats or species would be impacted as a result of the proposals, with mitigation measures and enhancement recommendations made to ensure that there would be no detrimental impact. The assessment also highlights that no further surveys are required.

6.40 As such, the context of the site and the submitted details provided indicate that there would be no detrimental impact on habitats or protected species, with enhancements recommended in this regard, in accordance with Policy 31 of the HDPF.

7. Summary and Conclusion

7.1 Overall, given the location of the site which is within a defined settlement boundary and the position of the Council with regards to its 5-year housing supply, the proposal represents an appropriate form of development in this sustainable location. The proposals for 1no dwelling would be commensurate with the prevailing character of the vicinity and would be comfortably contained within the site / plot. The proposals would also be acceptable when considered against all other material matters, as detailed within this statement.

7.2 As such, while now considered to be out of date, the proposals would be in accordance with Policies 3, 25, 31, 32 and 33 of the HDPF and therefore, the Local Planning Authority is respectfully asked to grant planning permission accordingly.

8. List of Appendices

8.1 The following Appendices are included together with this statement –

- Appendix A – Ownership Areas
- Appendix B – Email confirming Land Ownership from North Horsham Parish Council