



Conversion of stables to dwelling, removal of smaller stable block
and sand school. Associated landscape works.

at

Gaydon
Kennel Lane
West Grinstead
RH13 8LX

Planning Statement

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Location

The site amounts to approximately 0.28 hectares and forms part of the grounds of Gaydon, a detached property in large grounds.

The site is located on the eastern side of Kennel Lane and forms part of the garden of one of a number of dwellings along the lane.

The site is located outside the defined built-up area in the parish of West Grinstead.

The wider site contains a garage building, stable building, hay barn and a large sand school to the north.

Access to the site is from the southwest corner with the driveway from Kennel Lane.

Dense hedging and trees form the northern and western boundary whilst the southern and eastern boundaries are more open to the fields around.

There is a large pond to the northwest of the site.



The Proposal

The proposal is for the conversion of the existing stable buildings to a single dwelling.

The application also proposes the removal of the smaller stable building to the north and the sand school to the north of that.

In addition the application proposes associated landscaping.

The application follows the refusal of DC/25/1466 for the same development. The application seeks to address the previous reasons for refusal which are stated as:

1. It has not been sufficiently demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the proposed development would represent a conversion. The development would be located beyond a defined built-up area on a site not allocated within the Development Plan and would not be essential to this countryside location. The development would therefore be contrary to the overarching spatial strategy and hierarchy approach of concentrating development within defined settlements and advocating a planned approach to settlement expansion, contrary to policies 1, 2, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015). Notwithstanding the absence of a five-year land housing supply, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) at paragraph 11(d), it is not considered that there are any material considerations in this instance which would outweigh harm arising from conflict with Local and Neighbourhood Plan policies in these regards.
2. The relationship between the subject building and the neighbouring property to the south-west is considered to result in a degree of overlooking and overbearing impact that would result in a poor quality environment for future occupiers of the proposed dwelling. The development would therefore be contrary to Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).



Principle of Development

Whether the building is a conversion

The previous reason for refusal stated that it had not been sufficiently demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the proposed development would represent a conversion.

As a result the LPA went on to consider that the development would be contrary to the overarching spatial strategy and hierarchy approach of concentrating development within defined settlements and advocating a planned approach to settlement expansion, contrary to policies 1, 2, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

It is vital therefore to establish that the development is indeed a conversion.

The Officers report states:

it is noted that the proposed plans indicate substantive works to the building, including external cladding, a link extension, the enclosure of open sides, and potential structural works. Given the current state of the buildings, and the works as indicated on the submitted plans, it is considered highly likely that the proposal would amount of a rebuild rather than conversion. To this effect, the proposal would be contrary to Policy 10 of the HDPF and paragraph 87 of the NPPF.

The proposals have been amended to note that the existing cladding to roof and walls will be retained and the building will be insulated internally within the existing envelope.

Existing doors will be retained as a feature with new doors and windows fitted behind them to provide compliance with building control whilst resulting in minimal alteration to the buildings appearance.

The application is also now accompanied by a structural report which states that *'the walls appear generally sound and can be retained'* and that with *'minor works to the roof structure undertaken the structure would be suitable for conversion from a structural perspective.'*

These works are no greater than the typical repairs and improvements undertaken in a traditional barn conversion and certainly do not result in a rebuild as opposed to a conversion.

The buildings are therefore structurally sound and capable of conversion without rebuilding.

No extensions are required other than a small connecting section to connect the two buildings which would be hidden from view as between the building.



Compliance with the NPPF

Horsham District Council currently has a housing land supply of 1 year, as confirmed in the Council's most recent Authority Monitoring Report (April 2025).

Under paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024), such a shortfall would normally trigger the “tilted balance,” which favours granting planning permission for sustainable development where local policies are out of date or insufficient.

The site lies within a rural area wherein opportunities for travel by public transport are limited.

The area however provides good access for cycling, and walking (with numerous footpaths in close proximity). The village is a 20-minute walk away.

The NPPF however outlines that there are three dimensions to sustainable development, notably economic, social and environmental. It is clear therefore that sustainable development is not just about transport and location and so this alone should not make the location unacceptable.

Paragraph 87 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- a) There is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of farm businesses, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
- b) The development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
- c) **The development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;**
- d) The development would involve the sub-division of an existing residential building; or
- e) The design is of exceptional quality, in that it:

-Is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and

-Would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

The Framework does not define the word ‘isolated’, but in *Braintree District Council v SSCLG & Ors* [2017] EWHC 2743 (Admin), the judge found ‘isolated’ should be given its ordinary objective meaning of ‘far away from other places, buildings or people; remote’.

That judgement was subsequently upheld at the Court of Appeal, *Braintree DC v SSCLG, Greyread Ltd & Granville Developments Ltd* [2017] EWHC 2743 (Admin); [2018] EWCA Civ 610.

The Court of Appeal’s judgment in *Bramshill v SSHCLG* [2021] EWCA Civ 320 however went on to affirm that the essential conclusion in *Braintree* was that in determining whether a particular proposal is for “isolated homes in the countryside”, the decision-maker must consider “whether it would be physically isolated, in the sense of being isolated from a settlement”.



What is a “settlement” and whether the development would be “isolated” from a settlement are both matters of planning judgment for the decision-maker on the facts of the particular case.

At paragraphs 33 and 34 of the judgement the Court held that to adopt remoteness from other dwellings, instead of remoteness from a settlement, as the test for “isolated homes in the countryside” would seem inconsistent with the Government’s evident intention in producing the policy in paragraph 79. Stating:

It would mean that the policy would not apply to a development of housing in the countryside – large or small – on land next to an individual dwelling remote from the nearest settlement, because although the new homes might be “isolated” from the settlement, they would not be “isolated” from existing development.

It would prevent the policy from applying to the development of additional dwellings, one or two at a time, on sites next to other sporadic rural housing, again on the basis that they would not then be “isolated”.

It might even prevent the policy from applying to a proposal for two or more dwellings on a single, undeveloped site in the countryside, because none of them would itself be “isolated” from another dwelling, and the development as a whole would therefore not be “isolated”.

If this were so, only the development of a single dwelling, on its own, separate from any other dwelling already built or proposed nearby, would engage the policy.

This would be hard to reconcile with the Government’s aim, as policy-maker, to “promote sustainable development in rural areas.

It is clear therefore that the Bramshill judgement confirms the following in relation to isolated homes in the countryside:

that the correct interpretation of “isolated homes in the countryside” requires the decision maker to consider whether the development would be physically isolated, in the sense of being isolated from “a settlement” rather than being isolated from “other dwellings”.

and

that the questions of what is a “settlement” and whether the development would be “isolated” from a settlement, are both matters of planning judgment for the decision-maker on the facts of the particular case.

Taking in to account the Bramshill judgement the site is clearly an isolated home in the countryside given it is not located in close proximity to an existing settlement.

A similar approach was adopted in Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/24/3339079 at Well Meadows, Pickhurst Road, Chiddingfold, Godalming, Surrey GU8 4TG

The Inspector concluding that

Paragraph 84 c) [now para 87] of the Framework sets out that planning decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting. The main parties are in dispute as to whether the proposal is isolated.



Having regard to the relevant case law, the word “isolated” in this context simply connotes a dwelling that is physically separate or remote from a settlement. In this respect, I have already concluded in the first main issue that the proposal is isolated.

It is clear that the location would result in an isolated home in the countryside and therefore Paragraph 87 of the NPPF should be triggered.

Para 87 of the NPPF recognises exceptions where

The development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;

There are 2 parts to this:

- a) The development would re-use redundant or disused buildings
- b) The development would enhance its immediate setting;

The following makes an assessment of each part.

The development would re-use redundant or disused buildings

The Officer Report for the previously refused application stated:

The submitted Planning Statement asserts that the stables are “redundant”, however site inspection and the building layout (shown on the existing block plan – stables, hay barn and sand school in active equestrian configuration) do not substantiate such redundancy. No evidence has been provided to confirm that the buildings have ceased their equestrian use, and the mere absence of horses owned by the applicant does not mean that the building is redundant.

It is not clear why the LPA consider that the fact the buildings remain on site with the sand school means they are not redundant.

The applicant does not have horses and has no intention of having horses on site. They purchased the property for its location, not for its equestrian facilities which were installed by a previous owner.

The fact the applicant does not have horses and does not need the building **does** mean that the building is redundant. To draw a different conclusion is to ignore the conclusions of the Well Meadows appeal decision (APP/R3650/W/24/3339079) – a material consideration.

This confirmed that redundant should be given its ordinary meaning of ‘no longer needed or useful; superfluous’

The Well Meadows appeal decision confirmed that redundant should be defined as a building that is no longer needed. Stating:

Although the appeal buildings are currently in use, I have no reason to dispute that they are redundant in terms of no longer being needed or useful.

The buildings on the application site are no longer needed as the applicant does not have horses, and they wish to remove them along with the sand school.

As such the buildings are no longer needed and are therefore redundant.



The development would enhance its immediate setting:

The Officer Report for the previously refused application stated:

Paragraph 87 also requires that such conversions enhance their immediate setting. While the proposal includes removal of the smaller northern stable block and sand school, the resulting residential use together with formalised curtilage, parking, garden areas, domestic paraphernalia and associated lighting would introduce suburbanising elements into a currently open and distinctly rural part of the site. The overall effect would be the domestication of the countryside rather than a genuine landscape enhancement.

This is again at odds with the Well Meadows decision where the Inspector concluded that:

I have found that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would not harm species and habitats within and around the site, subject to conditions. I am satisfied that appropriate landscaping and external materials details could be agreed under suitably worded planning conditions. On that basis an enhancement to the immediate setting of the proposal would be achieved. Therefore, the proposal derives support from paragraph 84 c) of the Framework [now para 87]

The Inspector concluding that avoidance of harm to the landscape along with appropriate landscaping was enough to be considered an enhancement to the immediate setting.

The application proposal goes far further and results in a significant enhancement to the setting of the building through the removal of the building and sand school to the north as well as landscaping.

The application plans demonstrate that a large area of hardstanding will be removed to the north of the building as well as a large outbuilding. The proposals also include the removal of a large sand school.

Whilst the areas immediately around the building will change in character to domestic, this will replace the existing character which is equestrian and is cluttered with paraphernalia. The change in character will not be that distinct so as to result in harm to the character of the area.

This has to be balanced against the wider benefits to the landscape character with the removal of large areas of hardstanding, the removal of a further building and the removal of the sand school. All of which would result in a reduction in sprawl of built form across the site.

This combined with the wider biodiversity enhancements proposed as part of the scheme and the proposed landscaping would clearly result in an enhancement to the immediate setting.



Conclusion on principle

It is clear that the location would result in an isolated home in the countryside and therefore Paragraph 87 of the NPPF should be triggered.

The proposal reuses existing redundant buildings and results in changes to the buildings and site which are an enhancement to their immediate setting.

The proposal is therefore consistent with Paragraph 87 of the NPPF .

The application would provide an additional dwelling against a backdrop of a serious shortfall in housing supply. Furthermore, it would reuse existing buildings in accordance with paragraph 87 of the NPPF.

In similar circumstances the Inspector in the Well Meadows decision concluded that

Overall, the harm arising from the reliance upon the private car for the single dwelling proposed in this case would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework. It follows that the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies and is an important material consideration which weighs in favour of allowing the scheme

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan but material considerations, including the Framework and the benefits arising from the development, justify making a decision other than in accordance with it.

The application draws many parallels with this decision and as a result the development is acceptable in principle.



Landscape impacts

Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) require development to demonstrate high-quality design that respects the character of the surrounding area.

Policy 32 highlights that design is a core component of sustainable development and must respond to the site context, while Policy 33 requires proposals to make efficient use of land, ensure appropriate scale, massing and layout, and integrate positively with the character of the site and surroundings.

The scheme involves minimal alterations to the existing equestrian buildings so that the building retains their functional rural character.

The external materials will match the existing with corrugated sheeting to the roof and horizontal timber cladding to the walls. Doors and windows will remain simple and utilitarian.

Policies 25 and 26 of the HDPF seek to protect the natural environment and landscape character of the District.

Development is required to protect, conserve and enhance landscape and townscape character, taking account of areas or features identified as being of landscape importance, individual settlement characteristics and settlement separation.

The development would result in the removal of the stable block to the north of the building and the removal of the large sand school to the north of this, both of which result in a sprawl of equestrian development across the site.

Both areas will be landscaped so that they integrate with the green and rural surroundings resulting in the development to the south being read as a tight cluster of development against the backdrop of the existing dwelling rather than the sprawl of development that exists at present.

The parking will be contained to the north west of the building and the majority of hardstanding will be located behind the building so as to avoid the introduction of urbanising features (driveway, garden boundary treatments, bins, bike stores), and domestic paraphernalia on the eastern side of the building which might be more visible from the land to the west.

The result is an enhancement to the character of the site and the surrounding area which is in accordance with the aims of policies 25 and 26 of the HDPF.



Amenity

One of the previous reasons for refusal stated that:

The relationship between the subject building and the neighbouring property to the south-west is considered to result in a degree of overlooking and overbearing impact that would result in a poor quality environment for future occupiers of the proposed dwelling. The development would therefore be contrary to Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

The application plans have been developed and updated to seek to address this point.

The proposed conversion is set to the north east of the existing dwelling and not directly behind it, as such there are no direct overlooking issues.

The only area of perceived overlooking is at an angle from the first floor window of the dwelling toward the southern elevation of the proposed conversion.

The conversion has no windows proposed on the southern elevation and the only window visible from the existing dwelling would be the shower room window which would be obscure glazed in any case.

There is no amenity space proposed on the southern side of the proposed conversion and all amenity space is proposed to the north of the proposed dwelling where it is not visible from the existing dwelling thus ensuring there is no overlooking.

In any case 2 large native trees are proposed on the south western corner of the plot to screen any viewed toward the building and ensure there is no sense of overlooking or overbearing.

The site would provide sufficient amenity space for both the proposed dwelling as well as ensuring the existing dwelling retains sufficient amenity space.

Both properties would retain sufficient space to ensure privacy.

The distances between the site and neighbouring occupiers would prevent any unacceptable harm in terms of potential overbearing, overshadowing or loss of privacy.

The proposed and existing dwellings would be sufficiently spaciouly arranged to avoid any overly cramped development and to satisfy a minimum standard of necessary amenity.



Highways and Access

The site is accessed via an established access on to Kennel Lane.

The application proposes to use the existing established access which has suitable visibility both north and south

Whilst the proposal would constitute an intensification of use, this would be modest within the context of the public highway network and would not be considered a material detriment to highway operation.

Overall, therefore, it is considered that the proposed development would be supported by a safe and convenient means of access without unacceptable safety implications for existing/future highway users such as to comply with the requirements of HDPF Policy 40

Policy 41 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that the proposed development is supported by adequate parking, including for vehicles, electric-vehicles and cyclists.

The proposal would provide two vehicular parking spaces with sufficient hardstand provided for vehicles to turn within the site.

The proposed layout includes a refuse store incorporating an EV charging point and storage for 2x cycles.

It is therefore the case that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network and therefore is not contrary to the Local Plan or the National Planning Policy Framework.



Ecology

The proposal includes a detailed Ecological Assessment.

This concludes that:

Overall, the site's ecological value was low within the works footprint, with higher-value habitats such as the treeline and pond located outside impact areas. With adherence to recommended safeguards and enhancement measures, impacts on protected species and habitats are expected to be minimal.

The application further proposes enhancements and precautionary measures which it is expected would be controlled by condition.

Biodiversity Net Gain is demonstrated by way of improvements on site. This will be outside of the private gardens on a small area of land to the north of the building.

Foul water and surface water drainage

The applicant proposes foul water disposal connected to mains drainage.

The site is not within a flood zone as identified by the Environment Agency.

Surface water will be discharged by infiltration. This will be designed following infiltration testing in accordance with BRE365, at the location and depth of proposed devices.

Infiltration devices will be located 5m from structures and boundaries, in addition to avoiding Root Protection Zones.

The applicant expects a detailed drainage design will be required prior to commencement of the development and is happy to accept a drainage condition requiring further details.

Sustainability statement

The proposal seeks to utilise sustainable design and construction techniques, for example, energy conservation and efficiency, water efficiency, reducing waste, re-using materials and recycling materials to ensure the most efficient use of limited resources.

The application seeks to meet these aims in the following ways:

- Provision of an electric vehicle charging point
- Improvements to the biodiversity of the site through substantial additional planting to the boundaries including enhancing existing hedgerows.
- Provision of separate waste and recycling bins along with suitable covered storage.
- Water limiting measures will be provided to ensure the water neutrality.



Planning balance and conclusion.

The application site lies outside the defined built-up area boundary.

The application proposes a single detached dwelling by way of conversion of the existing buildings.

The development would result in an enhancement to the wider landscape character through the removal of the building to the north and the sand school to the north of that.

The proposal therefore reuses existing redundant buildings and results in changes to the buildings and site which are an enhancement to their immediate setting.

The proposal is therefore consistent with Paragraph 87 of the NPPF

There are no neighbour amenity or unacceptable highways impacts.

The development would also not result in any impact on protected species or their habitats and would result in biodiversity enhancements on site.

The Council's most recent housing land supply position (from May 2025) has been assessed at 1 year, which represents a significant shortfall and means the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Paragraph 11 d) of the NPPF is engaged.

Further it has recently been established that the Council has failed to meet the latest Housing Delivery Test, principally due to the constraint water neutrality has placed on housing delivery.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development remains fully applicable requiring the granting of permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

The proposal results in 1 x new dwelling in a development that is of a high design quality and results in a net enhancement to the landscape.

It is, therefore, considered that planning permission should be approved.

