



APPLICATIONS & APPEALS SERVICES

FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEMOLITION OF EXISTING WORKSHOP, BARN AND OFFICES AND ERECTION OF A NEW BARN AND WORKSHOP BUILDING AND OFFICE BUILDING AND CREATION OF OPEN STORAGE ALONG WITH THE FULL ENCLOSURE AND REFURBISHMENT OF EXISTING BARN FOR THE CONTINUATION OF USES ON SITE FALLING WITHIN USE CLASSES E(g)(iii) AND B8, INCLUDING THE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF TRAILERS AND ANCILLARY EQUIPMENT; ASSEMBLY OF NEW TRAILERS, HORSE BOXES (INCLUDING THOSE WITH ACCOMMODATION ON BOARD); TRAILER, MOTORHOME AND HORSE BOX CONVERSIONS; PRE SALES WORK AND CUSTOMER COLLECTIONS; AND THE PREPARATION AND LOADING OF TRAILERS AND HORSE BOXES FOR EXPORT FOLLOWING GRANT OF DC/18/0661

**MENZIES WOOD FARM, OKEHURST LANE, BILLINGSHURST,
WEST SUSSEX**

PLANNING, DESIGN AND STATEMENT

MARCH 2025



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing workshop, barn and offices with replacement buildings and creation of open storage along with the continuation of uses on the site falling within use classes E(g)(iii) and B8, involving various activities associated with repair and maintenance of trailers, ancillary equipment, motorhomes and horse boxes.

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

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

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

1.3 The Statement will demonstrate that the proposed development accords with the relevant planning policies and is acceptable in all respects.

2.0 PHYSICAL CONTEXT & PLANNING HISTORY

Physical Context

- 2.1 The application site is located on the northern side of Okehurst Lane, c.1.1km north of the edge of the settlement of Billingshurst. The site is accessed directly off Okehurst Lane and has shared use with Menzies Wood Farmhouse which sits on the north west side of the access.
- 2.2 The site is predominantly a hard surfaced yard containing a series of single storey buildings/ barns and areas of open storage. The site office is contained within a single storey timber clad building which sits to the west of the entrance into the main site/ yard area; adjacent to the rear of the office building is an open sided steel frame barn. To the north of these buildings is the workshop which is partially enclosed with an open lean-to section to the southern side. Within the centre of the site is a larger steel framed open sided barn with a pitched roof.
- 2.3 Large areas of the yard surrounding the barns/ buildings is used for open storage of trailers, horse boxes, motorhomes, ancillary equipment and materials in association with the historic

activities on the site pertaining to repair and maintenance of the aforementioned vehicles.

- 2.4 In the wider context, the site is located in a low density rural setting characterised by a number of farmstead development and large detached dwellings set in generous grounds. Okehurst Lane is a typical rural lane, reasonably narrow with various passing places dispersed along its length. The closest neighbouring dwelling is the property known as Menzies Wood farmhouse which sits close to the south western boundary and entrance to the site. North west of the site is a further residential property known as Lannards.
- 2.5 The site is located within designated countryside; there are no other landscape designations. The closest heritage asset is Minsterls Wood Okenhurst Lane which is a Grade II Listed Building located south east of the application site, some 300m away.

Figure 2.1 - Block Plan



2.6 The following are photographs of the application site and context:

Figure 2.2 - Existing Open Barns To Be Demolished



Figure 2.3 - Existing Office And Open Barn To Be Demolished



Office building
to be
demolished

Figure 2.4 - Open Barn Being Refurbished And Retained



Figure 2.5 - Existing Barn To Be Retained



Figure 2.6 - Existing Barns and Open Storage



Figure 2.7 - Existing Barns and Open Storage



Figure 2.8 - Shared Access Into The Site



Planning History

2.7 A search of the Planning Register reveals the following relevant planning history for the site:

- **DC/18/0661** - Hybrid planning application for the retention, full enclosure and refurbishment of existing barn and the change / retention of uses on site falling within use classes B1(c) and B8, including the repair and maintenance of trailers and ancillary equipment; assembly of new trailers, horse boxes (including those with accommodation on board; trailer, motorhome and horsebox conversions; pre sales work and customer collections; and the preparation and loading of trailers and horse boxes for export; and outline planning application (with approval of access and layout) for demolition of existing workshop, barn and offices and erection of a new barn and workshop building and office building, creation of open storage area. Approved 30 April 2019.
 - A number of the conditions placed on the permission were subsequently varied by appeal: APP/Z3825/W/19/3240255 – Appeal allowed 4 March 2020.

- **DC/07/0421** - Change of use to servicing maintenance and storage of trailers and horticultural/estate machinery. Approved 24 September 2007
- **DC/06/1016** - Variation of conditions 12 and 15 of BL/123/98 to allow the change of use of land for the servicing and maintenance of trailers and compact tractors and limited retail sales and the erection of a 1.95m high perimeter fence. Refused 16 June 2006.
- **BL/68/02** - Amend condition 6 on bl/123/98 to allow lighting of the yard and security lighting. Approved 7 October 2002.
- **BL/60/99** - Variation of condition 21 on bl/123/98 to refer to 3 lorries per day to leave the site prior to 0730 hours. Approved 13 July 1999.
- **BL/123/98** - Erection of a building for B8 use and conversion of existing building to B1 use. Approved 19 April 1999.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Planning permission was given for a hybrid application (DC/18/0661) which regularised the existing uses on the site and gave outline planning permission for demolition or three of the four existing barns on site along with the erection of two replacement buildings and alterations to the retained barn.
- 3.2 A Reserved Matters application was not forthcoming and the permission has since expired. As such and for completeness, this application seeks to secure full planning permission for the development as a single application allowing continued use of the site as approved by DC/18/0661 along with the approved operational development.
- 3.3 A total of three existing buildings are proposed to be demolished, the office and two open sided workshop/ storage buildings. The largest of the four, located in the middle of the site is proposed to be retained and the sides fully enclosed. A replacement barn/ workshop is then proposed to be erected to the east of the retained barn, adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site and an office building, is then proposed to be located within area of the site. The proposal also includes areas of

secure open storage within the central yard area adjacent to the retained barn and in the north of the plot.

- 3.4 The scale of the buildings to as existing and proposed are set out as follows:

Existing:-

Barns - 692 sq m

Office - 137 sq m

Workshop - 244 sq m

Total - 4 Units 1,073 sqm

Proposed:-

Refurbished Barn - 461 sq m

Unit 1 - Office - 160 sq m

Unit 2 - Barn/Workshop - 461 sq m

Total - 3 units 1,082 sqm

- 3.5 The proposed pallet of materials consists of insulated Kingspan or similar cladding panels in a bright green for both the retained and new barns roof and elevations with matching roller shutter doors. The proposed office will have horizontal boarding in grey/green with tiled/ tile effect roof and timber doors and windows.
- 3.6 Extracts from the proposed plans are as follows:

Figure 3.1 - Proposed Block Plan



Figure 3.2 - Proposed Retained Barn Elevations

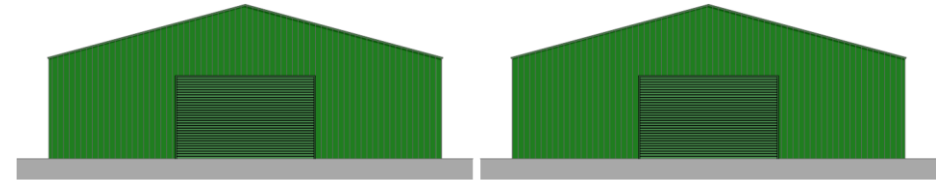
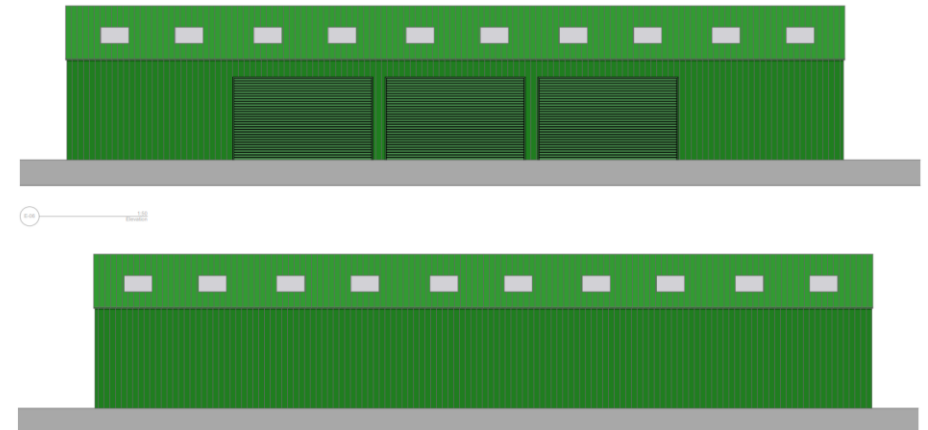


Figure 3.3 - Proposed Retained Barn Side Elevations



3.7 The elevations of the proposed barn match those of the retained barn above.

Figure 3.4 - Proposed Office Floor Plan

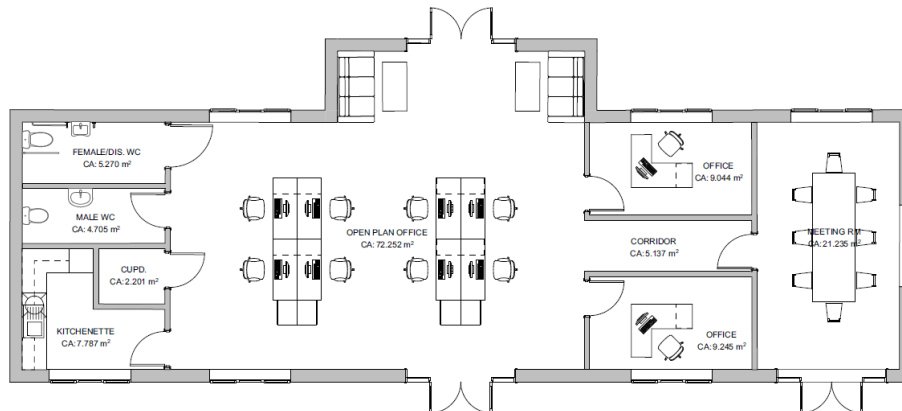


Figure 3.5 - Proposed Office Building Front and Rear Elevations:



Figure 3.6 – Proposed Office Building Side Elevations:

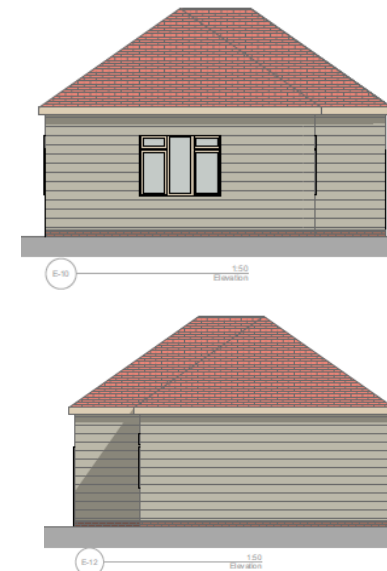
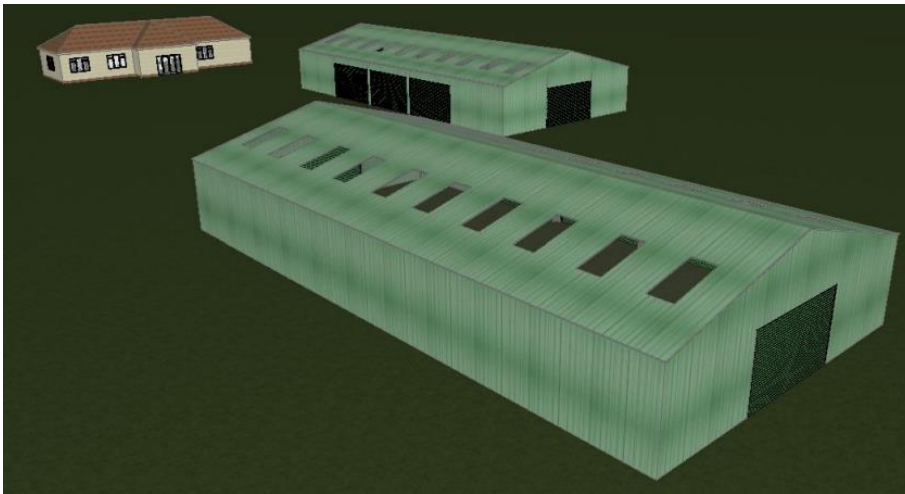
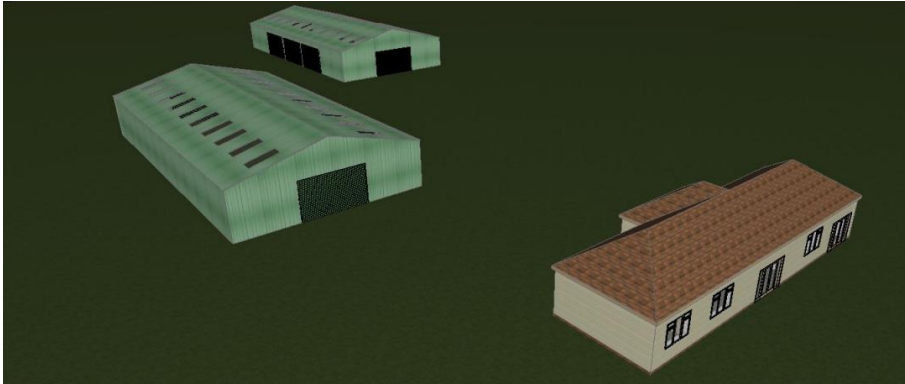


Figure 3.7 - Proposed 3D Visuals:



4.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

Sustainable Development

- 4.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and Wales and how these should be applied. It provides a framework for the preparation of local plans for housing and other development. The NPPF should be read as a whole.
- 4.2 Paragraph 2 of the NPPF sets out that ***'Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements'***.
- 4.3 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has the following three overarching objectives which are independent but need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:

- a) ***'an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;***
- b) ***a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and***
- c) ***an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural***

resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy’.

- 4.4 Paragraph 10 states ***‘So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11). For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.***
- 4.5 Where there are no relevant development plan policies or the relevant policies are out of date, the NPPF states that planning permission should be granted unless the policies of the Framework indicate otherwise or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework considered as a whole (paragraph 11 d).
- 4.6 Paragraph 12 of the Framework states that ***‘The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including***

any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed’.

Plan and Decision Making

- 4.7 Paragraph 34 requires local plans and spatial development strategies to be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary. In particular, ***‘Relevant strategic policies will need updating at least once every five years if their applicable local housing need figure has changed significantly; and they are likely to require earlier review if local housing need is expected to change significantly in the future’.***
- 4.8 In terms of decision-making, the Framework states at paragraph 39 that ‘Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will

improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible’.

Rural Economy

- 4.9 Paragraph 88 supports sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed beautiful new buildings; development and diversification of agricultural businesses; sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments; and, the retention of accessible local services such as local shops.
- 4.10 Paragraph 89 goes on to acknowledge that sites may be found beyond existing settlements and in locations not well served by public transport and goes on to note in these circumstances it is important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to improve the scope for access by more sustainable modes. The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, are also encouraged by this paragraph.

Highways and Car Parking

- 4.11 Paragraph 109 requires transport issues to be considered at the early stages of plan-making and development proposals. This is to ensure that (inter alia) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed.
- 4.12 Paragraph 112 states that if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account the accessibility of the development, its type, mix and use, the availability of land and opportunities for public transport, local car ownership levels and the need to ensure that adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles. Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport.
- 4.13 Paragraph 116 makes it clear that ‘Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable ***impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe***’.

Design

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

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

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

Climate Change

- 4.17 Paragraph 161 requires the planning system to support the transit to a low carbon future and to taking into account flood risk. Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (paragraph 159). Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate (paragraph 175).

Countryside

- 4.18 Paragraph 187 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural local environment by (inter alia) ***'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside....'***.
- 4.19 Paragraph 189 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and notes that the scale and extent of development within them should be limited.

Biodiversity and Valued Landscapes

- 4.20 Paragraph 187 states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, minimising impacts on and providing net gains in biodiversity.
- 4.21 Paragraph 189 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscapes and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty noting that the scale of development should be limited.

- 4.22 Paragraph 198 states that planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment.

Heritage

- 4.23 Paragraph 207 requires that when determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Whilst paragraph 205 requires Local Planning Authorities to identify and assess the significance, including by development affecting the setting of the asset.
- 4.24 Paragraph 212 states that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation when considering the impacts on its significance. Whilst paragraph 213 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset is identified, including from development within its setting, convincing justification is required.

- 4.25 Paragraph 215 sets out the test to be applied where less than substantial harm is identified and states that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 4.26 Paragraph 216 requires consideration of the impact of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, where any direct or indirect harm is identified a balanced judgement is required having regard to the scale of harm and the significance of the asset.
- 4.27 Paragraph 219 states that where proposals preserve the elements of the setting of a heritage asset that make a positive contribution to the asset or which better reveals its significance, they should be treated favourably.

Local Planning Policy

- 4.28 Local planning policy is set out in the Horsham District Planning Framework which took effect November 2015. The plan is currently under review and at the time of drafting is going through public examination. The review is at an advanced stage, but the adopted Plan still carries full weight. Local planning policy is contained within the **Horsham District**

Planning Framework, November 2015 (HDPF). The following policies are relevant to the proposal:

- 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 7: Economic Growth
- Policy 10: Rural Economic Development
- Policy 24: Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
- Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 26: Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
- Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33: Development Principles
- Policy 34: Cultural and Heritage Assets
- Policy 35: Climate Change
- Policy 36: Appropriate Energy Use
- Policy 37: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy 40: Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41: Parking

- 4.29 Policy 1: Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development – states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF. As such, planning applications that accord with the policies in the new Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date, the Council will grant planning permission, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.30 Policy 2: Strategic Policy: Strategic Development – development will be focused in and around the key settlement of Horsham and in accordance with the identified settlement hierarchy in the District. The policy encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield).
- 4.31 Policy 3: Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy – states that development will be permitted within the towns and villages which have defined built-up area areas. The policy sets out a settlement hierarchy.
- 4.32 Policy 4: Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion – the growth of settlements across the District will be supported (subject to criteria) in order to meet identified local housing, employment and community needs.
- 4.33 Policy 7: Economic Growth – supports sustainable employment development in the district, including specific support for redevelopment, regeneration, intensification and smart growth of existing employment sites.
- 4.34 Policy 10: Rural Economic Development – encourages sustainable rural economic development and enterprise in order to generate local employment opportunities and economic, social and environmental benefits for local communities.
- 4.35 Policy 24: Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection – the high quality of the District’s environment will be protected through the planning process.

- 4.36 Policy 25: Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character – the natural environment and landscape character of the District will be protected against inappropriate development.
- 4.37 Policy 26: Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection – outside the built-up area boundaries the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any development must be essential to the countryside location and meet certain criteria, including enabling sustainable development of rural areas. In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location and should not lead to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside.
- 4.38 Policy 30: Protected Landscapes – seeks to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and enjoyment of the South Downs National Park.
- 4.39 Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity – sets out that development is supported where it can demonstrate it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure, creation and management of new habitats and protects against the loss of protected trees, requiring suitable replacement planting where loss is necessary. Any loss of biodiversity is required to be appropriately mitigated and compensated.
- 4.40 Policy 32: The Quality of New Development – requires a high quality and inclusive design for all developments within the District. Development should (inter alia) be attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable. Development should also contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and surrounding spaces.
- 4.41 Policy 33: Development Principles – sets out criteria for new development to comply with. This includes (inter alia) making efficient use of land, prioritising previously developed land, ensuring no harm will result to the amenities of occupiers/users of nearby properties and by ensuring that the scale, massing and appearance of development is a high standard of design. High standard of building materials, finishes and landscaping should also be included.

- 4.42 Policy 34: Cultural and Heritage Assets – seeks to sustain and enhance the historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets.
- 4.43 Policy 35: Climate Change - Development will be supported where it will make a clear contribution to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change and to meeting the District's carbon reduction targets. Development must be designed so that it can adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- 4.44 Policy 36: Appropriate Energy Use – All development will be required to contribute to clean, efficient energy.
- 4.45 Policy 37: Sustainable Design and Construction – Proposals must seek to improve the sustainability of development. To deliver sustainable design, development should incorporate measures where appropriate according to the type of development and its location.
- 4.46 Policy 40: Sustainable Transport – development will be supported subject to criteria including the need for it to be located in areas where there are or will be a choice

in the modes of transport available and minimises the distance people need to travel.

- 4.47 Policy 41: Parking – adequate parking and facilities must be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users.

Emerging Planning Policy

- 4.48 Public Examination is underway on the Council's emerging Local Plan, however, the emerging Local Plan does not yet represent adopted policy. As such, and having regard to NPPF paragraph 49, the Council's emerging Local Plan carries some weight at this stage. The following draft policies are noted below as being relevant to the planning application:

- 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 11: Environmental Protection
- Policy 14: Countryside Protection

- 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 24: Sustainable Transport
- Policy 25: Parking
- Policy 30: Enhancing Existing Employment
- Policy 31 – Rural Economic Development

Neighbourhood Plan

4.49 Menzies Farm is located within the Parish of Billingshurst – the Neighbourhood Plan was made 23 June 2021. There are no policies which are considered directly relevant to the proposal.

Relevant Legislation

4.50 In considering the issue of the principle of the proposed development it is necessary to also consider the legal framework within which planning decisions are made. Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with

the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (as also confirmed at paragraph 2 of the NPPF).

4.51 Specifically, section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that in dealing with an application for planning permission (or permission in principle), the authority shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, including a post-examination draft neighbourhood development plan, any local finance considerations and any other material considerations (all so far as material to the application).

4.52 Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides:

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

4.53 When considering whether or not a proposed development accords with a development plan, it is not

necessary to say that it must accord with every policy within the development plan. The question is whether it accords overall with the development plan (see *Stratford on Avon v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* (2014)). Even if a proposal cannot be described as being in accordance with the development plan, the statutory test requires that a balance be struck against other material considerations.

- 4.54 The Courts have emphasised that a planning authority is not obliged to strictly adhere to the development plan and should apply inherent flexibility (see *Cala Homes (South) Limited v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* (2011) and *Tesco Stores Ltd v Dundee City Council* (2012)).

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

“Under section 38(6) the members' task was not to decide whether, on an individual assessment of the proposal's compliance with the relevant policies, it

could be said to accord with each and every one of them. They had to establish whether the proposal was in accordance with the development plan as a whole. Once the relevant policies were correctly understood, which in my view they were, this was classically a matter of planning judgment for the council as planning decision-maker.”

- 4.56 Paragraph 3 of the NPPF confirms that the Framework should be read as a ‘whole’ and the Government’s Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) confirms that ***‘Conflicts between development plan policies adopted, approved or published at the same time must be considered in the light of all material considerations, including local priorities and needs, as guided by the National Planning Policy Framework’*** (paragraph 012 21b-012-20140306). The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and it is demonstrated that the proposal complies with this when considered against the relevant policies of the development plan and the Framework, on balance and when considered as a whole.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY APPRAISAL: USE, AMOUNT & SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT

Principle of Development

- 5.1 In this respect, paragraph 85 of the NPPF states that ***‘Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.’***
- 5.2 Paragraph 88 requires planning policies and decisions to enable ***‘the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings’***. It also supports the development and diversification of not only agriculture but also other land-based rural businesses.
- 5.3 The proposal is seeking to secure full planning permission for development as previously approved by hybrid application DM/18/0661 as amended by Appeal
- (APP/Z3825/W/19/3240255) involving demolition of three existing buildings and enclosing and refurbishment of one other along with erection of three new buildings to facilitate continued operation of the long standing and successful light industrial and distribution business (Use class E(g)(iii) and B8).
- 5.4 Universal Trailer (UT) was set up in 1982 and are one of the largest trailer distributors in the UK; planning permission was granted on the site in 1999 for B1 and B8 use. The business has been operating successfully from the site for many years, and more recently demand for their services has increase, helped by changes in legislation and insurance requiring owners to maintain their trailers in a good roadworthy condition, as well as growth in the export market to mainland Europe, New Zealand, the Middle East and South Korea.
- 5.5 The company offer a wide arrange of specialist services; maintenance and servicing, as well as an array of bespoke commissions to modify, convert and upcycle discarded trailers/ vehicles for other commercial purposes including mobile bars and pizza ovens. The company also undertake modifications to existing models/ vehicles and build new trailers from scratch.

- 5.6 Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) Policy 7 (Economic Growth) sets out overarching support for sustainable employment development, including redevelopment, regeneration, intensification and smart growth of existing employment sites. Whilst Policy 10 (Rural Economic Development) more specifically supports sustainable rural economic development and enterprise in order to generate local employment opportunities. The policy supports development which maintains the quality and character of the area, whilst sustaining its varied and productive economic activity.
- 5.7 Proposals are required to contribute to the wider rural economy and be contained wherever possible within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion or within the existing boundaries of the estate. Where new buildings are proposed, the result should be substantial environmental improvement and reduction in the impact on the countryside. Car parking is also required to be accommodated satisfactorily, which will be addressed later in this Statement.
- 5.8 Policy 26 (Countryside Protection) supports development that is essential to a countryside location where it would enable sustainable development of rural areas and where they are of a scale that is appropriate to its countryside character location.
- 5.9 The proposal, much like the recently approved hybrid application (DM/18/0661), seeks to both re-use an existing building and to demolish three existing buildings and erect replacements elsewhere within the site. The existing buildings have been in use for many years however are no fit for purpose. The site has been the subject of enforcement investigation and the lack of suitable buildings/ noise attenuation has led the applicant to seek to upgrade the premises to provide fit for purpose buildings to house their operations and reduce the impacts on their neighbours and improve the visual aesthetic.
- 5.10 Thus, the proposal will not only facilitate improved working conditions, but the retained building which sits furthest away from neighbouring properties, will be enclosed thus reducing noise disturbance and the proposed replacement buildings will be sited further away from the nearest neighbouring dwellings thus resulting in improved amenity impacts overall. The buildings will represent a notable improvement in terms of visual amenity as well and overall the development will be of an appropriate scale for the location and character of the area.
- 5.11 The proposal is in line with the previous outline permission which approved access and layout and indicated floor area and

was found acceptable by the Council. The Committee report noted specifically in relation to demonstrating an environmental improvement, as required by Policy 10, that the proposals would involve the removal of dilapidated buildings in a poor state of repair which are considered to be detrimental to the location. The new buildings were described as appearing more in keeping with the countryside location, utilising agricultural barn style design. The officer also noted that, although only at outline stage, the new buildings would serve to maintain and enhance the character of the area.

- 5.12 In respect of Policy 26, the officer notes that the proposal would enhance the established commercial site as well as the surrounding area and would ensure better containment of the current activities. As per the previous approval, the proposal would not result in a marked increase in in the overall level of activity on site and there is no proposal to carry out any retail sales from the site, pre-sales and collection would remain ancillary to the main operations and any collections would be by appointment.
- 5.13 In summary, the proposal is supported by the NPPF and at a local level, both the framework and the local plan place significant weight on the need to support economic growth and

expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, including through diversification, re-use of existing buildings and appropriately scaled and design new/ replacement buildings. The proposal will protect the character and enjoyment of the countryside, resulting in improved visual amenity and reduction in impacts on neighbouring amenity. The development will support a long established successful local business, allowing them to continue their operations whilst reducing any impacts on their surrounding environs.

6.0 LAYOUT, DESIGN AND APPEARANCE

Design and Appearance

- 6.1 The NPPF sets out that the Government consider the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning process should achieve, and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development (paragraph 131). The importance of good design has been further emphasised in the most recent version of the NPPF along with a move to encourage local authorities to produce design policies, guidance and codes to support development within their area (paragraphs 132 and 134).
- 6.2 At a local level, Policy 25 (The Natural Environment and Landscape Character), Policy 32 (The Quality of New Development) and Policy 33 (Development Principles) set out in the development plan provide the framework for design considerations and set out the key criteria against which new development must be judged.
- 6.3 The previous application was hybrid and did not therefore include all the detail regarding the design of the proposed new buildings. The plans did however indicate the siting and footprint of the buildings which are very similar to the current proposal. The Committee report notes that the proposed buildings would be sited some 117m from the public highway with extensive mature soft landscaping retained along the boundaries of the site and as such, the proposed buildings would not be visible from a public vantage point from Okehurst Lane.
- 6.4 The report also noted the existing poor state of repair and positioning of the existing buildings which are proposed to be removed and conclude that the proposed buildings and enclosure of the existing barn would serve to enhance the site and would not cause harm to the character and visual amenities of the street scene. In addition, the proposed open storage area is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the landscape character given the existing boundary treatments, particularly when compared to the existing level of external storage.
- 6.5 As a detailed proposal, full elevational details are provided in support of the current application which indicates that the proposed refurbished barn and proposed new build barn will match in footprint and external appearance. Each will have a simple typical agricultural/ rural design, with a shallow dual

pitched roof and elevations clad with green insulated cladding panels. The new build barn will have a total of ten rooflights on either side of the roof slopes and below them five matching roller shutter doors are proposed to access the interior bays. The proposed refurbished building will have a slightly different configuration with three roller shutter doors on the main elevation with roller doors at both ends.

- 6.6 In addition, to the barn a new office building is proposed which has a simple form and low single storey form with low eaves and central projecting wing.
- 6.7 As per the council's previous conclusions, the proposed development will be pulled further away from the nearest neighbouring property where currently the unsightly buildings which are in a poor state of repair will be demolished and the new buildings located within the centre of the site. The existing dense boundary treatment will be retained, and new landscape planting is proposed where the buildings are proposed to be demolished. The proposal will therefore enhance the landscape character, avoiding any loss of existing green infrastructure and delivering a well designed and appropriate development which respects both the natural and built environment within which it will sit.

Heritage

- 6.8 At a national level legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 and 66 of the Act place a duty on the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their setting. Whilst section 72 places a similar duty on the decision maker regarding preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas, however this does not extend to their setting.
- 6.9 Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places a duty on the Local Planning Authority to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal. The effects need to be assessed against four components of its heritage significance, namely; its archaeological, architectural and artistic and historic interests.
- 6.10 Paragraphs 214 and 215 of the Framework describes two levels of potential harm that can be caused to the significance of an asset; substantial harm and less than substantial harm and describes how weighting should be applied in the planning

balance. Paragraph 216 deals with less than substantial harm and notes that such harm should be weighed against public benefits associated with the proposal.

- 6.11 At a local level, Policy 34 sets out that the Council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development effecting heritage assets.
- 6.12 There are no heritage assets on or immediately adjacent to the site. The closest designated heritage asset is the property known as Minstrels Wood which is located south east of the application site, in addition to the west of the site is Copped Hall which is also a Grade II listed building. Minstrels is the closest of the two, however at some 300m away, the proposal would not have any negative or harmful impact on the setting of either this asset or Copped Hall which is even further from the site.
- 6.13 The Council's Conservation Officer commented on the previous approval and raised no objection, noting that the proposal would serve to enhance the site, given the current state of repair of the existing buildings. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in terms of heritage impacts.

Residential Amenity

- 6.14 Local Plan Policy 33 supports development where it does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of nearby/ neighbouring properties. As noted above and in the Council's committee report for DM/18/0661, the proposal would involve demolishing the existing buildings which are not fit for purpose and which have no soundproofing/ are open sided, which are located on the boundary with the nearest neighbours and will facilitate erection of new purpose built structures further away and with appropriate sound attenuation.
- 6.15 The existing site and buildings are in a poor state of repair and untidy in places, the applicant is fully committed to tidying up the site and securing permission for fit for purpose buildings will help facilitate this aspiration. In terms of conditions, it should be noted that a number of more restrictive conditions were placed on the original permission however following a successful appeal a number were deemed unnecessary/ were varied. The applicant is content for the set of conditions imposed by the Inspector to be reimposed on this development proposal. With the imposition of necessary conditions, the proposal would result in a notable improvement of the current use of the site in both visual and amenity terms.

Biodiversity

- 6.16 Paragraph 192 requires the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity. Paragraph 193 states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should avoid significant harm to biodiversity which should be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for. Development should not result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists. In addition, under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted in England, bar a few exemptions, are required to deliver 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) through the development, preferably on site but off-site improvements can also be sought in certain circumstances. BNG is measured using Defra's biodiversity metric and all off-site and significant on-site habitats will need to be secured for at least 30 years.
- 6.17 At a local level, HDPF policy 31 (Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity) sets out support for development where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances existing green infrastructure and requires development to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity.
- 6.18 The application site is not located within or close to a designated site of nature conservation importance and the buildings are well maintained with no obvious missing tiles or vegetation that could accommodate any protected species of animal such as bats and with no openings to support access into the buildings. Any works or demolition would however be undertaken with a precautionary approach to ensure if any protected species were found, advice from a qualified ecologist would be sought to ensure the appropriate measures are undertaken in order to meet the requirements of the Countryside and Wildlife Act.
- 6.19 In terms of biodiversity net gain, the application is exempt on the basis that the application site is predominantly hard surfaced and the proposed new buildings will be fully contained within the hard surfacing and the adjacent vegetation and trees will be fully protected. The development therefore falls under the de minimis exemption category where less than 25m² of on-site habitat and/ or 5 metres of on-site linear habitats will be impacted. In addition, the development does not impact a priority habitat.

6.20 The application is however supported by an Ecological Appraisal Report which assesses the ecological value of the site and sets out the potential impacts of the proposed development. The report concludes that although the survey work identified a number of potential ecological constraints, with appropriate mitigation, as detailed in the report, there would be no residual impacts. The applicant is content for appropriate conditions to be applied in this regard.

Water Neutrality

- 6.21 The application site is located within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone where Natural England have raised concerns about ground water abstraction on a number of designated sites – including the Amberley Wild Brooks Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Pulborough Brooks SSSI. These form part of the Arun Valley Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Conservation Area (SAC) and Ramsar Site. As a result of existing conditions on these sites, any further development which requires an increase in water abstraction would be likely to have an adverse impact on the European sites.
- 6.22 The current application is supported by a Water Neutrality Report which follows the Waterwise neutrality definition of the three steps which should be taken in order to achieve water

neutrality (2021). The report demonstrates how the development would remain water neutral by utilising various methods to reduce water consumption, including through rainwater harvesting with on-site tanks which will reduce the overall demand down to match the water demand on the existing site, making the site water neutral and thus raising no issues in relation to the abstraction sites.

Flood risk and Drainage

- 6.23 Policy 38 (Flooding) sets out the requirement for development proposals to follow a sequential approach, prioritising development sites with the lowest risk of flooding and making required development safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. The policy also sets out a requirement to incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDDS) where feasible to address potential increases in flood risk.
- 6.24 Southern Water commented on the previous application (DC/18/0661) and noted that there is no public sewer in the vicinity of the site and that alternative means of foul sewage disposal should be sought. A condition was imposed on the approval to seek foul and surface water disposal details which was disputed by the applicant at appeal (APP/Z3825/W/19/3240255).

- 6.25 The Inspector noted that the existing site had a 'relatively permeable surface' which would be maintained and repaired as part of the proposal but on the basis that the floor area of the new buildings would only be c.9sqm larger and there would be no significant increase in impermeable surfacing and would not therefore result in significant increase in surface water as a result. As such, it was concluded that no additional surface water drainage provision would be necessary.
- 6.26 In relation to foul drainage, the Inspector noted that the applicant intended to rely on the 'existing, unspecified provision' but that the proposal did not result in any increase in employees and the Inspector considered there to be no evidence to suggest that further capacity or additional provision would be needed and concluded that the condition was not reasonable or necessary.
- 6.27 The current application is however supported by a drainage report and strategy which sets out that in respect of surface water will discharge to a culverted watercourse via a connection in an existing drainage network on site. The surface water discharge is to be restricted to 2.0l/s and the network will make use of a geocellular attenuation tank in order to cater for the 1

in 100-year +45% storm. In respect of Foul water, it is intended to be treated on site prior to discharging into the culverted watercourse via a new connection into an existing drainage system on site. As such, the proposal fully demonstrates that the proposal would be not give rise to increased risk of flooding either on site or in the vicinity of the site.

7.0 ACCESS AND CAR PARKING PROVISION

- 7.1 The NPPF sets out at paragraph 116 that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 7.2 HDPF Policies 40 (Sustainable Transport) and 41 (Parking) seek to ensure that proposals incorporate safe and adequate means of access and that there is appropriate car parking provision.
- 7.3 The previous approval was supported by additional information and clarification on highway matters in response to requests from West Sussex County Council Highway Authority (WSCC HA). The current application is supported by a Transport Statement which sets out that the proposed development will continue to utilise the existing access into the site which has operated without incident for over 30 years, including more intensively by previous occupiers. The proposal will facilitate improved accommodation on site but over similar floor areas and will not lead to a material change in operations to current

and no retail sales are proposed on site. The type and amount of traffic using the access and Okehurst Lane therefore will not alter. The report concludes that as the proposal will create a modes 9sqm uplift in floor area, it is highly unlikely that the trip generation for the site will increase. The business will continue to operate with three employees and will generate approximately twelve two-way movements across the working day, with client appointments to be booked in advance only and as such, there should be no reason to reject the development on transport grounds.

- 7.4 It should be noted however that although the HA were not fully satisfied that the access was sufficient and had originally requested details and upgrades by condition, the Inspector found that there is unlikely to be a significant increase in the number of vehicles using the access *and '...while it would be desirable to improve visibility splays, it has not been demonstrated that such works are necessary for the proposed use to operate without unacceptable harm to highway safety. The proposal without the condition would therefore maintain the existing situations and would provide safe and suitable access.'*
- 7.5 The Transport statement sets out that the development will also be fully compliant with parking standards for both cycles and

cars with 6 cycle spaces available within the workshop barns and 22 car parking spaces on the existing hardstanding.

- 7.6 As such, the condition was deleted and it is respectfully anticipated that any subsequent approval of the current proposal would not seek to reimpose any such unnecessary condition. The proposal would meet the requirements of HDPF Policy 40 and the provisions of the Framework in this regard.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing workshop, barn and offices with replacement buildings and creation of open storage along with the continuation of uses on the site falling within use classes E(g)(iii) and B8, involving various activities associated with repair and maintenance of trailers, ancillary equipment, motorhomes and horse boxes. The development will facilitate the continued operation of a successful long established business, improving working conditions, visual and neighbouring amenity.
- 8.2 The proposal is in line with the previous outline permission for which the committee report highlighted the environmental improvement as a result of the development. the proposal is supported by the NPPF and at a local level, both the framework and the local plan place significant weight on the need to support economic growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, including through diversification, re-use of existing buildings and appropriately scaled and design new/ replacement buildings. The proposal will protect the character and enjoyment of the countryside, resulting in improved visual amenity and reduction in impacts on neighbouring amenity.
- 8.3 The development is well screened from outside the site by the retained vegetation which lines the boundaries. Where visible, the development represents a significant improvement over the currently site and will therefore enhance the landscape character and will have no adverse impact on any nearby heritage asset. The development is exempt from requiring BNG and has demonstrated it will be water neutral.
- 8.4 It is requested, should the application be permitted, conditions to protect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers in terms of acoustics, outdoor working and HGV sizes be attached to the permission. These conditions should reflect the previous application and appeal decisions.
- 8.5 The proposal complies with the elements of sustainable development, fully accords with the requirements of the NPPF and local development plan and relevant guidance in all respects. There are no adverse impacts associated with granting planning permission and listed building consent that would outweigh the benefits associated with the proposal.