Land at Sir Robert's Farm
Goose Green Lane
Pulborough
West Sussex

Design and Access Statement

In connection with:
The demolition of an existing dwelling and erection of a replacement three-bed farmhouse-style dwelling with a detached garage; the demolition of a building (with existing full planning permission for change of use to a three-bedroom residential dwelling) and erection of a replacement barn-style three-bed residential dwelling with a detached garage; together with associated access and change of use of land from paddock to residential curtilage.

At:
Sir Robert's Farm
Goose Green Lane
Pulborough
West Sussex RH20 2LW

1 INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for:

The demolition of an existing dwelling and erection of a replacement three-bed farmhouse-style dwelling with a detached garage; the demolition of a building (with existing full planning permission for change of use to a three-bedroom residential dwelling) and erection of a replacement barn-style three-bed residential dwelling with a detached garage; together with associated access and change of use of land from paddock to residential curtilage.

This Design and Access Statement sets out the aims of the proposal, the steps taken to appraise the context of the site and explains the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development.

This Statement has been prepared in accordance with the:

- Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015;
- National Planning Practice Guidance (as revised);
- National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024); and
- Horsham District Planning Policy Framework (November 2015),

and objectively demonstrates the commitment of the owner to achieving good design, sustainable development and otherwise meeting the requirements of planning policy and legislation. Specifically, it demonstrates compliance with the Horsham District Planning Policy Framework by explicitly addressing key policies such as Policy 2 (Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development), Policy 3 (Strategic Policy: Development in the Countryside), Policy 26 (Strategic Policy: Good Design), and Policy 31 (Strategic Policy: Climate Change), which are central to the District's planning objectives.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the planning application and associated planning drawings and supporting statements.

1.1 The Site and Location

Sir Robert's Farm (the **"Property"**, outlined red in Figure 1) is a holding of approximately 5.26ha/13ac comprising pastureland, woodland and buildings of various uses. It is located to the North-East side of the B2133, Goose Green Lane, approximately 200m to the North-East of the junction with Cray's Lane. The Property lies approximately one mile from Thakeham Village.

1.2 Access

The Property has the benefit of two existing vehicular access points connecting to the local road network (Goose Green Lane), approximately at the South-East and South-West corners of the Property (identified by blue arrows on Figure 1).

1.3 The Existing Buildings on the Property and Associated Planning History

The existing buildings on the Property comprise (numbers correspond to numbered buildings in Figure 1):

1. **Sir Robert's Bungalow** - A Use Class C3 dwelling house. The building comprises a pitched roof single storey bungalow of timber construction and a flat roofed extension. The accommodation comprises 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, living room and kitchen. It has an approximate gross external area of 119.6m². In this document, this building is referred to as the "**Bungalow**". The Bungalow has full planning permission for its demolition, change of land use from paddock to residential curtilage, and replacement with a four-bedroom

two storey barn-style residential dwelling and detached garage (see DC/25/0040). This followed the applicant securing a fallback position comprising prior approval for addition of a second storey extension (DC/24/1295) and a single storey 8m rear extension (DC/24/1664) and is similar therefore in context to this application. The replacement dwelling and associated approved curtilage is labelled as "**Plot 3**".

2. **Sir Robert's Cottage** - A Use Class C3 dwelling house. The building comprises a pitched roof single storey bungalow. The accommodation comprises a combined living room/kitchen, one bedroom and one bathroom. It has an approximate gross external area of 45.0m². In this document, this building is referred to as the "**Cottage**". The Cottage has prior approval for enlargement by: (i) the erection of an additional (second) storey (DC/24/1312); and the erection of a single storey rear larger home extension which would project 8m from the rear elevation (DC/25/0597). For further details, please refer to the Section 2 (Cottage Fallback Position) below. This application includes the replacement of the Cottage with a three-bedroom two-storey farmhouse-style dwelling and designation of the associated residential curtilage. The proposed replacement dwelling and associated curtilage is labelled as "**Plot 2**".

3. **Sussex Barn** - An L-shaped traditional barn of timber construction with masonry infill and weatherboard cladding with a clay tiled roof. In this Statement, this building is referred to as the "**Sussex Barn**". The Sussex Barn has full extant planning permission under Ref. DC/23/1546 for conversion to a three bedroom residential dwelling. All conditions have been discharged and the development has commenced. No changes are proposed to the Sussex Barn under this application.

4. **Workshop** - The building comprises a timber shed with a corrugated roof and a concrete floor. The building measures 5.5m x 17.4m and has an approximate gross external area of 95.7m². In this document, this building is referred to as the "**Workshop**". The Workshop has full extant planning permission under Ref. DC/23/1549 for change of use to a three bedroom residential dwelling house (Class C3) and associated minor alterations. This application includes the demolition and relocation of a replacement three-bedroom dwelling to the North of its existing site, to make way for the Cottage replacement and curtilage, and proposes its associated curtilage and access.

5. **Garages** - The building is of concrete block construction with a mono-pitch corrugated roof and a concrete floor measuring approximately 6.1m x 13.9m. In this document, this building is referred to as the "**Garages**". The Garages have full extant planning permission under Ref. DC/23/1550 for change of use to a one bedroom residential dwellinghouse (Class C3) and associated minor alterations. No changes are proposed to the Garages under this application.

The above buildings are located approximately in the South-West corner of the Property and are accessible off Goose Green Lane. Descriptions of the Bungalow, Sussex Barn and Garages are provided for context only. This application relates solely to the replacement of the Cottage and relocation of the Workshop (together with associated access and residential curtilage).

Figure 1 - Block Plan of existing buildings at Sir Robert's Farm. Property extent edged in red.

2 COTTAGE FALLBACK POSITION

The proposed development comprises:

(a) the demolition of the Cottage, and replacement with a two-storey, three-bedroom, Sussex Farmhouse-style dwelling, together with detached garaging and associated access, curtilage and landscaping; and

(b) the demolition of the Workshop building (permitted as a dwelling), and replacement with a relocated single story three-bedroom dwelling, together with associated access, curtilage and landscaping.

The fallback position represents a significant material consideration in the assessment of this planning application. As established in the Court of Appeal judgment of *Mansell v Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council* [2017] EWCA Civ 1314, the prospect of implementing a fallback development does not need to be probable or likely; a mere possibility is sufficient for it to be considered material.

In this case, the Cottage benefits from multiple fallback positions under permitted development rights:

i. Prior approval obtained for a second story under Class AA of Part 1, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) ("**GPDO**"). Please refer to: DC/24/1312.

ii. Prior approval obtained for an 8m rear extension under Class AA of Part 1, Schedule 2 of the GPDO. Please refer to: DC/25/0597.

iii. Rights to construct outbuildings under Class E of Part 1, Schedule 2 of the GPDO.

iv. Right to construct an access track through existing curtilage with a permeable surface under Class F of Part 1, Schedule 2 of the GPDO.

The Workshop benefits from full extant planning permission for: change of use (currently Use Class B1(c)) to a three-bedroom residential dwelling house (Use Class C3) (DC/23/1549). This permission is capable of immediate commencement with no pre-commencement conditions.

These combined rights constitute a substantial and material fallback position, allowing for significant enlargement of the existing dwelling without the need for full planning permission. This aligns with the principle set forth in *Gambone v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2014] EWHC 952 (Admin), which outlines a two-stage approach for considering fallback positions: first determining whether it is a material consideration, and then deciding what weight should be attributed to it.

The proposal for a two-story Sussex Farmhouse-style dwelling, detached garage, access and landscaping offers substantial improvements over the potential fallback development, including: a more cohesive and architecturally appropriate design for the rural setting; and improved energy efficiency and sustainability features.

These improvements constitute clear public benefits, which are key factors in successfully applying the fallback argument.

It is important to note that, as per the ruling in *R v Secretary of State for the Environment and Havering BC* [1998], the fallback position meets the three established tests:

i. There is a legal right to implement the fallback position established through multiple permitted development rights.

ii. There is a real prospect of the fallback being implemented, as evidenced by the prior approval for the second story and rear extension.

iii. The proposed development has been compared to the potential fallback scenarios.

Precedent can also be drawn from the Planning Authority's recent approval of the proposed two-story two-storey replacement of the adjacent Bungalow (see DC/25/0040). This application was supported by the Planning Authority in principle, design and appearance.

Therefore, it is respectfully requested that significant weight be given to the fallback position when assessing this application. The combined effect of the permitted development rights provides a robust baseline for evaluating the merits of the proposed development, demonstrating that the new Sussex Farmhouse-style dwelling, garage, access and landscaping represent a more favourable outcome in terms of design, efficiency, and overall impact on the local area.

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This section provides an overview summary of the proposed development, but should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings.

Figure 2 – Proposed Property Layout

3.1 Layout

3.1.1 The Cottage Replacement

The proposed Cottage replacement dwelling would be sited substantially within the existing curtilage of the Cottage. Its orientation would be turned approximately 90 degrees anti-clockwise, matching the approximate orientation of the approved property on Plot 3, resulting in the front elevation of the building facing (but set back from) the B2133, Goose Green Lane.

The proposed three-port garage would be located in front, at 90 degrees, South-West of the dwelling.

3.1.2 The Workshop Replacement

The proposed Workshop replacement building, will be located approximately 35m North-East of the existing Workshop building location. Its orientation will remain substantially the same, with the front elevation facing South-West.

The proposed three-port garage would be located in front, at 90 degrees, South-West of the dwelling.

3.2 Access

The proposed Cottage replacement dwelling will continue to utilise the South-West access points from the public highway. The proposed dwelling will be accessed via the permeable access track to Plot 3 (as permitted under DC/25/0040).

The proposed Workshop replacement dwelling would continue to utilise the South-West access point from the public highway. The replacement dwelling will be accessed via an extension to the

permeable access track to Plot 3 (as permitted under DC/25/0040), turning at approximately 90 degrees North-East, running along the North-West boundary of Plot 3, and South-East boundary of Plot 2, arriving at the South-East corner of the proposed Plot 5. The access track will be constructed from permeable material.

The access track will accord to Building Regulations Approved Document B (Fire Safety). The access will enable Fire Appliance access to within 45m of all parts of the dwellings. It will have a load bearing capacity of no less than 12.5 tonnes, a width of 3.7m, a corner radius of no less than 7.75m and shall provide for a turning circle of at least 16.8m (this has resulted in the building being situated slightly further North). These dimensions and specifications are designed to fully meet or exceed the requirements of Building Regulations Approved Document B (Fire Safety) and all relevant local fire service access requirements for multiple dwellings, ensuring safe and efficient emergency vehicle access to both proposed dwellings and thereby fully addressing public safety policy objectives.

3.3 Curtilage

3.3.1 The Cottage Replacement

The curtilage for the Cottage replacement dwelling is shown edged red and labelled as "Plot 2" in the associated drawings. The curtilage will encompass the original residential curtilage of the Cottage, and original Workshop, and small area of paddock land North of the existing Workshop. The proposed curtilage is 0.12 hectares.

3.3.2 The Workshop Relocation

The curtilage for the Workshop replacement dwelling is shown edged red and labelled as "Plot 5" in the associated drawings. The Curtilage will comprise a change in use in paddock land to the North of the existing Workshop site. The proposed curtilage is 0.23 hectares.

3.3.3 Curtilage General

The proposed development includes a redefinition of the residential curtilages of the Cottage and Workshop.

The paddock North of the Workshop is not currently used for agricultural purposes. It has been enjoyed as part of the existing residential use of both the Bungalow and the Cottage (regularly mowed, maintained etc.) for many years, and as such could be demonstrated as comprising residential curtilage currently. The Applicant submits this application requesting change of use of this land, for the avoidance of doubt and in order to establish a certain permitted use, without prejudice to the fact that the land could currently be demonstrated as being within the residential curtilage of one or more residential buildings on the site.

These changes are necessary to accommodate the replacement dwellings and proposed garaging and access track, while maintaining an appropriate setting for the proposed dwellings. The curtilages have been carefully considered to ensure they are proportionate to their associated dwellings, provide adequate amenity space for future residence, and do not adversely affect the landscape character or intrude into the surrounding countryside.

The proposed curtilages for Plot 2 (0.12ha) and Plot 5 (0.23ha) are demonstrably proportionate to the scale of the replacement dwellings and are designed to avoid unnecessary encroachment onto agricultural land, aligning with Horsham District Local Plan Policy 3 (Development in the Countryside) which seeks to protect the character and setting of the rural area. Their configuration, which integrates existing hedgerows and natural features, minimizes visual impact and ensures that the "openness and setting of the countryside" is maintained by creating a logical and clearly defined edge between residential and rural areas without urbanising the landscape.

The new curtilages have been designed to follow natural features where possible, such as existing hedgerows or tree lines, to minimize visual impact and integrate seamlessly with the local landscape. Where new boundaries are required, they will be formed using traditional materials and planting schemes that are in keeping with the rural character of the area.

The defined curtilages will allow for:

- Improved, and individual access to each of the properties;
- Enhanced landscaping and garden areas;
- Improved privacy and amenity space;
- Appropriate siting of the dwellings and garaging.

Care has been taken to ensure that the defined curtilages do not encroach unnecessarily onto agricultural land or areas of ecological importance. The boundaries have been positioned to create a logical and well-defined edge to the residential areas, maintaining a clear distinction between the domestic space and the wider countryside.

This redefinition of the curtilages is essential to the overall design concept and will contribute to the creation of a high-quality, sustainable development that respects its rural setting while meeting the needs of modern living.

3.4 Parking

Each dwelling includes a spacious three-port garage, designed to accommodate modern living needs and promote sustainable transportation options. Two of the ports in each garage building will feature doors, providing secure storage for vehicles, while one will remain open, offering flexibility for various uses. The garage has been designed to incorporate three electric vehicle (EV) charging points, one for each port, future-proofing the property and encouraging the adoption of low-emission vehicles. These charging points will be easily accessible and located close to where vehicles will be parked, ensuring convenience for users.

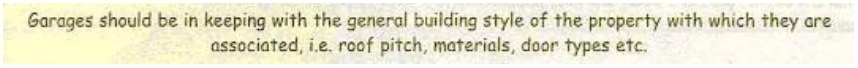

Figure 3 - Extract from Thakeham Design Statement

In addition to vehicle storage, the garages will include dedicated bicycle storage areas, promoting active travel and aligning with sustainable transport objectives. The bicycle storage will be designed to accommodate a variety of cycle types, including non-standard cycles, with appropriate spacing and access considerations. The design also incorporates adequate lighting and security measures to protect both vehicles and bicycles.

3.5 Bin Storage

The proposed development includes carefully designed bin storage facilities that align with best practices for waste management. The bin storage areas will be conveniently located on the North elevation of the garage units and will be situated within 10 meters of the respective dwellings, ensuring easy access for residents. The storage areas will have a solid, slightly inclined floor with drainage to prevent liquid pooling and potential odour issues.

To maintain visual appeal, the bin storage has been designed to not dominate the frontage or take visual priority over the main building. It will be sufficiently enclosed, including the roof space, to prevent unauthorized use and will feature appropriate lighting for security and ease of use.

The bin storage area will be sized to accommodate the required number of bins for refuse and recycling, with enough space for residents to access each bin individually.

A clear, flat access path at least 800mm wide will be provided between the storage area and the collection point, avoiding steps and other obstacles. This path will facilitate easy movement of bins for collection days.

These measures will ensure efficient waste management and contribute to the overall cleanliness and functionality of the development.

3.6 Character and Appearance

The site is located in a rural setting. The proposed replacement building designs takes inspiration from rural properties within the Thakeham Parish and surrounding areas and is sensitive to the Thakeham Parish Village Design Statement.

The Thakeham Parish Village Design Statement (as excerpted in Figures 3, 4, and 5) emphasises retaining the distinctive rural character, using traditional materials, and ensuring new development respects the local building vernacular and landscape through design details like varied roof forms, appropriate massing, and the use of natural materials. The proposed Cottage replacement, a Sussex farmhouse-style building, directly responds to these principles by incorporating varied and long-spanned roof forms, catslide roof elements, simple design, and a mixture of one and two-storey heights, which are characteristic of traditional Sussex farmhouses found locally. Its specific massing, with varied roof forms and catslide elements, along with the careful arrangement of windows and doors, creates a harmonious and visually interesting silhouette that blends with the rural context and avoids monolithic appearances, thereby contributing to the "good design" outcomes advocated by NPPF and Horsham District Local Plan Policy 26.

The proposed Workshop replacement comprises a single storey 'chicken shed' style barn, taking inspiration from the original design of the Workshop building; including a long-spanning simple roof form and gable ends. This single-storey elongated form is specifically chosen to maintain a subordinate role in the landscape, reflecting the hierarchy of farmstead forms encouraged by local design guidance and preventing it from appearing incongruous or overly dominant, consistent with the Thakeham Parish Village Design Statement's focus on maintaining rural scale and character.

The proposed replacement buildings will use a pallet of local vernacular materials typical of those used on traditional Sussex farmsteads, including: soft brown/red clay roof tiles, dark timber feather edge weatherboard cladding, oak timber framing, Sussex clay bricks and Sussex flint.

Figure 4 - Extract from Thakeham Design Statement

3.7 Landscaping

The landscaping scheme for this development has been carefully designed to complement and enhance the local context, respecting the existing landscape character and adhering to neighbourhood guidance. Our approach aims to create a harmonious integration of the new development with its rural surroundings while promoting biodiversity and sustainable practices.

The design draws inspiration from the surrounding countryside, incorporating elements that reflect the local vernacular and natural environment. We have considered the typical species found in the area, the traditional boundary treatments, and the overall rural aesthetic to ensure our landscaping seamlessly blends with the existing landscape character.

The approach to all boundaries will be to provide chestnut post and rail fencing, a traditional and visually appealing choice that aligns with the rural setting. This fencing will be complemented by native hedgerow and tree planting, which will serve multiple purposes:

- Enhance privacy and security
- Create natural wildlife corridors
- Improve air quality and reduce noise pollution
- Provide visual interest and seasonal variation

Native species selected for hedgerows and trees will include a mix of deciduous and evergreen plants, ensuring year-round interest and maximizing ecological benefits. Species may include hawthorn, field maple, dogwood, and holly, among others, depending on soil conditions and local biodiversity goals.

Subject to those trees proposed for removal as detailed in section 4.6 below, all other existing trees and hedgerows on the site will be retained, preserving the established character of the area and maintaining valuable habitats for local wildlife. These mature landscape features will be incorporated into the overall design, creating a sense of immediate maturity and continuity with the surrounding environment.

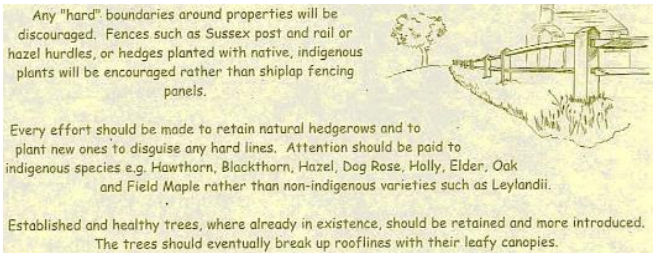

Figure 5 - Extract from Thakeham Design Statement

3.8 Sustainability

The proposed development demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility, significantly enhancing the eco-credentials of the site. The new two-story barn-style dwelling will be constructed using high-performance, thermally efficient materials and incorporate state-of-the-art insulation techniques, resulting in a building that far exceeds current energy efficiency standards.

The project is designed to achieve an estimated Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of 'A', significantly reducing energy demand and corresponding operational carbon emissions. This represents a projected reduction of over 70% in the operational carbon footprint compared to a standard new build of similar size, demonstrating clear alignment with Horsham District Local Plan Policy 31 (Climate Change) and national targets.

The design includes a South-West and South-East-facing roof elevations optimized for solar panel installation, with an integrated battery storage system to maximize renewable energy utilization. Ground source heat pumps will provide low-carbon heating and hot water.

The permeable access track and sustainable drainage solutions will effectively manage surface water runoff, contributing to flood resilience.

Additionally, the landscaping plan incorporates native species to enhance biodiversity, and the garage includes electric vehicle charging points to support sustainable transportation.

These features collectively ensure that the new development will have a significantly lower carbon footprint and reduced environmental impact compared to the existing bungalow, aligning with both local and national sustainability goals.

This proposed development is a self-build project on a site measuring less than 0.5 hectares. In accordance with current planning requirements, developments of this scale are not required to submit a formal Biodiversity Net Gain assessment under the Environment Act 2021, as the statutory BNG duty applies primarily to sites exceeding this threshold or those specifically conditioned by the local planning authority. However, to align with the spirit of the Environment Act 2021 and Horsham District's environmental policies (such as Policy 32: Biodiversity and Geodiversity), the project voluntarily commits to enhancing biodiversity through the extensive planting of native hedgerows and trees. The creation of wildlife corridors and the careful selection of native species (such as hawthorn, field maple, dogwood, and holly) are projected to deliver a tangible ecological uplift across the site. While not formally quantified for a statutory BNG, the estimated increase in linear habitat and native planting significantly contributes to the overall ecological value of the site.

3.9 Heritage Statement

Following a thorough assessment of the site and its surroundings, including consultation of the National Heritage List for England and the local Historic Environment Record, we can confirm that:

- There are no Listed Buildings within the site or its immediate vicinity.
- The site is not located within a Conservation Area.
- The site does not fall within or adjacent to any Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- There are no known archaeological remains or finds recorded on the site.
- The site is not within a Registered Park or Garden.
- There are no locally listed buildings or other non-designated heritage assets identified by the local authority that would be affected by the proposed development.

Given the absence of designated or non-designated heritage assets within or in close proximity to the site, the proposed development is not anticipated to have any direct or indirect impacts on heritage assets or their settings.

3.10 Size and Scale

	Existing	Fallback Position	Proposed Replacement
Cottage Replacement Dwelling (Plot			
Storeys	1	2	
Gross External Area	45.6m²	137.3m^2	202.7m^2
Total Height	4.1m	6.65m	8.6m

Gross Internal Floor Area	40.1m^2	170.3m^2	339.5m^2
Workshop Replacement Dwelling			
Storeys	1	1	1
Gross External Area	95.7m^2	95.7m^2	253.0m^2
Total Height	4.32m	4.32m	5.4m
Gross Internal Floor Area	91.2m^2	91.2m^2	239.6m^2

Whilst the proposed Cottage replacement building is significantly larger in terms of height and floorspace than the current building, it is comparable in size compared to the aggregate fallback position (with the increase predominantly due to the larger second storey floor area).

3.11 Proposed Materials

The proposed replacement buildings will use a pallet of local materials including clay roof tiles, timber cladding, oak framing, Sussex clay bricks and Sussex flint walls.

3.11.1 Walls

Ever since Roman times flint has been an important building material in the South-East of England. Flint work is one of the key features in the distinctive appearance of the villages and towns of Sussex.

- Plinth wall to be flint, framed with red brick. Feather edge timber cladding to lower and upper storeys.
- Flint – random knapped field flint, framed with bricks to create a texturally rich finish.

- Bricks – Handmade Sussex red clay bricks

- Black timber feather edge cladding

3.11.2 Roof

- Plain clay tiles, soft brown-red. Keymer handmade traditional range (Antique / Wealden Red) or similar.

3.11.3 Windows

- Powder coated black/white aluminium casement windows.

3.11.4 Entrance Doors

- Hardwood/oak.

3.11.5 Bifold/sliding doors

- Powder coated black aluminium.

3.11.6 Guttering

- Black cast aluminium (heritage range), half round profile with round downpipe.

3.11.7 Garage/Car Port

- Oak framing with plinth wall in flint framed with red brick. Feather edge timber cladding above.

3.11.8 Landscaping

- Steps and paths – Flagstones with stone/brick risers
- Terraces – Limestone pavers with stone/brick risers
- Driveway gates – 5-bar oak gates
- Fencing – chestnut post/rail
- Parking and turning areas – permeable gravel surface

4 SURVEYS

4.1 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the Site (dated September 1, 2022) by Phlorum Limited concluded that both the Workshop and the Cottage were considered to have a low potential for roosting bats. For the Cottage, potential roosting features included loose and lifted ridge tiles. The report recommended that a bat survey be carried out for both the Chicken Shed and the Cottage just prior to any demolition or conversion works. Additionally, a precautionary approach to site clearance was recommended for breeding birds, badgers, hazel dormice, stag beetles, and hedgehogs to minimize adverse impacts.

4.2 Asbestos Refurbishment & Demolition Survey

An Asbestos Refurbishment & Demolition Survey (dated June 16, 2022) specifically for the Workshop identified the presence of asbestos cement panels in its pitched roof and asbestos cement lining

panels within the former chicken shed**. These materials were identified as containing Chrysotile (white asbestos) with a substantial content (2-50%). The survey concluded that these asbestos cement materials could be managed and monitored if left in situ; however, if removal is planned, it must be carried out by a licensed asbestos removal contractor. The overall risk associated with these materials was assessed as "Low".

4.3 Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) - Land Contamination

The Preliminary Risk Assessment for land contamination (dated June 13, 2022), which focused on the redevelopment of the Workshop into a residential dwelling, highlighted the potential asbestos roofing of the Workshop as a High risk for asbestos inhalation. The report recommended an asbestos survey specifically for the buildings planned for development to assess the presence of asbestos prior to any demolition or conversion works. Despite this, the overall risk of land contamination at the site, including for the Workshop, was considered "Low", assuming its redevelopment into a residential dwelling with surrounding structures and open green space. No specific contamination risks for the Cottage were identified in this report, though the general "Very Low" risk for contamination sources from existing structures would apply.

4.4 Phase 2 Site Investigation (Contamination Assessment)

Following the Preliminary Risk Assessment, a Phase 2 Site Investigation (dated June 12, 2023) was undertaken across the Site, including areas around the Cottage and Workshop. The intrusive investigation, involving six trial pits and analysis of soil samples, did not detect any elevated levels of inorganic contaminants, Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH), or Petroleum Hydrocarbons (PHC) in the soils. Crucially, no asbestos was detected in any of the soil samples taken. This led to the conclusion that there were no potential sources of contamination identified from the intrusive investigation, and the overall human health risk from soil contamination for future site users, construction workers, and adjacent land users was deemed "Negligible". Consequently, no remediation works for soil contamination are required.

4.5 Place Services Confirmation (Bat Activity Survey)

A Bat Activity Survey Report by Phlorum (dated July 28, 2023) was specifically commissioned to assess bat presence at the Wokshop and the Cottage, following a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) that had classified both buildings as having a low potential for roosting bats and recommended an activity survey prior to development. The survey, undertaken on June 1, 2023, focused on these two buildings which are were proposed for demolition and conversion. Crucially, no bats were observed emerging from either the Workshoo or the Cottage during the activity survey. While no emergences were recorded from the buildings themselves, the survey did identify a low level of overall bat activity across the wider site, with six species, including common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Nathusius' pipistrelle, barbastelle, and noctule, recorded foraging and commuting. Based on these findings, the report recommended a precautionary approach to the start of works at the Workshop and Cottage to minimize disturbance. This report's conclusion that no bats emerged from the buildings, combined with the recommended precautionary measures, enabled Place Services to confirm the discharge of Condition 6 of the planning application (DC/20/2606 relating to the conversion of the Workshop). They noted that a precautionary approach, including the presence of a suitably qualified ecologist on site, should still be followed, especially given the recording of Barbastelle bats during the wider survey

4.6 Tree Survey

A detailed Tree Survey was conducted for the site, providing an assessment of individual trees and groups of trees in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations'. Each tree was evaluated based on its species, height, stem diameter, crown clearance, life stage, remaining contribution, physiological and structural condition, and public amenity value. Trees were assigned a retention category (U, C1, C2, B1, B2), indicating their

quality and value. The survey also outlines a phased approach for tree works, including pre-commencement installation of tree protection fencing, maintaining protection during demolition and construction, and removal of protection post-development. Overall, the survey provides a comprehensive baseline for managing existing tree stock and informing the landscape design within the development.

The proposed development necessitates the removal of specific trees to facilitate the construction of the replacement dwellings and associated access:

- T012 (Horse chestnut): This tree is categorized as 'U' (Unsuitable) due to its short remaining contribution of less than 10 years. Its removal is considered acceptable because it exhibits significant physical defects, including cavities and decay on the lower trunk, impacting its structural integrity and long-term viability.
- T016 (Pedunculate oak): Classified as 'C1' (a tree of low quality or value with a life expectancy of at least 20 years), this is a small tree with an asymmetrical crown and deadwood in its central canopy. Its removal is deemed acceptable as it has limited long-term retention value and contributes moderately to public amenity.
- T017 (Grey willow): This tree is categorized as 'C2'. It exhibits dense epicormic growth from its lower trunk and has a low public amenity value. Its removal is considered acceptable given these characteristics and its limited overall contribution to the landscape.
- T018 (Weeping willow): Classified as 'C1', this tree has been previously topped around 4-5m and possesses an asymmetrical crown due to physical defects. Its public amenity value is considered low. These factors make its removal acceptable to facilitate the proposed development.
- T019 (Willow): This tree is classified as 'U' (Unsuitable) because it is over mature, with a decayed stem, is ivy-clad, and has limited live growth. Its poor physiological and structural condition and short remaining contribution of less than 10 years make its removal acceptable.
- T020 (Blackthorn): This is a 'C1' category tree, described as a multi-stemmed large shrub/small tree with a low public amenity value. Its removal is considered acceptable given its size, form, and minimal contribution to the overall public amenity, allowing for necessary development and new landscaping.

5 SUMMARY OF BENEFITS OVER THE FALLBACK POSITION SCHEMES

5.1 The Cottage Replacement

The proposed development seeks to replace the existing Cottage, which has prior approval for the addition of a second storey and 8m flat roof rear extension under Class AA of the GPDO.

The fallback scheme would result in a property where over 60% of the roof would be flat roof. The fallback scheme, although permitted would be devoid of any architectural merit and does not reflect any aspect of the local vernacular.

Whilst the extended elements could be of sound construction, the existing cottage is of poor construction quality, with very poor energy efficient properties.

The fallback scheme could also incorporate one or more outbuildings, permitted under Class E of the GPDO, but there is no requirements for such to be constructed in a manner that reflects the local vernacular. On the contrary, the hight restriction under Class three would promote further flat roofed structures, which would be further out of keeping with the countryside location.

5.2 The Bungalow Replacement

The proposed development seeks to convert the existing Workshop building, which currently benefits from extant approval for conversion to a three-bedroom dwelling.

The fallback scheme, while implementable under the existing consent, would essentially retain the form and character of the Workshop with only limited upgrades. In this form, the building would deliver a dwelling of modest design quality, offering little enhancement to the building fabric or its setting. Energy efficiency gains under the fallback approval would also be minimal, constrained by the retained construction and envelope.

By contrast, the proposed scheme delivers clear improvements in multiple respects. The works will enable a dwelling of far greater energy efficiency, incorporating modern insulation, construction techniques and detailing suited to long-term performance. The proposal also secures improved standards of construction, overcoming the inherent limitations of the existing Workshop fabric.

In addition, the current scheme includes an increase in curtilage, providing more generous amenity space appropriate for a family home and improving the overall usability of the site. Vehicular access and parking arrangements have likewise been reviewed and enhanced, offering safer, more convenient facilities than the fallback scheme would achieve.

Taken together, these enhancements represent a significantly more positive outcome than the extant fallback, contributing to the sustainability, residential quality, and long-term viability of the Workshop's reuse.

Overall the proposed development offers significant improvements over the fallback position:

Architectural Character and Materials

The proposed development seeks to replace the existing Cottage and Workshop with new buildings that respond positively to the rural West Sussex context, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) objective to achieve well-designed places and Local Plan policies protecting the countryside and promoting sustainable development.

Sussex Farmhouse (replacement of Cottage):

- Designed as a two-storey farmhouse reflecting the architectural heritage of West Sussex rural dwellings, consistent with Local Plan guidance encouraging development sympathetic to local vernacular. The varied, and long-spanned roof forms, with catslide roof elements and mixed one and two-storey heights, create a visually complex and engaging structure that is deeply rooted in the local character, aligning with the Thakeham Parish Village Design Statement's emphasis on appropriate massing, architectural detailing, and the avoidance of monolithic forms.
- The use of red brick and flint plinth walls celebrates traditional local materials and craftsmanship, supporting the NPPF's emphasis on using materials that reinforce local characteristics.
- Timber framing and lime render are introduced to reflect historic finishes, aligning with policies promoting high-quality sustainable design responsive to historic context.
- A steep clay tile roof with varied pitches ensures practical performance and visual interest, avoiding flat roofs discouraged by policy for failing to reflect local character.

Chicken-Shed Style Dwelling (replacement of Workshop):

- A single-storey elongated form inspired by traditional agricultural outbuildings, supporting Local Plan aims to retain rural character while allowing sensitive re-use of existing structures. This design approach, featuring a long-spanning simple roof form and gable ends, reflects the 'chicken-shed' typology observed in the Thakeham Parish Village Design Statement, contributing to the site's overall farmstead aesthetic and maintaining a subordinate architectural role.
- Traditional timber cladding and discreet roofing materials enable the building to integrate visually into the landscape, consistent with policies protecting the openness and character of the countryside.
- The design respects the hierarchy of farmstead forms, reflecting a balanced relationship between principal dwelling and ancillary building, encouraged in design guidance.
- Together, these new buildings create a cohesive rural ensemble that upholds the character and distinctiveness of the area as required by the NPPF and local development policies.

Spatial and Functional Improvements

Unlike fallback schemes which would perpetuate inefficient and unsympathetic layouts, the new design supports the NPPF's objective of delivering functional and adaptable homes:

- The farmhouse provides a flexible and spacious layout with opportunities for vaulted ceilings and generous connections to outdoor spaces, aiding health and wellbeing through quality living environments.
- The chicken-shed style dwelling offers accessible, single-storey accommodation, meeting growing demands for adaptable housing in rural settings as encouraged by Horsham District Local Plan rural housing policies.

Energy Efficiency and Sustainability

- The proposal aligns with the NPPF's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and promoting energy efficiency in new developments:

- High-performance insulation and modern building fabric exceed current building regulations, supporting the Horsham District Local Plan sustainable design requirements. The projected 'A' EPC rating and estimated over 70% reduction in operational carbon footprint compared to a standard new build demonstrate a strong quantifiable commitment to these goals, contributing significantly to climate action priorities.

- Renewable energy technologies such as solar panels and heat pumps will significantly reduce the dwellings' carbon footprints, aligning with national and local climate action priorities.

- The building orientation and natural light strategy reduce reliance on artificial lighting, further supporting energy efficiency goals.

Visual Impact and Local Context

The development clearly improves on fallback outcomes by promoting the NPPF's objective to protect and enhance valued landscapes and historic character:

- The farmhouse reinstates a traditional rural form and materials palette, reinforcing local identity and sense of place as advocated in local heritage and design policies. Its architectural details and material choices are in direct harmony with the recommendations of the Thakeham Parish Village Design Statement for new development in the rural setting, ensuring contextual sensitivity.

- The chicken-shed dwelling's subordinate scale and agricultural aesthetic protect the openness and setting of the countryside, consistent with countryside protection policy.
- Avoidance of flat roof extensions and incongruous additions improves visual coherence, meeting design guidance requirements for development sensitive to context and surroundings.

Summary

This proposal to replace the existing Cottage with a traditionally inspired Sussex farmhouse and the Workshop with a single-storey chicken-shed style dwelling represents a significant enhancement over the fallback position by:

- Delivering high-quality, locally rooted architectural design in line with NPPF and Horsham District Local Plan principles.
- Providing energy efficient, sustainable dwellings that address climate change and resource use policies. This includes a quantified commitment to achieving an 'A' EPC rating and significant carbon footprint reduction, directly supporting Policy 31 (Climate Change).
- Enhancing spatial quality, amenity provision, and adaptability in line with national housing objectives.
- Protecting and enhancing rural character, landscape quality, and historic context as set out in planning policy. The proposed landscaping, with native hedgerows and trees, also offers voluntary biodiversity enhancement beyond statutory requirements, further strengthening the ecological contribution as per Policy 32 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity).

Overall, the scheme successfully integrates the principles of sustainable development, good design, and countryside protection required by national and local planning policy frameworks, offering a long-term positive contribution to the site and its setting.