

OBJECTION

DC/25/1957 Oaklands Stud, Forest Grange, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 6HX

Demolition of pole barn. Conversion of existing stable building into 1no. detached dwelling with associated works.

I object to the above planning application.

The proposal should be refused: because of issues with the application, because it conflicts with many previous planning decisions on the site which have consistently refused permission for residential development, and because it is clearly contrary to local and national planning policies designed to protect landscapes from inappropriate development.

a) Inaccuracies, misstatements and flaws in the application

- Deliberate, repeated misstatement of boundaries of land owned by the applicant – this is a serious issue which invalidates the application AND renders it undeliverable.
- Domestic curtilage to the south would impinge on land owned by Forest Grange Private Road Limited (FGPRL) and to the north interferes with the field boundaries.
- The development is contrary to a well-established linear pattern of development on the Forest Grange estate – there has never been residential development to the north of the access lane
- The design would involve significant re-build, retains inappropriate suburban features (glazed windows, glass sliding doors) is not sustainable (barely any light; and none from the south) and provides no utilities. Resolving these issues would involve further unacceptable urbanisation and landscape harms.
- The development would involve significant further site degradation – traditional field patterns lost to arbitrary sub-division, and inappropriate fencing eroding landscape character.
- Development would be visible from public vantage points to the north; claimed natural screening to the south no longer exists, and fencing to the south is inappropriate and conflicts with both the conditions applied to the original stable approval (CG/33/94) and the High Weald Design Guide. Without this fencing the development would be clearly visible from the access lane and the south; and would compromise the setting of the Grade II listed building Forest Grange Manor.
- The surface water drainage solution is not supported by technical analysis and is demonstrably inadequate; and foul water drainage is not even included in the proposal, which further invalidates the application.
- The site is not sustainable – the nearest amenities are more than 3km away down a narrow unlit private lane with no footpath and Forest Rd, similarly unlit and no footpath, making walking impractical, hence requiring vehicular use and reinforcing unsustainable traffic patterns.
- The applicant's right of access up the lane is limited to the authorised use of the land – agriculture and grazing. There is no right of access for residential use.

b) Previous planning history

Granting permission for this proposal would be contrary to a long series of refusals at local AND national level to allow residential development on this site, notably:

- CG/25/96 – detached bungalow: **refused**

- PE/22/0050 – pre-plan advice on stable conversion: unlikely to gain permission
- DC/22/2126 – 10 yr residential use of caravan: **refused**
- DC/24/1499 – modification of condition 4 on CG/33/94 – **residential use of the stables precluded**
- DC/24/0974 – 2 gypsy pitches: **refused** by HDC; **appeal dismissed by PINS**
- EN/24/0264 – enforcement by HDC against residential/mobile home: **appeal dismissed by PINS**
- DC/25/0462 – 4 bedroom dwelling “conversion”: **refused** by HDC
- DC/25/1428 – 2 gypsy pitches: **refused** by HDC

Even brief details from some of these decisions shows clearly that the current application should be refused:

Note two key points from the PINS dismissal of the appeals referred to above (DC/24/0974; and EN/24/0264):

1. PINS highlight that there has been **no authorised residential development to the north of the access lane**
2. PINS emphasised that the **harms associated with residential development on this site outweigh the benefits of increased housing stock or gypsy sites.**

The dismissal of the applicant’s appeal against refusal of DC/24/0974 is omitted from the applicant’s submission.

Note that both HDC’s **enforcement notice and PINS’ appeal dismissal**, (EN/24/0264) in confirming the **unacceptability of human habitation and residential development** on the site, apply to the **whole site** in the applicant’s ownership, not just that sub-set of the site that is the subject of the current application.

In addition, note that in agreeing to **DC/24/1499** in January ‘25, HDC **specifically precluded residential use of the stables**: “The stables and sandschool hereby permitted shall only be used for private equestrian purposes; and shall **not be** let out or **used for residential** or commercial **purposes**”. This is omitted from the application.

Despite some window-dressing amendments to the design, the **fundamental** reasons shown below for refusal of similar application **DC/25/0462** have **not been addressed** by the current application and therefore contribute to reasons for its refusal:

- “The development ... **would not be essential to this countryside location**. The development would therefore be contrary to the overarching spatial strategy and hierarchy approach of concentrating development within defined settlements and advocating a planned approach to settlement expansion, contrary to policies 1, 2, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015). **Notwithstanding the absence of a five-year land housing supply, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) at paragraph 11(d), it is not considered that there are any material considerations in this instance which would outweigh harm arising from conflict with Local and Neighbourhood Plan policies in these regards**”.

The current proposed development would be no more essential to this countryside location than was DC/25/0462, and the harms associated with it continue to outweigh the marginal housing benefits.

- The design and scale of the development are “... at odds with the site's rural character. Additionally, the proposal would **introduce a formalised residential use and associated paraphernalia that would domesticate and degrade the natural, rural character of the site, in conflict with the purposes of the High Weald National Landscape**. The proposal fails to respect the setting of the High Weald National Landscape, conserve or enhance the visual and spatial qualities of the protected landscape and is contrary to Policies 25, 30, 32, and 33 of the HDPF”.

Clearly some of the design issues remain; but this reason for refusal is about much more than the building – it is more fundamentally about the introduction of residential **USE**. The current application does not, because it cannot, overcome this.

Neither does the current application address the reasons for refusal of **DC/25/1428**:

- The development, through the introduction of two residential pitches and associated structures, parking / turning area and related domestic activity, would result in an adverse visual and landscape impact causing harm to the landscape character and setting of the site within the High Weald National Landscape. The development fails to demonstrate it would conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape and would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies 23, 25, 30 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

All the above attempts to develop the site for residential use, including in the recently dismissed appeals for **DC/24/0974 and EN/24/0264** have been found to harm the HWNL and have been rejected, despite their purported benefits including additional housing; and enforcement action is underway to end the existing unauthorised residential use of the site.

c) Planning policies

The proposal conflicts with key local and national planning policies, including (but not limited to):

- Policies 2, 10, 23, 25, 26, 30, 32, 33 and 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF)
- Sept 2025 Shaping Development in Horsham District planning advice note (SDPAN),
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

d) Conclusion

The application, the latest in a long sequence of other speculative applications intended to exploit the site for commercial gain, **should be refused** because:

- It is flawed, incomplete, inaccurate and misleading in key respects
- Approval would run **completely contrary to all the recent residential development planning decisions on the site, all of which have been refused, at local and national level. The decisions have been clear, consistent and unequivocal – no residential development on the site.**
- It conflicts with key local and national planning policies that are designed to prevent such inappropriate development in this precious and highly protected landscape.