



APPLICATIONS & APPEALS SERVICES

**DEMOLITION OF DWELLING AND MACHINERY
STORE. CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE STOREY
REPLACEMENT (SELF-BUILD) DWELLING**

**WOODSIDE LODGE, PICTS LANE, COWFOLD,
RH13 8AT**

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

JANUARY 2026



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing timber, single storey dwelling and machinery store and the construction of a replacement single storey (self-build) dwelling Lodge, Picts Lane near Cowfold (previously known as Coopers Christmas Tree Nursery).

1.2 This supporting Planning Statement sets out the detail of the proposal which is described and appraised having regard to the following aspects:

- **Physical Context** – explains the physical context of the site and its surroundings;
- **Planning Context** – relevant planning history of the site and broad policy requirements;
- **Use** – the purpose of the proposed development;
- **Amount** – the extent of development on the site;
- **Scale** – details of the physical size of the proposed development;
- **Layout** – the relationship of the proposed development to the site and its setting;

- **Appearance** – details of materials, style and impact upon the existing and neighbouring properties;
- **Landscape** – impact of the proposal on the existing landscape and proposed planting and surfacing;
- **Access** – access to the proposed development and associated parking.

1.3 This Statement demonstrates that the proposed development accords with the relevant planning policies and that it is acceptable in all respects. It should be read in conjunction with the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Arboricultural Report and Sustainability Report.

2.0 PHYSICAL CONTEXT

2.1 The application site relates to a dwelling named Woodside Lodge which was granted planning permission on 01 June 2015 under Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended (DC/15/0793 - Prior Approval for the change of use from an agricultural building to a dwelling).

2.2 The Case Officer's report for application DC/15/0793 sets out the following description of development:

'The application seeks prior approval for the conversion of a building used as a workshop and office in association with the use of the site for the growing and selling of Christmas trees to provide a one bedroom property. The proposal would retain the existing footprint of the building and would involve internal works and the insertion of three windows in the rear elevation'.

2.3 The Prior Approval was subject to the following condition:

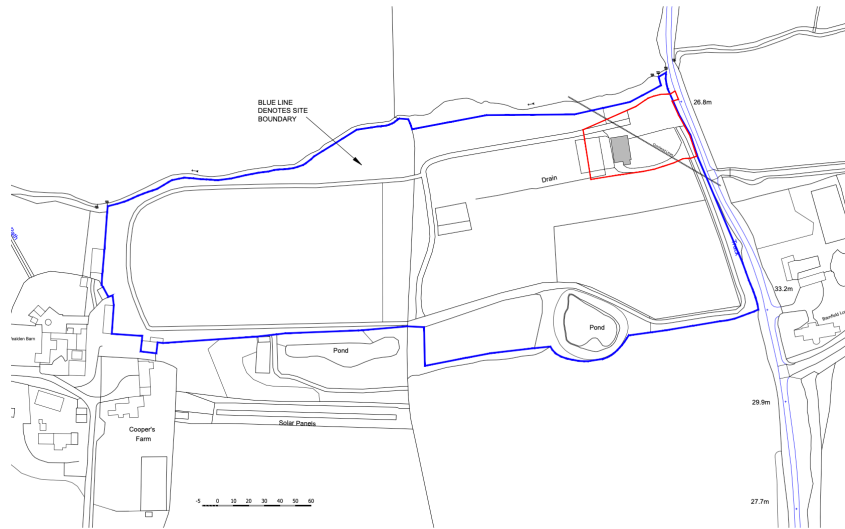
'The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person involved in the management of Coopers Christmas Tree Nursery only, or a widow or widower, of such a person or any resident dependants.

Reason: The site lies in an area where, in accordance with Policy DC1 of the Horsham District Local Development Framework; General Development Control Policies (2007), development which cannot be justified as essential to the needs of agriculture, forestry or a rural business would not normally be permitted'.

2.4 Woodside Lodge is located within the countryside, outside of a built-up area boundary. The nearest settlement is Cowfold located approximately 1.5 miles away to the south west. The dwelling is accessed via gates off a lane which joins the A272 to the south and Picts Lane to the north. The surrounding land at Woodside Lodge is planted with Christmas trees, having been formally used as a Christmas Tree Nursery.

2.5 Woodside Lodge is located outside of the High Weald National Landscape, the boundary of which runs along the northern side of Picts Lane/Bulls Lane to the north.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



2.6 The following are photographs of the application site:





3.0 PLANNING HISTORY AND PROPOSAL

Planning History

3.1 The following is the relevant planning history for Woodside Lodge:

- DC/15/0793 – Prior approval for the change of use from agricultural building to dwellinghouse. Prior Approval granted 01 June 2015.
- DC/14/2488 – Prior Notification for change of use of 55sqm of Agricultural building to Class C3 (dwellinghouse) and associated operational development. Prior Approval refused 14 January 2015.
- DC/06/2582 – Prior Notification to erect a building for the storage of Christmas trees and agricultural machinery, together with staff facilities and office. Prior Approval not required 04 December 2006.

- DC/05/1085 – Retention of gates, track, storage shed and hardstanding for use of the land for forestry. Application permitted 01 March 2006.

3.2 A number of examples of planning permissions relating to the construction of replacement dwellings within the Horsham district are included at Appendices NJA/2 – NJA/7 and listed below:

1. Appendix NJA/2 – DC/21/0343, Old Springfield Farm, Springfield Lane, Colgate. Demolition of dwelling, stable buildings and pole barn. Construction of replacement dwelling with link attached garage. Planning permission granted 21 May 2021.
2. Appendix NJA/3 – DC/19/0419, Elenge Plat, Grouse Road, Colgate. Demolition of existing buildings and construction of two storey detached dwelling. Planning permission granted 28 August 2019.
3. Appendix NJA/4 – DC/17/1892, Springfield Farm Bungalow, Springfield Lane, Colgate. Construction of replacement chalet bungalow including basement and terrace. Planning permission granted 19 October 2017.
4. Appendix NJA/5 – DC/17/2387, Lythmere, Grouse Road, Colgate. Demolition of existing dwelling, garage, workshop

and two sheds. Erection of replacement two storey dwelling and detached barn. Planning permission granted 18 December 2017.

5. Appendix NJA/6 – DC/18/2613, Beacon Hill Croft, Tower Road, Colgace. Demolition of existing outbuildings and erection of single storey detached dwelling. Planning permission granted 12 March 2019.
6. Appendix NJA/7 – DC/17/1517, Greenfield Farm House, Charwood Road, Ifield. Demolition of existing dwelling. Construction of two storey five bedroom dwelling with detached garage and ancillary loft space above. Planning permission granted 08 September 2017.

Proposal

- 3.3 The proposal is for the demolition of Woodside Lodge and the construction of a three bedroom single storey (self-build) dwelling sited in a similar location to the existing dwelling but set further east towards the front of the site and the lane.

Figure 2: Proposed Block Plan

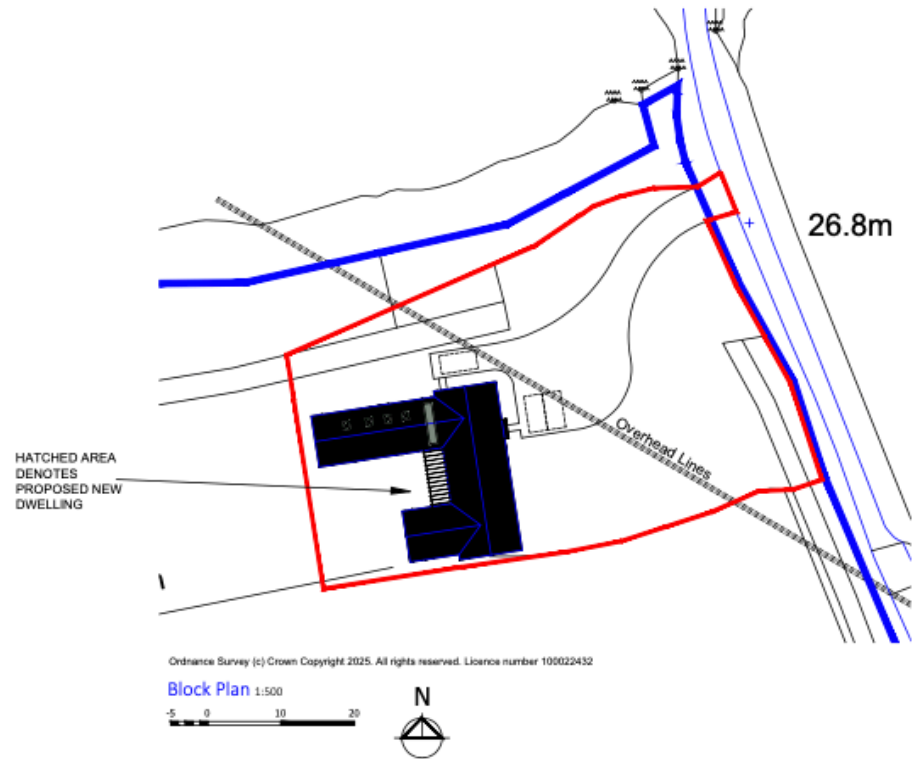


Figure 3: Proposed Elevations



Figure 4: Proposed Floor Plans



4.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

Sustainable Development

- 4.1 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 (NPPF paragraphs 1 and 3).
- 4.2 Paragraph 2 of the NPPF sets out that ***'Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements'***.
- 4.3 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has the following three overarching objectives which are independent but need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:
- a) ***'an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;***
 - b) ***a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and***
 - c) ***an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic***

environment, including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy’.

4.4 Paragraph 10 states ***‘So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).*** For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

4.5 Where there are no relevant development plan policies or the relevant policies are out of date, the NPPF states that planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies of the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a *strong* reason for refusing the development proposed, or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole. Particular regard should be given to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making efficient use of land, securing well-designed places and providing

affordable homes, individually or in combination (NPPF paragraph 11 d).

4.6 Paragraph 12 of the Framework states that ***‘The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed’.***

Plan and Decision Making

4.7 Paragraph 34 requires policies in local plans and spatial strategies to be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary. In respect of housing, ***‘Relevant strategic policies will need updating at least once every five years if their applicable local housing need figure has changed significantly; and they are likely to require earlier review if***

local housing need is expected to change significantly in the near future’.

4.8 In terms of decision-making, the Framework states at paragraph 39 that ***‘Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible’.***
Housing Provision

4.9 Paragraph 61 states ***‘To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet as much as an area’s identified housing need as possible, including with***

an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community’.

4.10 Paragraph 62 states that to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning practice guidance. Within this context, paragraph 63 requires the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community to be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups include (inter alia) people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

Highways and Car Parking

4.11 Paragraph 109 requires transport issues to be considered at the early stages of plan-making and development proposals.

4.12 Paragraph 112 states that if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account the accessibility of the development, its type, mix and use, the availability of land and opportunities for public transport, local car ownership levels and the need to ensure that adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

- 4.13 Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport (paragraph 113).
- 4.14 Paragraph 116 makes it clear that ***‘Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios’***.

Effective Use of Land

- 4.15 Paragraph 124 requires planning policies and decision to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring healthy living conditions.

Design

- 4.16 In terms of design, Section 12 seeks to achieve well designed places sets out that the ***‘The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities’*** (paragraph 131).
- 4.17 Paragraph 135 further states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. Development should also be sympathetic to local character and history and should be designed with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 4.18 Paragraph 139 states that ***‘Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides’***

and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes: and/or**
- b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit with the overall form and layout of their surroundings’.**

Climate Change

- 4.19 Paragraph 161 requires the planning system to support the transit to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate change impacts. New development should be planned in ways that avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change and to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design.
- 4.20 Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (paragraph 170). Local planning authorities should ensure

that flood risk is not increased elsewhere as a result of new development (paragraph 181).

- 4.21 Applications which could affect drainage in or around the site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff which are proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal (paragraph 182).

Natural Environment

- 4.22 Paragraph 187 requires planning policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (inter alia) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Policies and decisions should also minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity.

Habitats and Biodiversity

- 4.23 Paragraph 193 states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply a set of principles and if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated against or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

4.24 The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where there would be a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site (paragraph 195).

Ground Conditions and Pollution

4.25 Paragraph 196 requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner (paragraph 197). Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment (paragraph 198).

Local Planning Policy

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

4.26 Local planning policy is contained within the Horsham District Planning Framework, November 2015 (HDPF). The following policies are relevant to the proposal:

- Policy 1: Sustainable Development
- Policy 2: Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
- Policy 3: Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
- Policy 4: Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
- Policy 15: Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
- Policy 24: Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
- Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 26: Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
- Policy 28: Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
- Policy 30: Protected Landscapes
- Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32: 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 39: Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision
- Policy 40: Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41: Parking

4.27 HDPF policy 28 specifically permits the construction of replacement dwellings within the countryside.

Figure 5: HDPF policy 28

Policy 28
Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside

Outside the defined built-up areas, house extensions, replacement dwellings and ancillary accommodation will be supported if the development can be accommodated appropriately within the curtilage of the existing dwelling. In addition:

1. Replacement dwellings will only be supported on a one for one basis and if it can be demonstrated that the property is not derelict.
2. Replacement dwellings should not be disproportionate to the size of the existing dwelling whilst extensions should also, and in addition, be in keeping with the scale and character of the existing dwelling. The cumulative impact of existing extensions will be taken into account.
3. Ancillary accommodation and garaging will be required to meet with all other appropriate policies, particularly design principles, and demonstrate that the need for additional space cannot be met from an existing dwelling or buildings suitable of conversion on the site. The size of any new outbuilding should have regard to the dwelling they serve and should be grouped with the house. The use of ancillary accommodation as a separate dwelling will not be supported, and
4. Garages and any new outbuildings should have regard to the dwelling they serve and should be grouped with the house. The use of ancillary accommodation as a separate dwelling will not be supported.
5. Subsequent extensions to converted agricultural buildings which detract from the original form and character will be resisted.

Emerging Policy

4.28 The Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 was formally submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on Friday 26 July 2024 for public examination. Hearings commenced, however in a recent letter dated 04 April 2025 the Planning Inspector found that the Duty to Co-operate had not been met and raised significant soundness concerns in relation to the Plan’s housing requirement and spatial strategy. As a result, the Planning inspector recommended that the Council withdraw the Plan.

4.29 The Council has responded however at present, the HDPF remains the adopted development plan relevant to the determination of this planning application.

4.30 Nevertheless, it is noted that draft Local Plan policy 45 continues to support the construction of replacement dwellings within the countryside:

Figure 6: Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) policy 45

Policy 45: Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside

1. Outside defined built-up areas, house extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings will be supported if the development can be accommodated appropriately within the curtilage of the existing dwelling. In addition:
 - a) Replacement dwellings will only be supported on a one-for-one basis and where it can be demonstrated that the property is still in lawful residential use.
 - b) Replacement dwellings and extensions should be in keeping with the scale and character of the existing dwelling and of the surrounding area. This will have regard to the cumulative impact alongside existing extensions.
 - c) Garages and any new outbuildings will be required to meet with all other appropriate policies, particularly design principles and should be grouped with the house, having regard to the dwelling they serve.
 - d) Subsequent extensions to converted agricultural buildings which detract from the original form and character will be resisted.

Relevant Legislation

- 4.31 In considering the issue of the principle of the proposed development it is necessary to also consider the legal framework within which planning decisions are made. Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (as also confirmed at paragraph 2 of the NPPF).
- 4.32 Specifically, section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) states that in dealing with an application

for planning permission (or permission in principle) the authority shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan so far as material to the application and a post-examination draft neighbourhood plan also so far as material to the application. Consideration may also be given to any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application and any other material considerations.

- 4.33 Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

- 4.34 When considering whether or not a proposed development accords with a development plan, it is not necessary to say that it must accord with every policy within the development plan. The question is whether it accords overall with the development plan (Stratford on Avon v SSCLG [2014] JPL 104). Even if a proposal cannot be described as being in accordance with the

development plan, the statutory test requires that a balance be struck against other material considerations.

4.35 The Courts have emphasised that a planning authority is not obliged to strictly adhere to the development plan and should apply inherent flexibility: *Cala Homes (South) Limited v SSCLG* [2011] JPL 1458 and *Tesco Stores Ltd v Dundee City Council* [2012] 2 P.&C.R. 9.

4.36 More recently in *Corbett v Cornwall Council* [2020] the appeal court judge emphasised the importance of considering the plan as a whole stating:

“Under section 38(6) the members' task was not to decide whether, on an individual assessment of the proposal's compliance with the relevant policies, it could be said to accord with each and every one of them. They had to establish whether the proposal was in accordance with the development plan as a whole. Once the relevant policies were correctly understood, which in my view they were, this was classically a matter of planning judgment for the council as planning decision-maker.”

4.37 Paragraph 3 of the NPPF confirms that the Framework should be read as a ‘whole’ and the Government’s Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) confirms that ***‘Conflicts between development plan policies adopted, approved or published at the same time must be considered in the light of all material considerations, including local priorities and needs, as guided by the National Planning Policy Framework’*** (paragraph 012 21b-012-20140306).

5.0 DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL: USE, AMOUNT & SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT

The Principle of Development

- 5.1 NPPF paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental (NPPF paragraph 8).
- 5.2 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states ***‘So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11)’***. For decision-taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.
- 5.3 HDPF Policy 1 reiterates the advice set out within the Framework and states that the Council will take a positive approach to new development that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy 1 further states that ***‘the Council will always work pro-actively with applicants***

jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area’.

- 5.4 HDPF Policy 26 states that within the countryside development must be essential to its countryside location and must meet certain criteria. In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Certain development within the countryside may therefore be permitted, including the construction of replacement dwellings as confirmed by HDPF Policy 28. This policy states that the construction of replacement dwellings within the countryside will be supported where:

- The replacement dwelling can be accommodated appropriately within the curtilage.
- Replacement dwellings will be supported on a one for one basis and the property is not derelict.
- The replacement dwelling is not disproportionate in size to the existing dwelling.

- 5.5 Essentially HDPF Policy 28 seeks to ensure that replacement dwellings are of an appropriate scale, siting and design and which have due regard to the countryside setting and the size of the existing dwelling. As the proposal relates to the construction of a replacement dwelling there should be no objections in principle to the planning application submitted.
- 5.6 The NPPF does not provide any specific advice in respect of the construction of replacement dwellings within the countryside and therefore the key policy consideration in this regard relates to HDPF Policy 28. Having regard to the relevant criteria of this policy, the proposed dwelling is appropriately accommodated within the existing curtilage.
- 5.7 In this regard, the proposed dwelling is located within an existing opening at the property in an open area of land close to the property's entrance from the lane. The proposed dwelling will be sited further east, however, the site is enclosed to the boundaries and surrounded by trees and as a result, the proposed dwelling will remain appropriately screened.
- 5.8 The footprint of the replacement dwelling and size is larger than the existing, however given the substantial size of the land at Woodlands Lodge (a former Christmas tree nursery) it can be appropriately accommodated within the site without impacting upon its spacious character or encroaching into the countryside.
- 5.9 The existing dwelling is not derelict and the proposal is for a replacement dwelling on a one for one basis.
- 5.10 The replacement dwelling is of a high quality, traditional design (with modern design elements and use of materials) which is in keeping with the rural character and appearance of the area. There will be significant improvements to the overall appearance of the site.
- 5.11 Overall, although larger than the existing dwelling, the proposed dwelling will not result in any harm to the visual amenities of the countryside landscape. The proposal therefore complies with HDPF policies 26 and 28 and is an acceptable form of development within the countryside.
- 5.12 Relevant to this proposal are a number of planning applications previously referred to at Section 3 of this Statement where the Council has granted planning permission for the construction of replacement dwellings within the District. In respect of HDPF policy 28, the key aspects of these permissions are summarised as follows:

Old Springfield Farm, Springfield Lane, Colgate (Appendix NJA/2)

- 5.13 The proposal included the demolition of the existing dwelling at Old Springfield Farm together with a stable building and barn and the construction of a replacement dwelling with a link attached garage. Planning permission was granted on 21 May 2021. In considering the proposal against HDPF policy 28, the Case Officer's report notes the following:

'The application is effectively an amendment to a previously granted scheme under DC/20/0818. Ad before, the proposal involves a replacement dwelling located within an existing residential curtilage. The property is to be replaced on a one-for-one basis, its not derelict and can be accommodated within the curtilage of the existing dwelling. The proposed dwelling would represent a sizeable increase in the level of accommodation currently provided on site. It is though acknowledged that a number of existing buildings are intended for demolition and that the site is well screened from the public realm, with the immediate surroundings characterised by sporadic residential dwellings of varying form and scale., It is considered that in the absence of any adverse visual impact

arising from the replacement dwelling, which is considered below, that the scale of the replacement dwelling would not be an overriding reason to refuse planning permission'.

Elenge Plat, Grouse Road, Colgate (Appendix NJA/3)

- 5.14 Planning permission was granted at Elenge Plat on 28 August 2019 for the demolition of a number of existing buildings and the construction of a new dwelling (DC/19/0419). Planning permission had previously been granted for the conversion of the buildings to a dwelling in October 2016 (application reference DC/15/2447).
- 5.15 The existing buildings to be demolished at Elenge Plat were single storey in height. The Case Officer's report for application DC/19/0419 notes that the new dwelling would be a two storey one ***'however, owing to the existing topographical levels of the site, and to ensure that it would not appear as a prominent addition, the proposed dwelling would be sunken into the ground, to create the appearance of a single storey dwelling. This would be particularly evident in views from the north when approaching the dwelling from the existing access. Whilst utilising a modern design with a flat green roof, the proposed dwellinghouse would not appear***

any greater in height than the existing buildings to be removed’.

- 5.16 The Case Officer’s report further notes that ***‘It is acknowledged that the proposal would result in a larger dwelling in terms of internal useable floor area (384 sqm), when compared to the extant permission on site, however it is considered that the proposed dwelling would be appropriately sited and scaled in relation to the size of the plot. The design of the proposed dwelling would represent an enhancement to the site when compared with the existing buildings and would be a building of architectural merit and interest’.***

Springfield Farm Bungalow, Springfield Lane, Colgate (Appendix NJA/4)

- 5.17 Planning permission was granted on 19 October 2017 for the demolition of Springfield Farm Bungalow and the construction of a replacement dwelling (DC/17/1892). The planning application was a resubmission of a previously approved application for a replacement dwelling (application reference DC/15/1160 and first amended by DC/16/0384).

- 5.18 The replacement dwelling was permitted in a different but more appropriate location on site than the existing dwelling and set back further into the site from Springfield Lane. The Case Officer’s report for application DC/17/1892 notes that ***‘Whilst the dwelling has been pushed further into the site than that previously approved and has resulted in a larger area of car parking to the front and a smaller rear garden area, it is considered that, subject to conditions relating to landscaping and boundary treatments, the re-siting is acceptable’.***

Lythmere, Grouse Road, Colgate (Appendix NJA/5)

- 5.19 Planning permission was granted on 18 December 2017 for the demolition of Lythmere including its garage, workshop and sheds and the construction of a replacement dwelling with detached car barn (DC/17/2387). The new dwelling had a larger floorspace than the existing however the Council raised no objection to the proposal in this regard and the Case Officer’s report for the application states the following:

‘The proposed dwelling would reflect the elements of the design and form of the existing dwelling, albeit there would be a considerable increase in footprint, bulk and massing,

which includes excavation to the rear and to create a lower ground floor level. The increase in floorspace could be argued as being disproportionate to the existing, contrary to the objectives of Policy 28 of the HDPF. The additional accommodation would though primarily be achieved at lower ground floor level within a single storey side projection. It is though considered that no wider visual harm would result from this arrangement, the application site would be viewed as a large house on a large site surrounded by open fields. The proposed design approach would be appropriate for the location and the resulting building would not appear unduly prominent or unsightly’.

Beacon Hill Croft, Tower Road, Colgate (Appendix NJA/6)

5.20 At Beacon Hill Croft planning permission was granted by the Council on 12 March 2019 for the demolition of a number of outbuildings and the construction of a single storey dwelling (DC/18/2613). Prior to this, planning permission had been granted for the conversion of the existing buildings to a dwelling (application reference DC/18/0249).

The Council accepted that the existing outbuildings at Beacon Hill Croft detract from the immediate surroundings and that the proposed dwelling will retain the size and scale of the former

buildings to be converted as originally permitted. The Case Officer’s report for application DC/18/2613 notes that the new dwelling is contained largely within the existing footprint and scale of the existing buildings and similar to the building envelope of the previous permission. It further notes that the proposed dwelling would lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting and the appearance of the site.

Greenfield Farmhouse, Charlwood Road, Ifield (Appendix NJA/7)

5.21 Planning permission was granted on 08 September 2017 for the demolition of the existing bungalow, Greenfield Farmhouse, and its replacement with a three-storey dwelling (DC/17/1517). The Case Officer’s report notes that:

‘Whilst the proposed works represent a large increase in the overall built footprint on the site, the increase of the footprint of the dwelling in and of itself is not altogether significant. The replacement building will occupy a similar footprint as the existing house and will not require the alteration of any boundaries or access routes. As such, it is considered that given the extensive size of the host curtilage, this level of increase can be comfortably

accommodated within the site. The dwelling would represent a significant increase in terms of height, bulk and mass to the existing bungalow, but this will not be noticeable beyond the boundaries of the site. It will also be seen within the context of large agricultural and storage buildings located 14m to the north within the holding. The presence of these buildings ensures that the scale of development, including the proposed garage/office building would not be unprecedented, or harmful to the immediate landscape. It is therefore deemed that on this occasion, the proposed development is compliant with Policy 28 of the HDPF, and is acceptable in principle subject to all other material considerations’.

5.22 In summary of the above cases, it is clear that the Council has permitted replacement dwellings larger than the original dwellings/buildings and also in a different location on site where no harm would result to the visual amenities of the countryside landscape.

Sustainable Development

5.23 The proposal relates to redevelopment of a site where there is existing built form. It is therefore considered that the redevelopment of the site complies with the overarching principle of sustainable development in making good use of the land and by improving its appearance without encroaching upon undeveloped countryside. The effective use of land is specifically encouraged by the NPPF (paragraphs 123 – 127).

5.24 More generally, the NPPF sets out that there are three key objectives of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental. Each are addressed as follows:

a) an economic objective – the proposed development is sustainable economically by providing employment during the construction phase which supports the economic objective of sustainable development.

b) a social objective – whilst the proposal relates to the construction of a replacement dwelling, the new, modern dwelling will provide a new home of much higher standard of design making a positive contribution to the supply of high quality homes within the District.

c) an environmental objective – the proposed dwelling will make good use of the site and there will be substantial environmental improvements with the demolition of the existing building and the creation of a new dwelling. The new dwelling will also comply with modern building regulation requirements and as such it will be better insulated and more efficient than the existing dwelling in its use of resources and renewable energy may be incorporated into its design. The proposal complies with the environmental objective of sustainable development.

Agricultural Occupation Condition

5.25 NPPF paragraph 57 states that ***‘Planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects’.***

5.26 As set out, the Council issued Prior Approval for the creation of the existing dwelling via the conversion of an agricultural building under the provisions of Class Q of the Town and Country Planning GPDO. The approval was subject to a condition (‘Condition 1) requiring the dwelling to be occupied by a person involved in the management of Coopers Christmas

Tree Nursery only, or a widow, widower, of such or any resident dependants.

5.27 The Council’s reason for applying this condition is stated to be because the site lies within an area (the countryside) where development which cannot be justified as essential to the needs of agriculture, forestry or a rural business would not normally be permitted.

5.28 It is unusual that a such a condition was applied to a Prior Approval application as the reason given is a departure from the intention of Class Q of the GPDO which specifically permits (subject to criteria) the change of use of agricultural buildings or former agricultural buildings to dwellings regardless of a countryside location. There also is no specific criteria requiring dwellings permitted to be occupied only by an agricultural worker.

5.29 Looking at the Case Officer’s report for application DC/15/0793, it is understood that the condition was in fact applied under criteria Class Q.2 (a) (b) of the GPDO (the noise impacts of the development) in response to following comments made by the Council’s Environmental Health Department:

'I recommend that the agricultural building subject to this proposal is maintained in the same ownership as the rest of the land edged in blue on the application drawings. The reason being that if the proposed residential unit was occupied by a separate household, there would be the potential for loss of amenity from noise arising from normal nursery activities. Otherwise I have no objections'.

5.30 The existing dwelling has been occupied in accordance with Condition 1 however, the Christmas tree nursery has since ceased operations. As a result, the condition is no longer necessary or relevant to the development permitted as there are now no noise implications in respect of any impact upon the amenity of occupiers. As a result, this condition no longer complies with the tests set out at NPPF paragraph 57 and it should not preclude the granting of planning permission for a replacement dwelling as proposed with unrestricted occupancy.

6.0 LAYOUT, DESIGN & APPEARANCE

Design and Landscape

- 6.1 The NPPF sets out that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Developments should be visually attractive and sympathetic to the local character of the surrounding area and should optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (paragraphs 131 and 135).
- 6.2 In addition to the above, HDPF policies 32 and 33 set out the Council's criteria in respect of the quality and design of new development. Policy 32 requires a:
- 'High quality and inclusive design for all development in the District will be required based on a clear understanding of the local, physical, social, economic, environmental and policy context for development'.***

6.3 Policy 32 also sets out criteria including (inter alia) the need for development to provide for a functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environment, that it should complement the local distinctiveness of the area and contribute to a sense of place.

6.4 In this respect, careful consideration has been given to the design of the proposed dwelling in order to respect the character of the site and its location within the countryside. The proposed dwelling is of a high quality of design and there is no conflict with the requirements of HDPF policy 32 or the intentions of the NPPF as described.

6.5 HDPF Policy 33 sets out the Council's 'Development Principles'. This policy is addressed as follows:

In order to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment developments shall be required to:

- 1. Make efficient use of land, and prioritise the use of previously developed land and buildings whilst respecting any constraints that exist;***

6.6 The application site is already developed with a dwelling with workshop. The proposal makes appropriate use of a site that is already developed without encroaching into the countryside landscape and the proposed development is wholly contained within the site boundaries. The replacement dwelling can be appropriately accommodated within the curtilage of the site which will retain its spacious feel and character. The proposal complies with criterion 1.

2. Ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land, for example through overlooking or noise, whilst having regard to the sensitivities of surrounding development;

6.7 The site is separated from other neighbouring properties by substantial distances and as such, the proposal has no implications in respect of neighbouring residential amenities. The proposal therefore complies with criterion 2.

3. Ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout and where relevant relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes

within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views;

6.8 The proposed replacement dwelling has been carefully and sympathetically designed to respect the character and appearance of the rural area. In this respect the proposed dwelling is of a traditional design with some modern design features and is single storey in height. As a result and given the size of the site and boundary screening, the proposed dwelling will not have any adverse impact upon surrounding or important views. The proposal complies with criterion 3. For the same reasons, there is also no conflict with HDPF Policies 24, 25 and 26.

4. Are locally distinctive in character, respect the character of the surrounding area (including its overall setting, townscape features, views and green corridors) and, where available and applicable, take account of the recommendations/policies of the relevant Design Statements and Character Assessments;

6.9 The proposed replacement dwelling is distinctive in its design and character and is of a siting and scale that is appropriate to

the character of the area for the reasons described. The proposal complies with criterion 4.

5. Use high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping; and includes the provision of street furniture and public art where appropriate;

6.10 The proposed dwelling is proposed to be finished in black vertical cladding with a stone feature wall to the elevations and a dark grey zinc roof with hidden gutters. These materials are appropriate to the rural character of the area and there is as such no conflict with criterion 5.

6. Presume in favour of the retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. Development must relate sympathetically to the local landscape and justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development;

6.11 This planning application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Report, Tree Survey and Tree protection plan to ensure that the issues of trees is appropriately addressed. The proposal complies with criterion 6 (and HDPF policy 31).

7. Ensure buildings and spaces are orientated to gain maximum benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy, unless this conflicts with the character of the surrounding townscape, landscape or topography where it is of good quality.

6.12 The proposed dwelling is sited and designed to ensure that sufficient levels of natural light internally can be achieved and a high quality living environment will be provided for future residents including outdoor amenity space. The proposal complies with criterion 7.

Proposals will also need to take the following into account where relevant:

8. Incorporate where appropriate convenient, safe and visually attractive areas for the parking of vehicles and cycles, and the storage of bins/recycling facilities without dominating the development or its surroundings;

6.13 Parking is proposed in the form of private driveway parking comprising three parking spaces and a detached double

garage. Cycle parking and bin storage can easily be achieved within the site. The proposal complies with criterion 8.

9. Incorporate measures to reduce any actual or perceived opportunities for crime or antisocial behaviour on the site and in the surrounding area, and create visually attractive frontages where adjoining streets and public spaces, including appropriate windows and doors to assist in the informal surveillance of public amenity areas by occupants of the site;

6.14 The proposed dwelling will be secure and there would be no conflict with criterion 9. There would also be no conflict with criteria 10 and 11 below:

10. Contribute to the removal of physical barriers; and,

11. Make a clear distinction between the public and private spaces within the site.

6.15 The proposal raises no implications in respect of the above criteria and overall, it fully conforms with the provisions of HDPF policy 33.

Renewable Energy and Sustainable Construction

6.16 The proposed dwelling has been carefully and specifically designed to ensure that it is environmentally sustainable in its construction and future occupation. The dwelling will be constructed to the highest insulation standards and it will have an electric vehicle charge point.

6.17 The dwelling will also incorporate renewable energy technology, the details of which may be agreed and secured by condition to ensure compliance with the NPPF and HDPF policies 35, 36 and 37. Please see the Energy and Sustainability report and associated SAP calculations for more information.

Ecology, Biodiversity and Trees

6.18 NPPF paragraph 185 requires the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity. Paragraph 186 states that when determining planning applications, local planning

authorities should avoid significant harm to biodiversity which should be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for. Development should not result in the loss of deterioration of irreplaceable habitats unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists. Similarly, HDPF policy 31 requires the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

6.19 This planning application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Survey and an Arboricultural Report (with associated plans). The woodland setting of the application site has been appropriately addressed and there will be no adverse impact caused to important trees. Paragraph 3.13 of the Arboricultural Report states that ***'It is concluded that the existing trees on site should not present a planning constraint to the development of this site'***.

6.20 Furthermore, the proposal will be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the PEA including in respect of Great Crested Newts and reptiles and the implementation of mitigation measures.

7.0 ACCESS AND CAR PARKING PROVISION

vehicles to park (and turn) and there is as such no conflict with HDPF Policy 41.

- 7.1 The NPPF sets out at paragraph 116 that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 7.2 HDPF Policy 40 requires (inter alia) new development to be appropriate in scale to the existing transport infrastructure. Development should also minimise the distance people need to travel.
- 7.3 Just one replacement dwelling is proposed which will not generate additional volumes of traffic above that of the existing dwelling and long established residential use. There would as such be no adverse impact upon the existing road network or transport infrastructure and the proposal complies with HDPF Policy 40.
- 7.4 In respect of car parking, HDPF Policy 41 states (inter alia) that adequate car parking must be provided within new developments. The proposal includes space for multiple

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 This Statement supports the proposal for demolition of Woodside Lodge and the construction of a replacement, self-build dwelling.
- 8.2 This Statement demonstrates that the proposed replacement dwelling is compliant with the aims of the NPPF and relevant policies of the HDPF, in particular HDPF policies 26 and 28. In this respect, the proposed dwelling will not result in any harm to the visual amenities of the countryside landscape and the construction of replacement dwellings are acceptable in such locations.
- 8.3 There will also be no harm caused to neighboring residential amenity, there are no adverse impacts in respect of biodiversity or trees and the access and car parking arrangements are appropriate. The proposed dwelling is also of a highly sustainable design and construction.
- 8.4 It is concluded that the proposal complies with the elements of sustainable development in all respects. Therefore, in

accordance with NPPF paragraph 39, planning permission should be granted.