

Our Ref.: RBA/CEA

31st October 2025

NJA Town Planning Ltd
The Beehive,
City Place,
Crawley
West Sussex RH6 0PA

Dear Sirs,

Greenacres, Saucelands Lane, Shipley, West Sussex RH13 8PU

This letter relates to the planning application (ref DC/25/0780) in respect to Greenacres, Saucelands Lane, Shipley ("the Property") for the planning application to *Demolition of existing buildings. Erection of four barn style detached dwellings with associated garages utilising existing access together with landscaping.*

I confirm I am a Chartered Surveyor, qualifying in 2019 as a Professional Member within the Rural Division of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, having completed a Masters in Rural Estate Management at the Royal Agricultural University and has since qualified at a Fellow of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers. I am a Chartered Surveyor and Registered Valuer for H.J. Burt & Son, Chartered Surveyors & Estate Agents of Steyning and Henfield, West Sussex. I have a number of years' experience in valuing, letting and selling properties and land in West Sussex and the wider South-East.

H.J. Burt & Son is the longest standing independent estate agents in the area, having been established in 1887 and with a team of qualified property experts who are regularly involved in the valuing, marketing and subsequent transactions of agricultural and rural property.

In the last 18 months, planning policy with England has evolved following the changes in government and their desirer to increase housing supply and the addition of the term "grey belt" allowing for further land to be developed in areas where usually there is a strong presumption against it. Locally, Horsham District Council have previously been in the process of drafting and looking to adopt an updated Local Plan, however, in April 2025 the Planning Inspectorate recommended that the Local plan was withdrawn, with a new updated Local Plan to follow. At this stage and following some recent planning appeals, it is deemed that Horsham District Council ('HDC') has a housing land supply well below the 5 years required. With the updated national policies and the lack of housing in HDC, has meant that there is a significant requirement for sites capable of providing additional housing within the region.

The Property is currently a brownfield site housing several severely dilapidated storage units, located off Saucelands Road and being some 8 miles from Horsham. The Property benefits from an established private access, directly off Saucelands Road.

The Property is currently in a severely dilapidated in condition and not currently suitable for occupation as business units, being that they would unlikely be capable of being let as they would likely not meet current Health and Safety standards nor to be of interest to occupiers due to its poor condition. It would require significant improvements in order to bring the buildings up to a useable and safe standard. We understand that the buildings contain asbestos containing materials, although we are not aware of the condition or whether any of the materials is damaged/disturbed. Being that there are hazardous materials within the buildings which already require significant works, the most effective and likely safest way would be to demolish these and to replace.



Proposed Block Plan: DC/25/0780

Under current Health and Safety regulations (Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012) and requirements, we are of the opinion that the buildings in their current condition are not suitable to be occupied for any commercial operations and so could not be let out. A number of the buildings are timber frame and timber clad, and for which the timbers show evidence of being rotten and likely to be structurally unstable. The majority of the buildings were constructed prior to 1999, before the use of all types of asbestos in construction. We understand that there is likely asbestos containing materials within roof constructions, but also potential risk for asbestos within other materials used. This asbestos will not have been maintained and could pose a significant risk to the health of the occupiers.

In order for the buildings to be at a standard acceptable and suitable for use and occupation, demolition of the current buildings and rebuilding of the structures would be required.

Please note this is not a building survey nor have we carried out a building or structural survey on the Property.

Refusal

We understand that the applicant has previously submitted an application (reference DC/25/0780) which was refused in August 2025. As part of the refusal, it was stated that *"it had not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the existing commercial floorspace is no longer needed and/or viable for employment use, contrary to Policy 9 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)*. As stated above, the buildings are in a dilapidated condition and have been vacant for some time, being that they are not suitable for commercial occupation and use. Demand for out of town small commercial spaces has fallen since the pandemic and subsequent economic downturn. The access to the Property, is down a single track country road, meaning that the Property is not suited to all commercial uses or vehicles. It should also be noted that this reasoning for refusal, contradicts several other planning permissions including Arun Feedmills, sited less than 400m south of the subject Property. Arun Feedmills, has been granted permission for 8 residential units, however, the site has a fall back of consented commercial planning permission,

however the Council felt that housing need overrode the employment need as per Policy 9. Therefore, the same consideration should be given to the subject Property, being that location and other factors are comparable.

Two further recent appeals for commercial development within the vicinity highlighted the fact that the need for employment space is limited in the region and that there is surplus employment space in Horsham.

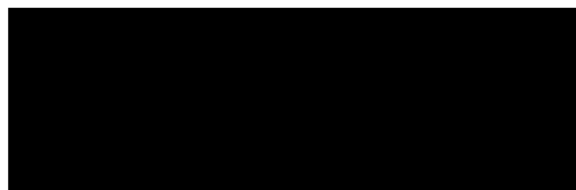
Commercial Market

The **RICS UK Commercial Property Market Survey for Q2 2025** published on 28th July 2025 *"indicates a stagnant market overall, with demand for both occupiers and investors in neutral territory"* and that that figure has now lowered. Additionally, the **Carter Jonas Commercial Market Outlook for October 2025** states that in terms of transactional volume in Q2 of 2025 there was *"a modest 3% decline quarter-on-quarter, 4% down year-on-year and 24% below the five-year quarterly average. The rolling annual total remained broadly in line with the previous quarter and was 14% below the five-year average"*. In terms of the occupier market, Carter Jonas' outlook reports that activity had been subdued in recent months, with demand being *"shaped by a variety of economic, political and technological drivers"*. It also comments that *"vacancy rates have been rising over recent quarters due to slowing demand and rising supply"*. These results are echoed by other firms throughout the UK.

The above market trends, coupled with new national planning policy and increased targets, as well as Horsham District Council falling behind on their current 5 year housing land supply, means that there is a proven need for additional residential accommodation within the region, and the subject Property provides a previously developed ('brownfield') site which is currently un-used and no longer suitable for its current use of commercial.

It is therefore our opinion that the previous reasoning for refusal under Policy 9, should not stand in this case for the reasons stated above and that permission for the demolition of the dilapidated buildings and erection of 4 dwellings to contribute towards the housing needs of the locality is permitted.

Yours faithfully,



Claire E Adcroft BSc (Hons) MSc MRICS FAAV