



# Planning and Design & Access Statement

**South Hill Farm, Storrington Road, Thakeham**

**Cygnature Homes Ltd**

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 SLR Consulting has been instructed by the applicant Cygnature Homes to prepare a Planning Statement in support of the submission of a full planning application to Horsham District Council (HDC) for the construction of a small development of 5no. new homes with associated access, landscaping and parking on unused land to the west of South Hill Farm, Storrington Road, Thakeham.
- 1.2 The proposal is being submitted for approval in full and is a re-submission of a previous scheme (reference DC/23/1777) which was refused by the Council in May 2024. This planning statement seeks to address the reasons for refusal of the previous scheme and justify why the scheme as proposed now is acceptable in planning policy terms.
- 1.3 The quantum of units, scale, design and layout of the proposed development has not changed from the scheme assessed by the Council under DC/23/1777. A scheme of 5no. detached homes is proposed, as shown in the extract from the submitted Site Plan, below:

**Figure 1: Extract from Coloured Site Plan**



- 1.4 This Planning Statement presents an analysis of the application site and surrounding area and sets out the relevant planning history and planning policy context. The Statement explains why the proposed development is appropriate, having regard to the key planning policies, as well as technical and environmental considerations (Section 6).
- 1.5 The final section of this statement (Section 7) provides a summary alongside the planning balance to demonstrate that the proposals are acceptable having regard to local and national policy; and why therefore the application should be approved.



1.6 This Planning and Design & Access Statement is supported by, and should be read in conjunction with, a suite of supporting plans, reports and technical documents, as set out below:

Plans:

- Landscape Masterplan
- Location Plan
- Plot 1 Plans
- Plot 2 Plans
- Plot 3 Plans
- Plot 4 Plans
- Plot 5 Plans
- Sections and Street Elevations
- Site Access Plan
- Site Plan [001 F]
- Site Context Plan
- Site Plan (Colour)
- Swept Path Analysis Plan [TR01]
- Swept Path Analysis Plan [TR02]
- Tree Constraints Plan

Reports:

- CIL Form
- Accommodation Schedule
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, prepared by HCUK Group
- Biodiversity Impact Calculation (Nov 2024), by The Ecology Co-op
- Draft Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (Dec 2024), by The Ecology Co-op
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Excel)
- Sustainability and Energy Statement, prepared by Blue Sky Unlimited
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, prepared by Judwaa
- Hazel Dormouse Strategy (March 2024)
- Landscape Design Strategy, prepared by Lizard
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (January 2023)
- Sustainability and Energy Statement (September 2023)
- Transport Note, prepared by Magna Transport Ltd
- Tree Survey and Report, prepared by Beechdown Arboriculture Ltd
- Tree Assessment
- Water Neutrality Statement (Nov 2024), prepared by Blue Sky Unlimited
- Water Offsetting Scheme at South Lodge (by Nicholls)



## 2.0 The Site and Surroundings

### Site Location

- 2.1 The application site is located on land to the west of South Hill Farm, which is located to the west of the B2139 (Storrington Road) in the village of Thakeham. The location of the site is shown in the map below.

**Figure 2: Site Location**

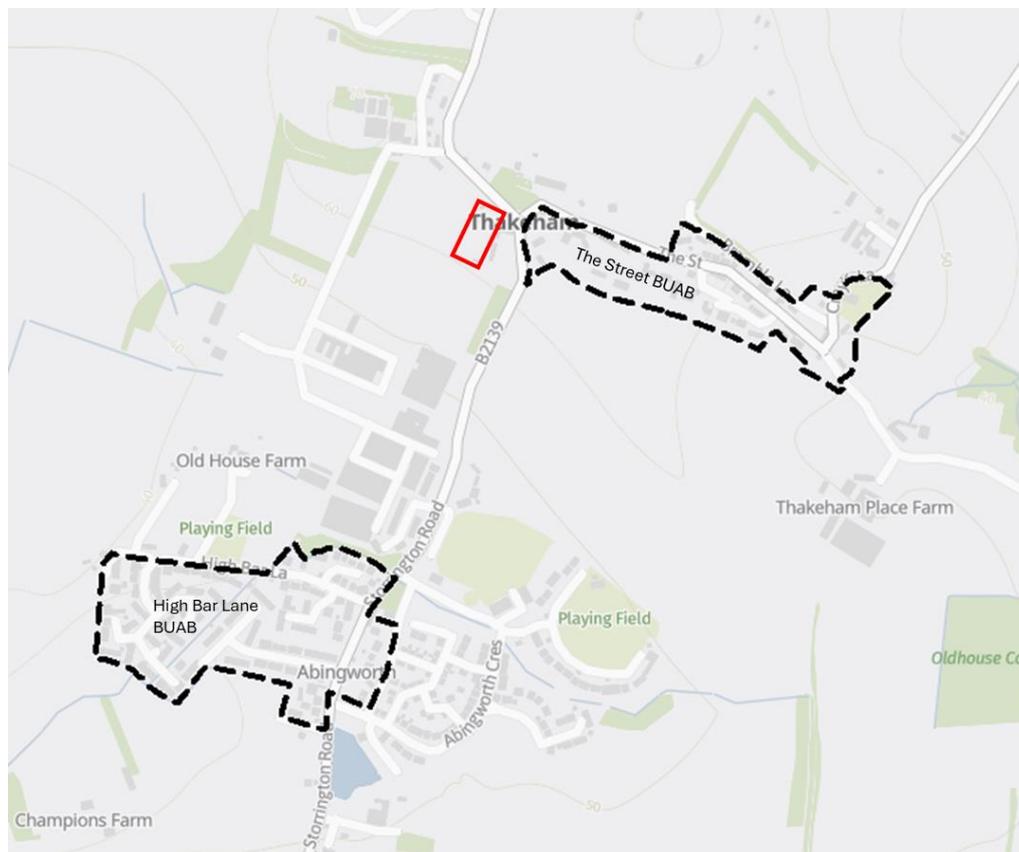


- 2.2 Thakeham is a settlement with two defined centres, comprising 'The Street' and 'High Bar Lane' which each have a defined Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB). The edge of the defined



BUAB of The Street is located close to the site, to the east of the B2139 as shown in the image below:

**Figure 3: Defined Built-Up Area Boundaries in Thakeham in relation to the Site (outlined in red)**



- 2.3 It is acknowledged that the site is located outside the defined BUAB, and by default is in the countryside. Notwithstanding this, the site is located directly adjacent to a cluster of existing residential dwellings to its east, and other detached dwellings to its north (north of Duke's Hill), as well as further dwellings and a small commercial estate to the north-west of the site. The B2139 runs close to the eastern edge of the site, and to the immediate south and south-west of the site is open fields and countryside. The former Thakeham Mushrooms factory is located around 150m to the south of the site. Two Grade 2 listed buildings ('Mansion House' and 'Martins') are located to the east of the site

### Site Description

- 2.4 The majority of the 0.68ha site is currently in horticultural use and (save for a small substation in the north-western corner) the site contains no existing buildings or built structure within its boundaries (previously standing polytunnels have now been removed). The site is well contained and is bounded by hedges to its south, east and west. The northern section of the site is a former garden area which is laid to grass and bounded by hedging. The site is currently accessed from the B2139 (Duke's Hill).



- 2.5 The site is largely flat and contains no existing trees or water features. The site is entirely within Flood Zone 1 (as shown on EA mapping) and no part of the site is located within an area identified as having surface water flood risk. The site is located within a designated Archaeological Site, and within a Bat Sustenance Zone.



## 3.0 Planning History

3.1 A list of planning applications most relevant to the site is provided in the table below:

Council Reference Number	Site Address	Description	LPA Decision	Appeal?
T/39/99	South Hill, Storrington Rd, Thakeham	Vehicular Access	Permitted 17.09.1999	n/a
DC/23/1777	Land to the West of South Hill Farm, Storrington Rd, Thakeham	Erection of 5no residential dwellings with associated access, car ports and landscaping	Refused 15.05.2024	n/a
DC/24/0021	Thakeham Mushrooms Site, Storrington Rd, Thakeham	Demolition of existing buildings and the phased redevelopment of the site as a residential led development comprising 247 dwellings and flexible non-residential floorspace (Use Class E), with works to public right of way and associated landscaping, open space and infrastructure.	Refused 31.07.2024	Appeal lodged

3.2 The most recent application for 5no dwellings on this site (refused 15 May 2024) was refused by the Council for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development would be sited within an unsustainable location in the countryside, outside of a defined built-up area boundary, and on a site not allocated for housing development within the Horsham District Planning Framework, or a made Neighbourhood Plan. Furthermore, the proposed development is not essential to its countryside location. Notwithstanding the absence of a five-year land housing supply, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) at paragraph 11(d), it is not considered that there are any material considerations in this instance which would outweigh harm arising from conflict with Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).
2. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate with a sufficient degree of certainty that the proposed development would not contribute to an existing adverse effect upon the integrity of the internationally designated Arun Valley Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and Ramsar sites by way of increased water abstraction, contrary to Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Paragraphs 185 and 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority Habitats & Species).



## 4.0 Application Proposal

4.1 The planning application proposes the following:

*'Full planning permission for the erection of 5no. detached dwellings with associated access, car ports and landscaping'.*

**Figure 4: Extract from Site Plan**



- 4.2 Access to the site is proposed utilising the existing access arrangement to the north of the site via the B2139 (Duke's Hill). The existing access would be widened, and appropriate visibility splays would be in place to ensure safe egress. A 5m wide internal access road (flanked by 2m footpaths) will lead from the site entrance the southern end of the site, linking to individual driveways serving each of the 5no. homes. A turning head is proposed at the southern end of the site for turning of larger vehicles.
- 4.3 Each property would be served by a double garage and generously sized driveways for additional off-street parking. An additional visitor space would be provided in a bay located along the access road opposite Plot 2. Separate bicycle storage is also proposed for each dwelling.
- 4.4 The 5no. dwellings would all be detached 2-storey homes, ranging from 225sqm to 229sqm in size and each would comprise 5 bedrooms. The dwellings are arranged in a linear format, each orientated to face north-east, with generously sized rear gardens facing south-west. The dwellings are set back from the main access road and are located in spacious plots reflecting the low-density character of the immediate surrounds and allowing for significant landscape buffers and new planting within the site.



- 4.5 A comprehensive landscaping scheme is proposed, including the provision of new native and ornamental trees, new ornamental planting and flowering lawns, which will help to create a high-quality development that is sufficiently screened from the rural surrounds. The existing hedgerow separating Plots 1 and 2 would be incorporated into the scheme and retained to create a natural plot boundary.
- 4.6 The dwellings have been designed to reflect the local vernacular utilising architectural styles, materials and features that are typical within this part of Sussex. Features including hipped roofs, gable frontages, porches and chimney breasts are proposed, and a palette of materials including white render, dark weatherboard, red/brown brick and tile hanging are shown (with precise design details to be secured by conditioned). The design of the houses, couples with the carefully considered layout and landscaping scheme will create a modest development of the highest quality that complements the sensitive rural character of its surrounds.



## 5.0 Policy Context

- 5.1 This section sets out the key relevant planning policy at national and local levels. Section 6 will then discuss the principle of development, as it relates to the relevant policies and why the scheme is considered acceptable when taking account of the adopted plan, and material considerations.
- 5.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, in the determination of planning applications, decisions are made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following section will first note the national policies of relevance before focusing on the local policies considered of most relevance to the consideration of the proposal for the site.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)

- 5.3 The most recently published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in December 2024 and this carries full weight in decision making. The new NPPF continues to establish a presumption in favour of sustainable development. **Paragraph 2** states that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 5.4 **Paragraph 8** confirms that there are three dimensions to sustainable development - economic (building a strong, competitive economy); social (providing the supply of housing required to meet needs and creating a high quality-built environment); and environmental (protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment).
- 5.5 **Paragraph 9** confirms that these roles should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of policies but also taking into account local circumstances to reflect the need and opportunities in each area.
- 5.6 **Paragraph 11** stresses that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the area, and proposals should accord with an up-to-date development plan, or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:
- i) The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
  - ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 5.7 **Footnote 8** of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour applies in situations where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites; or, where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that delivery of housing is substantially below (less than 75%) of the housing requirement over the previous three years. This is currently the case in Horsham and a 5-year supply cannot be demonstrated.



- 5.8 **Paragraph 12** states 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 usually be granted. If material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed, local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan.
- 5.9 **Paragraph 14** confirms that where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with a neighbourhood plan is likely to outweigh the benefits provided that the neighbourhood plan was made within the previous 5 years, **and** the plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified needs. The Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan is well over 5 years old (having been made in 2017), and as such does not benefit from the protections of paragraph 14.
- 5.10 **Paragraph 20** relates to strategic policies where it is set out that these policies should make sufficient provision for: housing (including affordable housing), employment, commercial development and infrastructure.
- 5.11 In terms of determining applications, **paragraph 39** of the framework states that it is a requirement for Local Planning Authorities to approach decisions in a positive and creative way. Planning Authorities should also work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area, whilst seeking to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 5.12 **Paragraph 48** reiterates the requirements set out in planning law that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It actively encourages decisions on applications to be made as quickly as possible.
- 5.13 **Paragraph 56** states that planning conditions can be used to make a development acceptable, where it might otherwise be unacceptable. **Paragraph 57** goes on to say that the use of conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed if necessary, relevant, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all respects.
- 5.14 **Section 5** (delivering a sufficient supply of homes) sets out clearly that the Government is committed to significantly boosting the supply of homes (**paragraph 61**) in order to meet local needs and help make sure that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
- 5.15 **Paragraph 63** states that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be reflected in planning policies, and should include those who require affordable housing, older people, people with disabilities, travellers, and people wishing to build their own homes.
- 5.16 **Paragraph 70** outlines the importance of small and medium size sites in the contribution to achieving the housing requirement of an area. These sites are often built out quicker and have less infrastructure requirements and associated risk.
- 5.17 **Paragraph 78** requires local planning authorities to identify an annual supply of deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of 5 years' worth of housing calculated against the latest local housing needs figure (plus a buffer of either 5% or 20%). The latest figures for Horsham



indicate that the district has (at best) a 2.9-year supply of housing. As such, the Horsham district does not currently have a 5-year housing supply as required by paragraph 78.

- 5.18 **Paragraph 83** seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas by directing new housing in suitable location where it will help to enhance the vitality of village communities and to enable them to thrive.
- 5.19 **Section 8** of the framework seeks to promote healthy and safe communities, with **Paragraph 103** highlighting the importance of providing access to a range of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity in order to promote the health and wellbeing of communities.
- 5.20 **Section 9** of the framework supports the provision of sustainable modes of transport, with **Paragraph 109** stating that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan making so that the potential impact of development on transport networks can be addressed, and so that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued. **Paragraph 109** states that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.
- 5.21 **Paragraph 116** is 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 would be severe’ [our emphasis].
- 5.22 **Paragraph 117** states that new development should give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, should facilitate access to high quality public transport, should address the needs of people with reduced mobility, and should be designed to create places that are safe, secure and attractive.
- 5.23 **Section 11** relates to making the most effective use of land to make sure that decisions meet the need for housing as effectively as possible whilst improving the environment and making safe and healthy communities. **Paragraph 129** requires decisions to support developments that make efficient use of land taking into account the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development as well as the importance of securing well-designed and beautiful, attractive and healthy places.
- 5.24 **Section 12** of the framework covers design, where the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. This policy highlights that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, which should be indivisible from good planning, which in turn should contribute positively to making places better for people and help make developments acceptable to communities.
- 5.25 **Paragraph 170** states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future).
- 5.26 **Section 15** covers the natural environment. **Paragraph 192** stresses the importance of protecting and safeguarding ecological networks, including national and locally designated sites of importance to biodiversity, wildlife corridors. It also promotes the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection of priority species. Paragraph 193 (d) seeks for a net gain in biodiversity to be demonstrated,



which accords with the requirement set out in the Environment Act 2021 to secure a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain.

- 5.27 **Paragraph 193(d)** states that developments that conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported and that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged.

## Adopted Development Plan

- 5.28 The application site falls within the jurisdiction of Horsham District Council (HDC) where the adopted development plan comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF 2015); the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018); and all made Neighbourhood Plans.

### Horsham District Planning Framework

- 5.29 The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) was adopted in November 2015. Those policies of the adopted HDPF of most importance to the application proposals are listed below.
- Policy 1 – Strategic Policy: 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 16 – Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs
  - Policy 24 – Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
  - Policy 25 – Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
  - Policy 26 – Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
  - Policy 27 – Settlement Coalescence
  - Policy 31 – Green infrastructure and Biodiversity
  - Policy 32 – Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
  - Policy 33 – Development Principles
  - Policy 34 – Cultural and Heritage Assets
  - Policy 35 – Strategic Policy: Climate Change
  - Policy 36 – Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
  - Policy 37 – Sustainable Construction
  - Policy 38 – Strategic Policy: Flooding
  - Policy 40 – Sustainable Transport
  - Policy 41 – Parking



## **West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018)**

5.30 The West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan 2018 was adopted in July 2018. The following policies are considered to be most relevant in the context of the proposal:

- Policy M9 – Safeguarding Minerals

## **Emerging Development Plan**

### **Horsham District Local Plan (2023 – 40)**

5.31 The emerging Horsham District Local Plan (2023 – 2040) has been through Regulation 19 consultation stage and has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for formal Examination (submitted 26 July 2024). Examination Hearings took place in December 2024 but have been cancelled owing to significant concerns raised by the Inspector with regard to the soundness of the emerging plan. The emerging plan therefore only holds some limited weight in decision making as it shows a direction of travel for the emerging policies and allocations that the Council supports but the Inspector may declare the Plan unsound.

5.32 The application site is not an allocation within the emerging Horsham District Local Plan (2023 – 2040).

5.33 The following draft policies contained with the Submission Local Plan do not hold full weight at this stage, but nevertheless are considered to be relevant in the context of the proposal and should be considered in decision making.

- Policy 1: Sustainable Development
- Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
- Policy 3: Settlement Expansion
- Policy 6: Climate Change
- Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
- Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy 9: Water Neutrality
- Policy 10: Flooding
- Policy 11: Environmental Protection
- Policy 12: Air Quality
- Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 14: Countryside Protection
- Policy 15: Settlement Coalescence
- Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 19: Development Quality
- Policy 20: Development Principles
- Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
- Policy 23: Infrastructure Provision



- Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
- Policy 25: Parking
- Policy 27: Inclusive Communities, Health and Wellbeing
- Policy 37: Housing Provision
- Policy 38: Meeting Local Housing Needs
- Policy 39: Affordable Housing
- Policy 40: Improving Housing Standards in the District

## **Thakeham Parish Neighbourhood Plan**

5.34 The Policies and Projects contained within the Thakeham Parish Neighbourhood Plan that are considered most relevant to this application are:

- Thakeham1 – A Spatial Plan for the Parish
- Thakeham6 – Design
- Thakeham7 – Heritage Assets
- Thakeham9 – Development in the Countryside
- Thakeham10 – Green Infrastructure and Valued Landscapes

5.35 The Thakeham Parish Design Statement (2002) is also relevant to this application.

## **Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance**

5.36 The Council has also adopted several separate Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other guidance documents which are material considerations in decision making. Those most relevant to the proposals are:

- Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) SPD (2017)
- Country Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology (2020)
- Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Guidance for Sussex (2020)
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Planning Advice Note (PAN) (2022)
- Facilitating Appropriate Development Planning Advice Note (PAN) (2022)



## 6.0 Summary of Key Planning Considerations

- 6.1 This section sets out the key planning considerations including the sustainability merits of the proposal and the economic, social and environmental benefits which the application will deliver, with regard given to the policies set out in the preceding section.

### Principle of Development

- 6.2 As the Local Plan (HDPF, 2015) was adopted over 5 years ago, the Council's housing target is now derived from the Government's (current) Standard Methodology rather than the adopted housing target of 800 dwellings per annum. The government's newly published Standard Method requires the delivery of 1,357 homes per annum in Horsham (a 48% increase on the HDPF figure). HDC acknowledged that it is unable to demonstrate a robust five-year supply of housing as required by national policy, with the latest published position showing a 2.9-year supply of housing against the adopted requirement (AMR, January 2024).
- 6.3 The recent publication of the new NPPF and the new housing targets that accompanies it (1,357 homes per annum), results in a worsening 5-year land supply position in Horsham, which will remain until a new Local Plan is formally adopted.
- 6.4 Paragraph 11 of the framework sets out the '*Presumption in favour of sustainable development*' which for decision making means either approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay, or: where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
- (i) The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
  - (ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.
- 6.5 The Framework directs that where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land, that development plan policies relevant to the supply of housing are to be considered out of date. As this is the acknowledged case in Horsham, the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 11d of the NPPF is therefore engaged and as the Site can demonstrate a sound water neutrality solution the provisions of paragraph 11d part (i) do not apply, and applications must be considered positively in line with the '*tilted balance*'.
- 6.6 Whilst the Council's 5-year housing land supply position is likely to have worsened since the Latest AMR was published in January 2024, we have no reason to disagree with the latest figure of 2.9 years supply which clearly shows a severe undersupply of housing against the Council's targets.
- 6.7 In light of the Council's inability to demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing sites, as well as the key objective of Government policy to significantly boost the supply of homes; the Council has



published the Facilitating Appropriate Development document (FAD, Oct 2022) which forms a material planning consideration in decision making.

6.8 The advice contained in the FAD does not alter the statutory decision-making framework but sets out the weight that can be given to current and emerging local policy and has been produced to enable the Council to act proactively to continue to deliver housing in a sustainable manner. The FAD supports applications that relate to sites already allocated as well as for proposals located outside the defined settlement boundaries. In relation to sites outside settlement boundaries, the FAD (at paragraph 5.7) echoes the requirements of HDPF Policy 4 and states that applications will be considered positively provided that all the following criteria are met:

- The site adjoins a BUAB
- The level of expansion is appropriate to the related settlement
- The proposal meets local housing needs
- The impact does not prejudice long term development
- The development is with an existing defensible boundary

6.9 Albeit the site does not directly adjoin the settlement boundary, it is considered that the proposed development largely accords with the above criteria of the FAD, demonstrated that the site is a sustainable and suitable location for additional housing growth in Thakeham, in the context of the Council's documented housing shortfall.

6.10 In addition to the above listed FAD criteria, the proposal must also be shown to be deliverable in the short-term, and the FAD requires that the relevant supporting information should be included to demonstrate when development would be expected to be delivered. The proposed development on land to the West of South Hill Farm, Storrington Road is a modest scale development of 5 homes that is available now and can be delivered immediately.

6.11 The remainder of this statement details the technical matters in relation to the proposal, demonstrating that there are no barriers to the delivery of the site.

6.12 Given the present policy position and application of the '*titled balance*' as described above, alongside the application of the FAD which carries weight in decision making at this time; it is our view that the principle of residential development of 5no. units on this site is acceptable.

### **Housing Mix and Affordable Housing**

6.13 Policy 16 of the HDPF states that the proposed housing mix should be appropriate to that of the site, locality, and surrounding character. The surrounding existing residential development is characterised by medium to large sized detached and semi-detached dwellings.

6.14 The proposed development is reflective of this existing character of mostly large family sized dwellings, with each proposed dwelling being 5-bedroom and 2-stories. Given the rural nature of the area, it is not considered an appropriate location for smaller units. It is considered that the proposed mix is suitable both in design terms and in achieving efficient use of the site. The applicant is committed to ensuring that the proposed scale and density of the development respects the surrounding locality.



- 6.15 Whilst Policy 16 of the HDPF states that on sites providing between 5no. to 14no. dwellings the Council will require 20% of the dwellings to be affordable housing; national planning policy dictates that seeking affordable housing on sites proposing less than 10 units is not required, therefore the requirements of HDPF 16 is no longer a relevant consideration.

### **Design, Appearance and Amenity**

- 6.16 Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character from inappropriate development. Proposals should consider townscape characteristics, with development seeking to provide an attractive, functional and accessible environment that complements the locally distinctive character of the district. Buildings should contribute to a sense of place, and should be of a scale, massing, and appearance that is of a high standard or design and layout which relate sympathetically to the landscape and built surroundings.
- 6.17 Policy Thakeham6 of the Thakeham Parish Neighbourhood Plan states that the scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout, and materials of all new development proposals, should reflect any architectural or historic characteristics of particular merit in, and the scale of the surroundings buildings in the wider area. Policy Thakeham 10 continues that development proposals will be supported provided they protect and retain, and wherever possible, enhance green infrastructure and valued landscape features of the Parish.
- 6.18 The proposed development will be arranged north to south and comprise 5no. detached 2-storey dwellings. The proposed development will be access from the north with the access track extending along the eastern site boundary. Each dwelling will benefit from an area of hardstanding for parking and manoeuvring, with private amenity space provided to the west. The proposed dwellings will incorporate hipped roofs and gables features. Each dwelling will vary in appearance with a range of local materials proposed.
- 6.19 The proposed development has been designed to provide sufficient space between each of the dwellings, and between the proposed development and the existing residential properties. For these reasons, it is not considered that the proposal would result in harm to the amenities of nearby residential properties and users of land, in accordance with the above policies.
- 6.20 The proposed development will adjoin the existing ribbon of residential development, with the proposed dwellings positioned in a linear arrangement. The built form will not extend further than the cluster of dwellings and associated buildings positioned to the east of the site.
- 6.21 The proposal provides a high-quality residential development that responds positively to the character of the semi-rural surrounds. The scheme has been designed to ensure the size, scale and siting of the proposed dwellings is appropriate. The carefully considered design and layout of the built form, combined with the extensive landscaping would mean that the semi-rural character of the locality will be preserved whilst creating an attractive scheme that relates to its surroundings. This complies with the requirements of Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF, as well as the policy requirements and aspirations as described in the Thakeham Parish Neighbourhood Plan, and it is not therefore considered that proposal will result in visual harm.



## Site Location/ Sustainability

- 6.22 Whilst the site is located outside of the defined BUAB and is unallocated; it lies close to the defined BUAB which is immediately to the east. This demonstrates that the site is closely linked to existing built form and is not isolated in the countryside.
- 6.23 Furthermore, the site is located within the Thakeham Parish which is classified as a “smaller village” in the HDPF settlement hierarchy. Notwithstanding this classification, the site is located approximately 900m to the east of the larger settlement of West Chiltington which offers a moderate range of services and facilities and is classified as a “medium village” in the settlement hierarchy.
- 6.24 The site gains access from B2139 Duke’s Hill which is a two-way single carriageway road. Duke’s Hill does not benefit from footways, but the stepped level bank provides a pathway for pedestrians to nearby bus stops and other areas. The nearest bus stops to the site are located within 100 metres to the east of the site access. These bus stops are served by bus services (nos. 71, 74A, 74B). Bus route 71 runs between Storrington and Chichester once a day on Wednesday only in both directions. Bus Routes 74A and 74B run between Storrington and Horsham three times a day (Monday to Friday) in both directions.
- 6.25 Due to the site’s proximity to the services and facilities of nearby “medium villages” and the access to public transportation, it is concluded that the site is judged to be sustainable for a modest development of 5no. homes, as per the proposal.

## Access and Highways

- 6.26 Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF promote development that provides safe and adequate access, suitable for all users.
- 6.27 The proposal will incorporate an existing access to the north-eastern corner of the site, which will be widened to ensure that sufficient visibility would be available. Each dwelling will benefit from an area of hardstanding for parking and turning, dedicated garaging, an electric vehicle charging point and sufficient space to accommodate at least 2no. cycle parks. Each unit will be able to accommodate up to 3no. cars.
- 6.28 The Transport Note submitted with the application further confirms that sufficient manoeuvring space has been provided within the design of the site layout to accommodate a 11.2 metre-long refuge truck (i.e., a typical delivery van or emergency vehicle). The Transport Note confirms the proposal provides safe and adequate access for all users and therefore the proposal is in accordance with Policy 40.
- 6.29 Policy 41 states that adequate parking facilities must be provided within developments to meet the needs of its anticipated users. The Transport Statement submitted with this application confirms that the proposal is in accordance with the West Sussex County Council’s (WSSCC) Guidance on Parking at New Developments (September 2020), and in doing so is in accordance with Policy 41 of the HDPF.
- 6.30 Overall, due to the design and scale of the proposal, the development is unlikely to result in significant traffic impact on both the users internal to the site and the safety and function of the highway network. In regard to matters relating to traffic, access and highways, we agree



with the conclusions set out under the previous application (DC/23/1777) by WSCC Highways, that “*there are no transport grounds to resist this proposal*”.

### **Landscape, Trees and Open Space**

- 6.31 Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character from inappropriate development. Policy Thakeham6 of the Thakeham Parish Neighbourhood Plan states that the scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout, and materials of all new development proposals, should reflect any architectural or historic characteristics of particular merit in, and the scale of the surroundings buildings and in the wider area. Policy Thakeham10 then goes on to state that development proposals will be supported provided they protect and retain, and wherever possible, enhance green infrastructure and valued landscape features of the Parish.
- 6.32 The site comprises enclosed agricultural land currently used for horticultural purposes. The site is bound to the south and west by agricultural fields, with a stretch of residential development located immediately to the east.
- 6.33 The scheme has been designed around a landscape framework that responds positively to the surrounding locality through the careful consideration of form and design. A Landscape Design Strategy and a Landscape Master Plan, both prepared by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology are submitted with this application.
- 6.34 As set out in the Landscape Design Strategy, it is intended that the existing trees and hedgerows on the site will be retained, and additional planting will be undertaken. The Tree Survey and Report submitted alongside this application further confirms that the development can be achieved with little or no impact on retained trees. The proposed soft landscaping would comprise native tree and hedgerow planting to the boundaries of the site and private properties. The frontages of each unit and access road would be enhanced with formal hedgerows, ornamental tree and shrub planting. The existing hedgerow to the east would be reinforced with gap filling.
- 6.35 The proposed hard landscaping will comprise paving to vehicular circulation areas, pedestrian paths, maintenance paths, and fencing to the private gardens. The hard landscaping has been designed using materials that are sympathetic with the semi-rural context of the site.
- 6.36 In regard to landscape, trees and open space we agree with the conclusions set out under the previous application (DC/23/1777), that the proposed development “*would be of a scale, form, and appearance that would appropriately reflect the character and visual appearance of the surrounding built form, and it is not therefore considered that the proposal would result in visual harm*”.

### **Ecology**

- 6.37 Policy 31 of the HDPF states that development will be supported where it demonstrates that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate.
- 6.38 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report, a Ground Level Tree Assessment Report and a Hazel Dormouse Mitigation and Compensation Strategy, all of which are prepared by aLyne Ecology Limited, are submitted to support this application.



- 6.39 The landscaping scheme will result in an improvement in ecological value of the site. The findings of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report suggest that with the imposition of the proposed mitigation, any existing species will be appropriately protected from the impacts of development. The trees with potential roost features for bats will be retained within the development. Any trees and hedgerows proposed to be removed have no potential roost features. Gaps in the retains hedgerows will be interplanted with native species, buffer zones of grassland will be planted, wildflower mix will be used in open spaces and a wildlife pond will be created.
- 6.40 In regard to ecology, we agree with the conclusions set out under the previous application (DC/23/1777), that the “*mitigation and enhancement measures are considered acceptable, and no ecology concerns are raised*”.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

- 6.41 The Biodiversity Impact Calculation and accompanying Statutory BNG Metric that have been submitted with the planning application set out how the proposals ensure the retention of habitat where possible with considerable enhancement.
- 6.42 The BNG calculations show that through the securing of off-site habitat improvements at Danefold Farm (West Grinstead), any biodiversity losses resulting from the proposed development will be offset to achieve the minimum 10% gain (+12.14% habitat units and +11.57% hedgerow units) which satisfied the Metric’s trading rules.
- 6.43 A draft Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) also accompanies this submission.

### **Water Neutrality**

- 6.44 It is proposed that water credits from water saving measures implemented at South Lodge Hotel (in Lower Beeding) will be used to offset the mains water use required to serve the proposed development of 5 units.
- 6.45 Accompanying this submission is a Water Neutrality Statement (by Blue Sky Unlimited) and a note by Nicholls which outlines the water credit arrangement that is in place at South Lodge Hotel.
- 6.46 In summary, the installation of a borehole at the hotel (which has been drilled into an aquifer not connected to Hardham, or to the River Arum catchment) has enabled 19,000 litres/day to be removed from the mains supply and utilised as credits against other development sites. This scheme has already been assessed by Natural England and approved under application DC/21/0749 and DC/230290 (Downsview Av, Storrington, 62 homes).
- 6.47 As the Water Neutrality Statement explains, the proposed development of 5no units requires a total water usage of 1,163 litres/day. Existing water consumption on site is calculated to be 1,004 litres/day. As such, 159 litres/day are required to be offset.
- 6.48 Of the 19,999 credits available at the South Lodge scheme, 159 credits are assigned to the proposed development by Cygnature Homes at South Hill, Thakeham (1 credit equates to offsetting 1 litre of water per day). This has been secured through a legal contract which can be provided to the Council if required.



- 6.49 Through a combination of water reduction technologies that would be embedded into the design of each house to reduce water usage to 85l/p/day; and the deduction of the existing water use on site; the residual amount of water that is required to be offset (159 litres/day) will be addresses through the purchase of credits from an accepted water saving scheme at South Lodge Hotel.
- 6.50 The proposal can therefore be shown to be water neutral. This overcomes the second reason for refusal on the previous scheme.

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

- 6.51 Policy 34 of the HDPF emphasises that development must adapt to the likely changes in the future climate and ensure flood risk is not increased.
- 6.52 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy prepared by Judwaa Consulting Limited. The existing site is an open site (with no fixed buildings) and vegetated boundaries/ hedgerows. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is at very low risk of surface water flooding.
- 6.53 Post-development surface water will be managed through sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) as described in the Drainage Strategy. The proposed SuDs features have been designed to attenuate surface water runoff for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100-year rainfall event plus allowance for climate change (45% increase in peak rainfall intensity) prior to discharge to the existing foul public sewer on Storrington Road.
- 6.54 Overall, the completion of the development will not increase flood risk on or off the site. The discharge of surface water has been considered within the proposed drainage strategy and will not form an impediment to the progress of this development.

### **Heritage and Archaeology**

- 6.55 Policy 34 of the HDPF states that the Council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets.
- 6.56 The site does not directly relate to any designated heritage assets. It is noted, the Officers Report in regard to previously refused Application DC/23/1777, agreed there will be negligible effects on the wider landscape setting and the development will not result in harm to the setting of the conservation area or any neighbouring listed buildings.
- 6.57 The site is however, located within both an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) and a Site of Archaeological Importance within the current HDPF Policies Map. In order to address any potential impacts, an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment has been submitted alongside this application.
- 6.58 The Archaeological Desk Based Assessment identifies that the site lies within the Roman, Early Medieval and Medieval Occupation Activity, Thakeham ANA. This ANA is recognised as a very sensitive area for archaeology based on the results of an excavation undertaken 30 metres to the east of the Site, which revealed a Saxon hut site with mid-Saxon pottery as well as Roman, medieval and Mesolithic finds. The assessment concludes that the site has “low to medium” potential for post-medieval and modern remains, a “medium” potential for Prehistoric, Roman and medieval remains and a “high” potential for early medieval remains to be present within the Site.



- 6.59 Based on the findings of the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, it is likely that a phased program of archaeological works will be required. The Applicant is agreeable to accepting an appropriated worded condition to this effect.

### **Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change**

- 6.60 Policies 35, 36 and 37 require that development mitigates the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reducing flood risk, reducing water consumption, improving biodiversity and promoting sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect the requirements of Chapter 14 of the NPPF.
- 6.61 The matters of flood risk, water consumption, biodiversity and sustainable transport modes are all addressed separately above. The Sustainability and Energy Statement, prepared by Bluesky Unlimited, sets out further measures imposed that reduce the impact of the of the development on climate change; including measures to improve energy efficiency of the project. These include adopting a fabric first approach and the use of sustainable energy technologies including EV charging at each dwelling.
- 6.62 Overall, based on the findings of the Sustainability and Energy Statement, it is reasonable to conclude the scheme's impact on climate change have been minimised and managed appropriately.

### **Planning Conditions**

- 6.63 NPPF paragraph 56 confirms that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where necessary and relevant to planning and the proposed development. It goes onto confirm that conditions are required to be discharged prior to commencement should be avoided unless there is clear justification. This application intentionally includes sufficient information to minimise the need for pre-commencement conditions, but where conditions are necessary, we are happy for them to be included in order to make the development acceptable to Council.



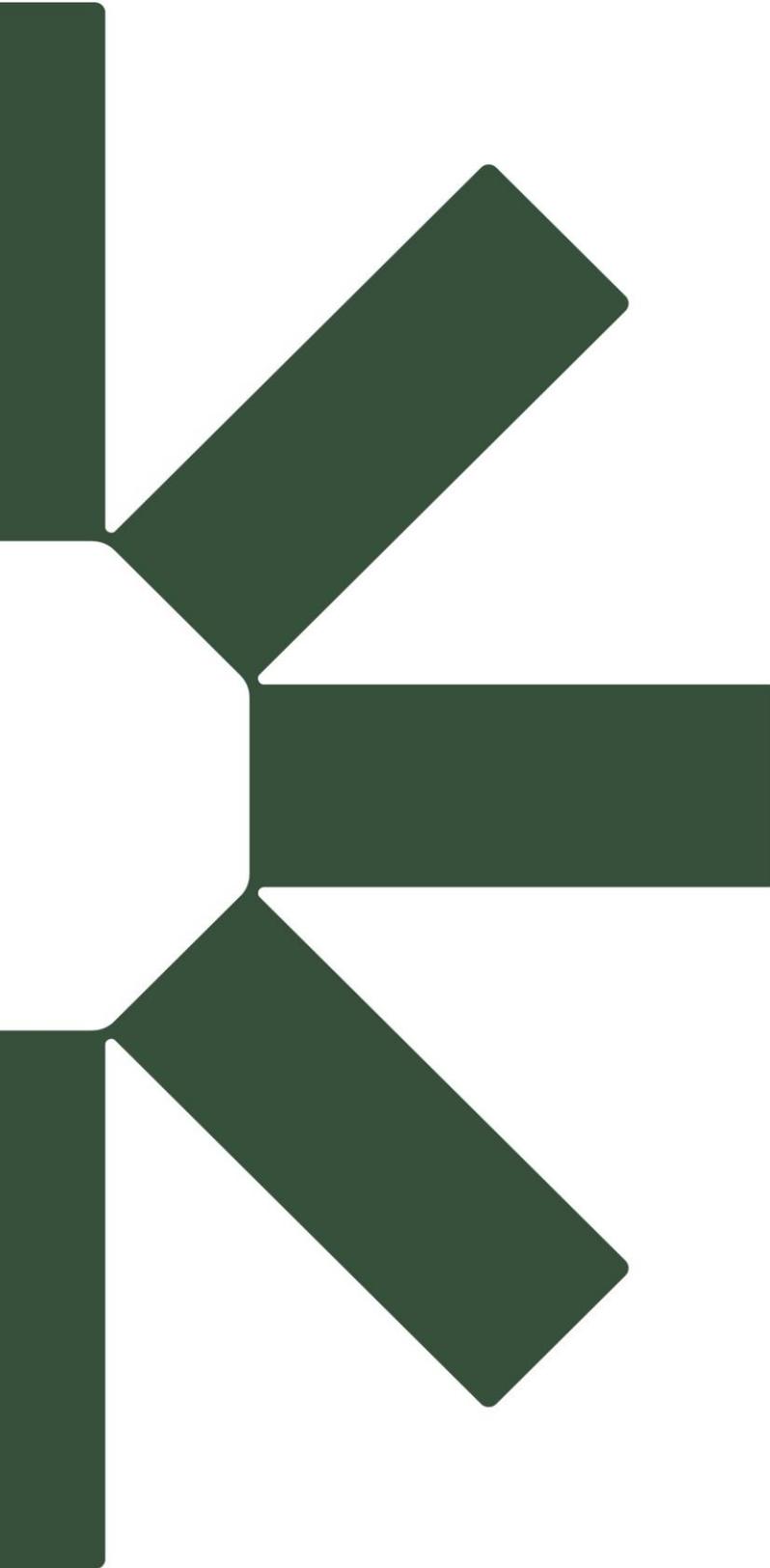
## 7.0 Summary and Planning Balance

- 7.1 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. As set out in NPPF Paragraph 8, the planning system has three overarching objectives which are key to achieving sustainable development. These are social, economic and environmental objectives.
- 7.2 The proposed development would result in **social** benefits through:
- The provision of 5.no dwellings in a sustainable location, to add to the much-needed housing stock in the district, representing a very substantial benefit in the context of the Council's housing supply and delivery position;
  - The retention and enhancement of existing landscape features for the enjoyment of incoming and existing residents, as well as private outdoor amenity space for each dwelling; and
  - A sustainable location with good access to a range of services and facilities, with convenient connections to the wider strategic highways network.
- 7.3 The proposed development will result in **economic** benefits through:
- The generation of employment related to construction; and
  - Contributions to the local economy by future residents.
  - CIL receipts.
- 7.4 The proposed development would result in **environmental** benefits through:
- Existing mature planting along the boundaries to be retained and enhanced, in order to retain the verdant character of the site and to protect wider landscape views;
  - Provision of ecological enhancement measures, including mitigation measures to prevent harm to sensitive habitats and to achieve the minimum 10% BNG;
  - Protection from flooding for the lifetime of the development by utilising SuDS which also provide ecological and landscape benefits;
  - Careful landscape design to produce a development of the highest quality, ensuring it respects the local area; and
  - Design of the homes to meet and exceed current environmental standards, including adopting a fabric first approach and the use of sustainable energy technologies including EV car charging at each dwelling.
- 7.5 It is therefore evident that the proposal would deliver multiple benefits, particularly the significant benefit of providing additional housing where there is a significant housing supply shortfall.



- 7.6 This statement has highlighted the significant benefits the proposal would offer and demonstrates that the proposed development would not result in any adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated to an acceptable level. The previous scheme was refused due to water neutrality not being resolved and therefore the planning balance concluded that the benefits of the scheme were not outweighed by the location in the countryside and impact on the Arun Valley. However, given the water neutrality issue has now been resolved, the tilted balance weighs heavily in favour of the scheme and the proposals should be supported as there is no clear and demonstrable harm arising from the scheme.
- 7.7 The confirmation by Council that only a 2.9-year supply of housing is current being achieved demonstrates the urgent need for housing to be delivered in the district. The development proposal for 5no. homes makes the most effective use of the land available whilst creating a beautifully designed place for new residents to live.
- 7.8 As this report has demonstrated, the benefits that would result from this development are significant, and there are no adverse impacts that would outweigh the delivery of these benefits. As such, having regard to the policies contained within Horsham's adopted and emerging development plans, as well as direction from the newly published NPPF and other material considerations identified; it is considered that the planning balance lies in favour of the proposal, and it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted without any further delay.





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