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Horsham District Council
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25 March 2025
Ref: RH/Let/P1882

Dear Sir/Madam

Application under Regulation 77 of the Conservation of Habitats Species Regulations 2017, Prior Notification Application – Agricultural Buildings at Land at Moatfield Farm, Kings Lane, Cowfold, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 8BD

We are writing on behalf of our client, Mr Toby Chapman, in support of an application pursuant to Regulation 77 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This application relates to a Prior Notification application at the above site, which was submitted to Horsham District Council on 26th February 2025 and has the planning portal reference number PP-13810378. It has been assigned planning application reference **DC/25/0307.**

The prior approval application is for the conversion of two agricultural buildings into two dwellings (Use Class C3) under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q, of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

In September 2021, Natural England published a Position Statement highlighting how water abstraction is having a negative impact on important wildlife sites. Horsham District's water supply comes from the Sussex North Water Supply Zone, which has many abstraction points located within the Arun Valley. In order to protect sites within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone, such as the Arun Valley Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar site, new development is required to be 'water neutral'.

Legislative Background

Regulation 75 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 states that any permission granted by the General Permitted Development Order that is likely to have a significant impact upon a European site must not be begun until approval has been received from the local planning authority under regulation 77 of the same document.

Regulation 77 states that an application to the local planning authority, as mentioned in Regulation 75, must give details of the development which is intended to be carried out and be accompanied by a copy of any relevant notification by the appropriate nature conservation body under regulation 76.

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The local planning authority must then send a copy of the application to Natural England and take into account any representations made by them. The authority must then make an appropriate assessment of the effects the development may have on the European site, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

Following this, the planning authority may allow the commencement of development if it has been ascertained that the proposed development will not adversely impact upon the European site in question

Development

The proposal relates to the change of use of two existing agricultural buildings and the land within their curtilage into 2 dwellinghouses.

The smaller building to the south would be converted into a single residential dwelling with a floorspace of some 90m^2.

The larger building to the north would be converted into a single dwelling with a floorspace of some 405m^2.

Water Neutrality

A water neutrality statement is submitted with this Regulation 77 Application. It sets out the existing baseline water demand which comes exclusively from between 45 and 50 dairy cattle which are sheltered in the buildings. The water demand at the site is recorded by meter.

The statement further considers the future water demand of the proposed dwellings and the water consumption reduction measures which would be put in place as part of the change of use.

It also sets out offsetting measures which include the provision of rainwater harvesting tanks which will be used to provide drinking water for the cattle after the development is complete. The statement demonstrates that the development will be water neutral. **A unilateral undertaking will be provided to secure the necessary water reduction and offset measures.**

The development subject to this application will therefore be water neutral and will not have an undesired impact on the integrity of the Arun Valley SPA, SAC and Ramsar site. The submission of this application will therefore meet the necessary requirements set out by Regulation 76 and 77 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

If you have any further queries or require further information, please contact me on 01903 248777.

Yours sincerely
ECE Planning



Chris Barker MATP MRTPI
Managing Director