

Horsham DC
Parkside
Chart Way
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RLDate: 13/7/2026
Our Ref: ATP/Ford
Your Ref: **PP-15004859**

To whom it may concern,

PP-15004859**Change of use from a farm building to B8 storage (retrospective) at Ford Farm, Ford Lane, Ashurst, BN44 3AT**

This short Planning Statement is to accompany the above planning application at Ford Farm.

It is intended to provide a short overview of the facts in this case as well as introduce the merits of the proposal placed before the LPA. It is considered proportionate to the nature of application lodged which is effectively to regularise an arrangement and use of some of the buildings at the site for storage.

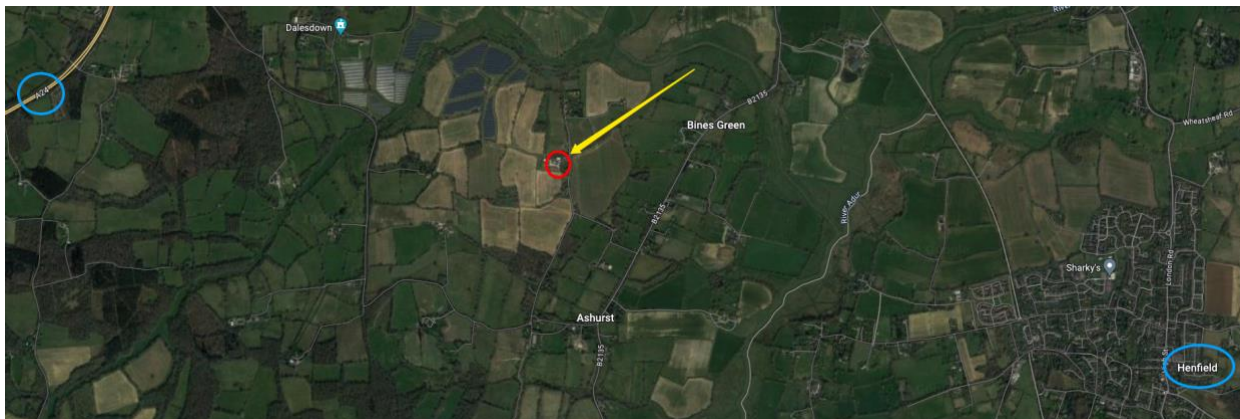
Site

The wider site is an array of mostly farm buildings with alternative uses peppered within the wider farm area.



The site located north-west of Henfield, south-west of Partridge Green within otherwise open countryside which has experienced immense change in recent years. The aerial shot shows solar

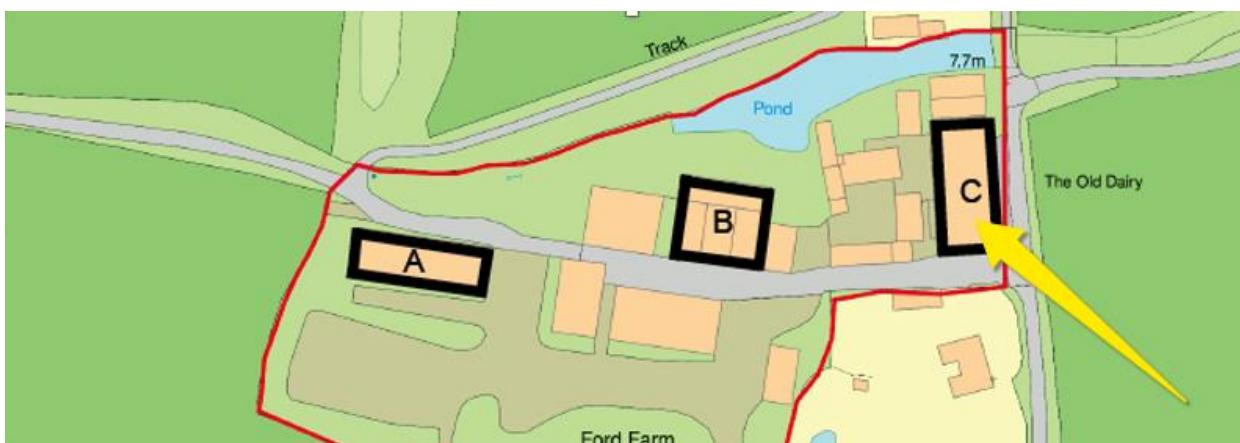
farms nearby to the north-west and the farm buildings sit within a wider agricultural holding that has embraced re-wilding since....



The application site is a little over one hectare in size but forms part of an existing holding and comprises 41 hectares of land used for grazing but also for rewilding.

The Application Buildings

This application relates exclusively to Building C as shown below and is lodged at the request of Madelaine Hartley of Horsham DC.



The following photographs were taken during a site visit held on 8th December:

Building C is part used for furniture storage and part used to serve as storage for a retail premises.



Access

It is understood that the nearest 'adopted' public roadway is the corner of Church Lane and Golden Lane – Ford Lane is thought to be a private road albeit this connects a bridleway which runs through the site. The turning off to Ford Lane is shown below:



In a recent planning appeal at the site following refusal of planning permission DC/24/0180, which related to all three buildings, the issue of access was not contested – not a reason for refusal or dismissal.

Intensity of Use and Amenity

The frequency and intensity of use is low with a consequential lack of impact on amenity of any nearby residents and no significant issue. This position is further endorsed in the most recent planning history and at the appeal following refusal of planning permission DC/24/0180 which related to all three buildings.

The Development Plan

Applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan along with national guidance and practice. The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) is of relevance at a strategic level and more locally the Horsham District Planning Framework applies.

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development

Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development

Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy

Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development

Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection

Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection

Policy 33 - Development Principles

Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport

Policy 41 - Parking

Relevant Planning History

With regards the 'online' planning history to following has been flagged which are not 'all' on the application site but they are relevant cases and nearby.

- [DC/05/2938](#) Change of use of an existing building to single dwelling (permitted)
- [AH/10/03](#) Change of use/conversion of buildings to 3 residential units (withdrawn)
- [AH/15/01](#) Change of use to B8 (permitted 24th May 2002)
- [AH/9/98](#) Non-compliance with condition 2 on ah/12/95 relating to provision of parking spaces (refused)
- [AH/7/98](#) Replacement of flat roof area with pitched roof (permitted)
- [AH/12/97](#) Change of use and alterations to existing stable/agricultural building to b1 office use (permitted)
- [AH/12/95](#) Change of use of farm buildings to class b1 office use and enclosed car parking (permitted)
- [DC24/0180](#) Change of use from 3 farm buildings to B8 storage (Retrospective).

This last application is of the greatest relevance and was refused, in relation to all three buildings, on the following singular ground.

“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 (2021), thus the Local Planning Authority is unable to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).”

Principle of Development

The application proposals are retrospective with some history of use going back more than ten years with regards Buildings A and B of the most recent refusal. The LPA have invited an application with regards to Building C following a change in position regarding the earlier refusal.

It is clear that the appeal history does not seek to resist the principle of the use other than with regards to the matter of water neutrality.

Water Neutrality

On 31 October 2025, Natural England issued a [Withdrawal Statement](#) confirming that its Water Neutrality Position Statement of September 2021 has been withdrawn.

This follows agreement between Natural England, Southern Water and the Environment Agency that a reduction in the licence cap on water abstraction will ensure with sufficient certainty that development will not adversely impact the protected Arun Valley habitats. This is the primary element of interest to local authorities in making decisions regarding relevant plans or projects, as it removes the connection between abstraction and growth.

For applicants this means that:

1. No water neutrality statement is now required;
2. No payment into SNWCS is needed to use the Southern Water capacity referred to above;
3. No bespoke conditions or s106 obligations are required to demonstrate water neutrality.

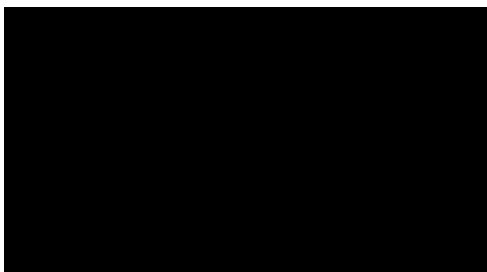
It is effectively a change in practice that addresses the sole reason for refusal from before and the sole material consideration at the dismissed appeal.

Conclusions

It is hoped that the LPA will continue to agree that the use is not giving rise to any amenity impacts, the use of the site for storage has no impact on the appearance of the open countryside given the use is wholly contained within existing buildings and is a low traffic generator.

Please do contact me if any further information is considered necessary to accompany the application if is you have any additional queries or questions.

Yours sincerely



Absolute Town Planning Ltd