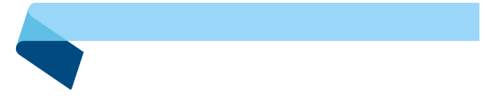


Batcheller Monkhouse



Planning, Design & Access Statement

Demolition of redundant agricultural buildings and the
erection of two dwellings; change of use of land from
agricultural to residential gardens (as an alternative to two
dwellings granted Prior Approval under
DC/24/19831 and DC/25/0816)

at

Mill Farm
Mill Lane
Itchingfield
West Sussex
RH13 0NP

On Behalf of
Mr & Mrs Robinson

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March 2026



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Appendix A – Pre-Application Advice

1 INTRODUCTION

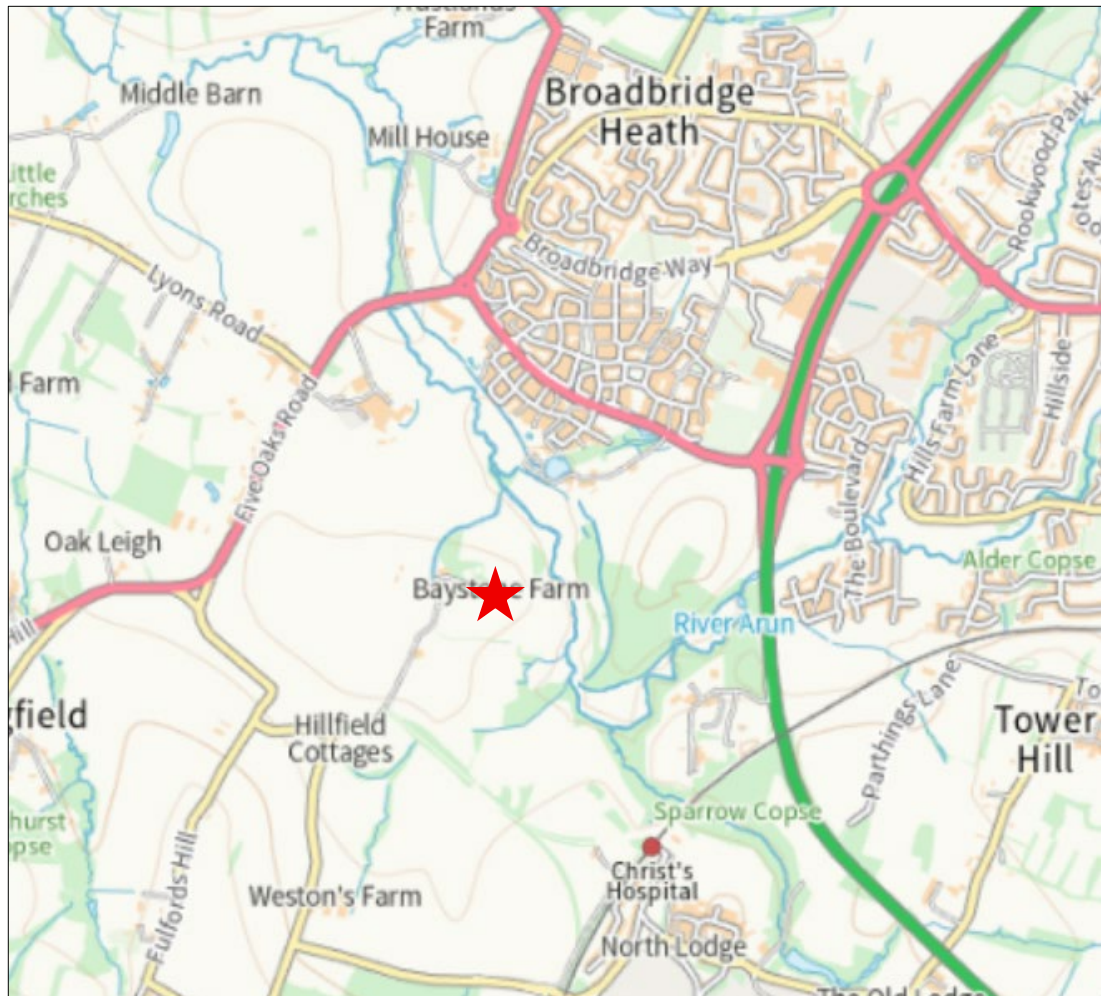
- 1.1 This Planning Statement relates to a proposal by Mr & Mrs Robinson to construct two dwellings on land at Mill Farm in Itchingfield. The scheme is presented as an alternative to two dwellings granted prior approval recently at the farm.
- 1.2 The proposed development comprises the demolition of two agricultural buildings, the erection of two dwellings and creation of associated parking areas and curtilages, and the repositioning of a field boundary. A small strip of agricultural land would also change use to form part of the new gardens.
- 1.3 Although the site lies outside the defined settlement boundary, it benefits from Prior Approval for two dwellings (under Class Q of the GPDO) and the scheme is presented as an alternative.
- 1.4 This report provides details of the site and proposed development together with an appraisal against all relevant planning policies.

2 APPLICATION SITE

2.1 Site Description

- 2.1.1 The site extends to 0.14 hectares and is located approximately 1.2km away from the main facilities of Broadbridge Heath.

Figure 2.1 – Site Location



- 2.1.2 The site comprises a hay barn and a storage/workshop building sited on a partially surfaced area of land. A field gate is located in between the two buildings and the site straddles the existing field boundary.

Figure 2.2 – Site Plan and Photographs



2.1.3 The buildings have a combined floor area of approximately 175sqm.

2.1.4 To the north and east of the site is the existing farmhouse and 'Green Barn' which is a recently constructed house granted consent under reference DC/23/0460. Photographs of both houses are shown in Figure 2.3 below.

Figure 2.3 – Photographs of existing dwellings at Mill Farm

Mill Farmhouse (rear elevation)



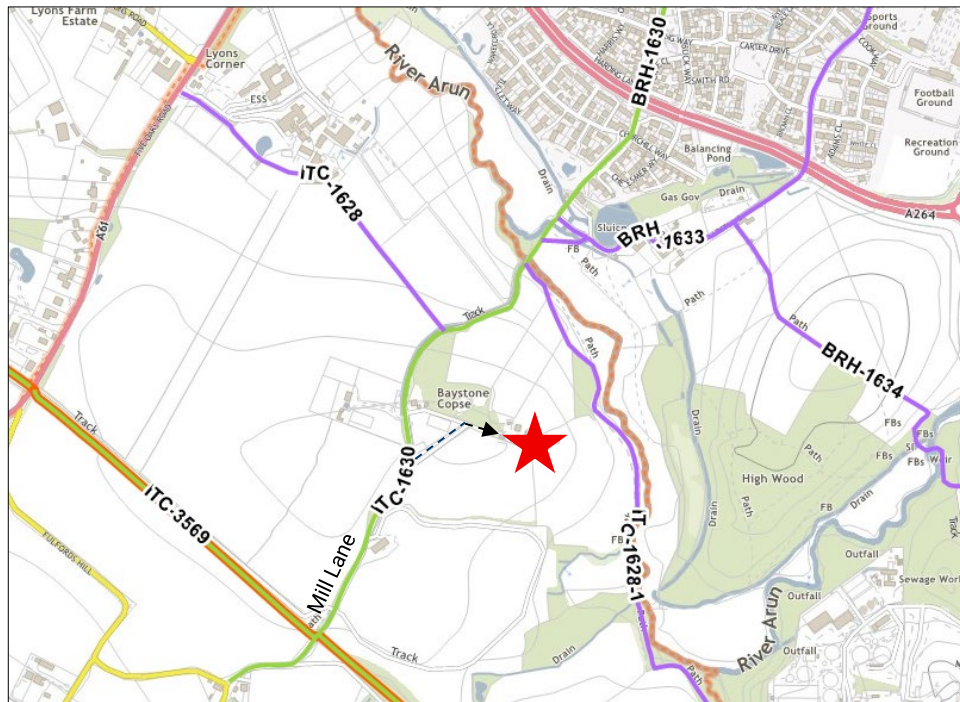
Green Barn (rear and side elevations)



2.2 Access and Rights of Way

- 2.2.1 Access is via an existing driveway leading from Mill Lane. The driveway serves the two existing dwellings.
- 2.2.2 The nearest public rights of way run along Mill Lane and the eastern boundary of the farm.

Figure 2.3 – Existing Access

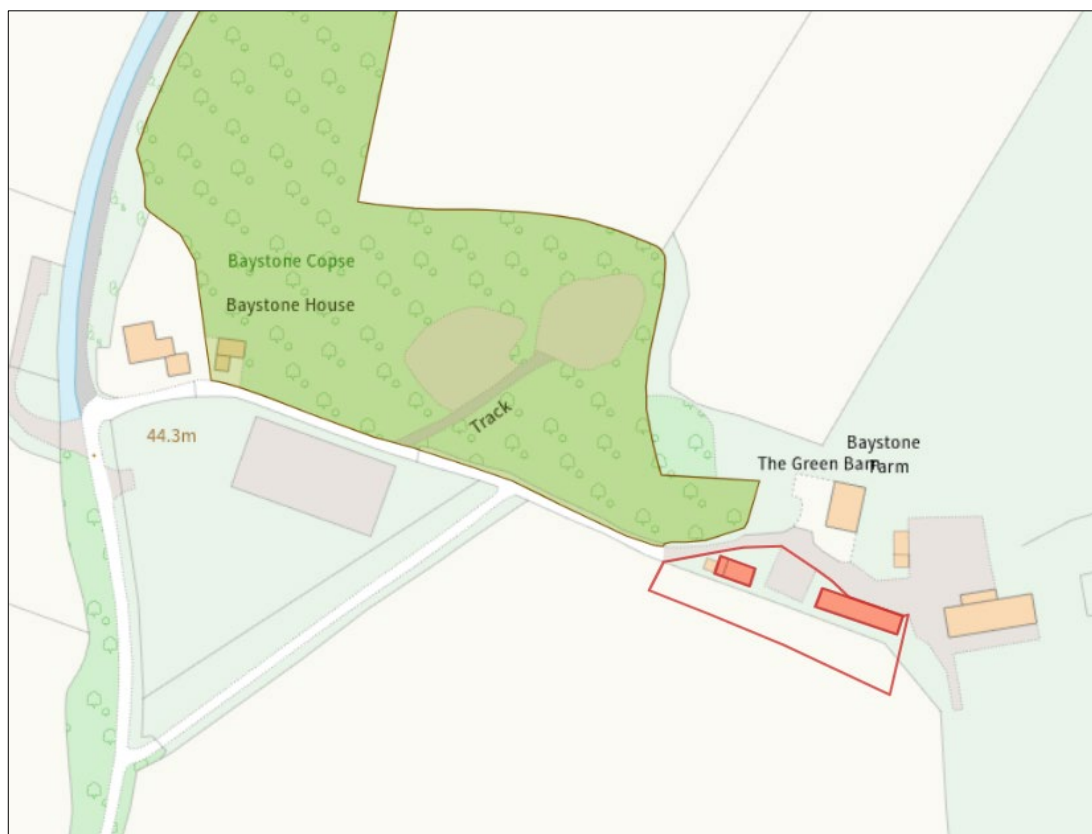


- 2.2.3 The nearest train station is at Christ's Hospital 2.8km away. Bus services operate on Weston's Hill 1km away.

2.3 Environmental Designations

- 2.3.1 The site is not subject to any statutory designations, although does lie within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone where water abstraction is considered to be giving rise to impacts on the Arun Valley designated sites.
- 2.3.2 There is an area of ancient woodland (Baystone Copse) to the north-west.
- 2.3.3 There are no listed buildings or conservation areas within close proximity of the site.

Figure 2.5 – Designations Map (Ancient Woodland shaded green)



3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 Planning Policy

- 3.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.1.2 The statutory Development Plan relevant to the site comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework (adopted 2015) and Barns Green & Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan (made 2025).
- 3.1.3 Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

3.2 Development Plan

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

- 3.2.1 The accompanying Policies Map identifies the site as lying within the countryside,

Figure 3.1 – Horsham District Planning Framework Policies Map



- 3.2.2 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 15: Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
- Policy 16: Meeting Local Housing Needs
- 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 35: Climate Change
- Policy 36: Appropriate Energy Use
- Policy 37: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy 40: Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41: Parking

3.2.3 Policy 1 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) requires the Council to take a positive approach when considering development proposals that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. 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.

3.2.4 Policy 2 states that development around the edges of existing settlements will be managed in order to prevent the merging of settlements and to protect the rural character and landscape. The provision of rural housing is supported where it will contribute towards the provision of affordable housing where there is a demonstrable need.

3.2.5 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 which defines Itchingfield as an unclassified settlement.

3.2.6 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.

- 3.2.7 Policy 15 supports settlement expansion where it is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type. The development should demonstrate that it meets the identified housing needs or will assist the retention and enhancement of community facilities and services.
- 3.2.8 Policy 16: Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs – development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of the district’s communities as evidenced in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment in order to create sustainable and balanced communities.
- 3.2.9 Policy 24 seeks to protect the high quality of the district’s environment. Developments will be expected to minimise emissions including noise, odour, air and light pollution, and ensure that they are appropriate to their location, taking account of ground conditions and land instability.
- 3.2.10 Policy 25 states that the Council will support development proposals which protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape character.
- 3.2.11 Policy 26 requires developments to be of a scale appropriate to the countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects and/or conserves and/or enhances the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located.
- 3.2.12 Policy 31 states that development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained.
- 3.2.13 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.
- 3.2.14 Policy 33 presumes in favour of the retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. Development must relate sympathetically to the local landscape and justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development. The proposed scale, massing and appearance of the development should be of a high standard of design and layout and where relevant should relate sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

- 3.2.15 Policy 35 supports development it makes a clear contribution to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change and to meeting the district's carbon reduction targets as set out in the Council's Acting Together on Climate Change Strategy, 2009.
- 3.2.16 Policy 36 requires development to contribute to clean, efficient energy.
- 3.2.17 Policy 37 relates to sustainable construction and states that all developments must be designed to encourage the use of natural lighting and ventilation. Measures which enhance the biodiversity value of a development should be incorporated. Satisfactory arrangements for the storage of refuse and recyclable materials should be an integral part of design.
- 3.2.18 Policy 38 relates to flooding and requires development o adapt to future climate change and avoid increasing the risk of flooding.
- 3.2.19 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.
- 3.2.20 Policy 41: Parking – adequate parking and facilities must be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users.

Itchingfield Neighbourhood Development Plan

- 3.2.21 Policy 1 requires development proposals to, where and as appropriate, incorporate measures that will conserve, maintain and/or enhance the green infrastructure of the parish.
- 3.2.22 Policy 2 requires proposals to protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity and ecology as appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the development proposal.
- 3.2.23 Policy 9A supports developments that facilitate the use of sustainable transport modes including walking, cycling, public transport and the use of electric vehicles.
- 3.2.24 Policy 11 relates to windfall development and supports housing proposals on unidentified sites within the built-up area boundary.
- 3.2.25 Policy 12 sets out design parameters for development proposals. Development will not be supported unless the character and design meets the following criteria:
 - 1. Be of high quality design and layout;
 - 2. Contribute positively to the private and public realm to create a sense of place;
 - 3. Respect the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;

4. Protect open spaces and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;
5. Protect the identity and character of Barns Green and Itchingfield;
6. Does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight and security;
7. Create safe, accessible and well connected environments
8. Protect existing landscape features and contributes to the parish's Green Infrastructure network;
9. Incorporate the use of local materials which are appropriate to the existing housing stock;
10. Positively respond to the local vernacular character of the parish.

3.2.26 Policy 13 requires development proposals to incorporate, where possible, electric car charging points, solar panels and solar heating panels/ground and air source heat systems.

3.2.27 Policy 14 supports the provision of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom houses.

3.2.28 Policy 15 seeks the provision of off-road visitor and residents parking.

3.3 Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (NPPF)

3.3.1 The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking (paragraph 11).

3.3.2 There are three dimensions to sustainable development: social, economic and environmental (paragraph 8). Residential developments play an important role in the provision of sustainable development with the delivery of high-quality homes in the right location contributing towards the social, economic and environmental health of the district.

3.3.3 Paragraph 11 states that development proposals which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless:

- The application of policies in the framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

- 3.3.4 Footnote 7 of the NPPF confirms that protected areas or assets include habitats sites and or sites designated as SSSIs, Green Belt, Local Green Space, National Landscapes, a designated heritage asset and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.
- 3.3.5 The above presumption applies in this case as the Horsham District Planning Framework is more than five years old and the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply. In such an instance, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with a neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits but only where the plan was made five years ago and contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement. In this instance the neighbourhood plan was made very recently and whilst it contains a windfall policy and allocations these are to meet a now out-of-date housing requirement.
- 3.3.6 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’.
- 3.3.7 Paragraph 61 states ‘To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay’.
- 3.3.8 Paragraph 72 requires planning policies to identify a sufficient supply and mix of housing sites including specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan period and specific, deliverable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6-10 and where possible, for years 11-15 of the plan.
- 3.3.9 Paragraph 73 sets out that ‘Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built out relatively quickly’.
- 3.3.10 Paragraph 78 requires strategic planning policies to include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period. It states that ‘Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide

a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old'.

- 3.3.11 Paragraph 83 states 'To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby'.
- 3.3.12 Paragraph 84 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 a farm business, 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 subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or
 - e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help 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'.
- 3.3.13 Paragraph 109 requires transport issues to be considered at the earliest 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.
- 3.3.14 Paragraph 110 acknowledges that 'opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making'.
- 3.3.15 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.

- 3.3.16 In assessing development proposals, paragraph 115 states that it should be ensured that there are appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes, that there is safe and suitable access to the site (for all road users) and that any significant impacts on the transport network or on highway safety terms can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
- 3.3.17 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'.
- 3.3.18 Paragraph 124 of the Framework states that 'Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions'.
- 3.3.19 Paragraph 125 encourages multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes.
- 3.3.20 Paragraph 125 confirms that planning policies and decisions should (inter alia) 'promote and support development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.
- 3.3.21 Paragraph 128 states that 'Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help meet identified development needs'.
- 3.3.22 In relation to design, Section 12 seeks to create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places, acknowledging that 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.
- 3.3.23 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.

3.3.24 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'.

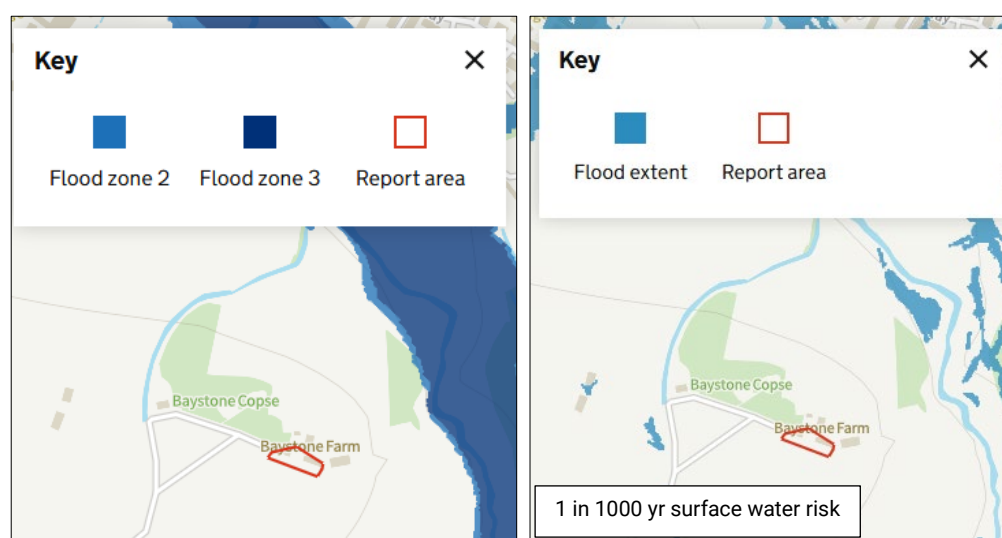
3.3.25 Paragraph 187 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural local environment by (inter alia) 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside....'.

3.3.26 Paragraph 192 requires the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity.

3.4 Environmental Constraints

3.4.1 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 with a low probability of flooding. The site is also at less-than-low risk of flooding from surface water up to a 1 in 100 year event. The pond at the rear of the site has a 1 in 1000 annual likelihood of flooding.

Figure 3.2 – Flood Maps for Planning



3.5 Planning History

3.5.1 The site has been the subject of a number of previous applications, most notably:

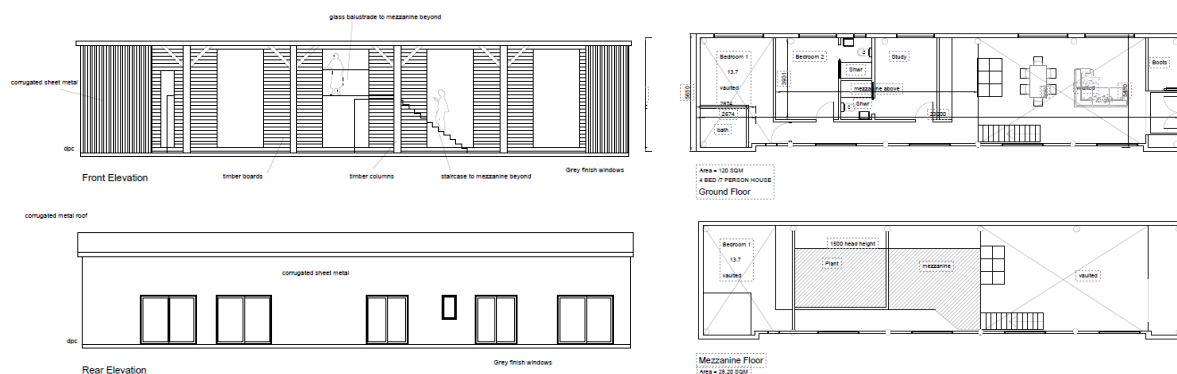
- DC/24/1831 – Prior Notification for change of use of agricultural building to single dwellinghouse
Prior Approval required and permitted 20th January 2025
- DC/25/0816 – Prior Notification for change of use of agricultural building to 1no. dwellinghouse (storage/workshop building)
Prior Approval required and permitted 8th July 2025

3.5.2 Pre-commencement conditions are attached to both prior approvals relating to contamination investigations which have not yet been discharged.

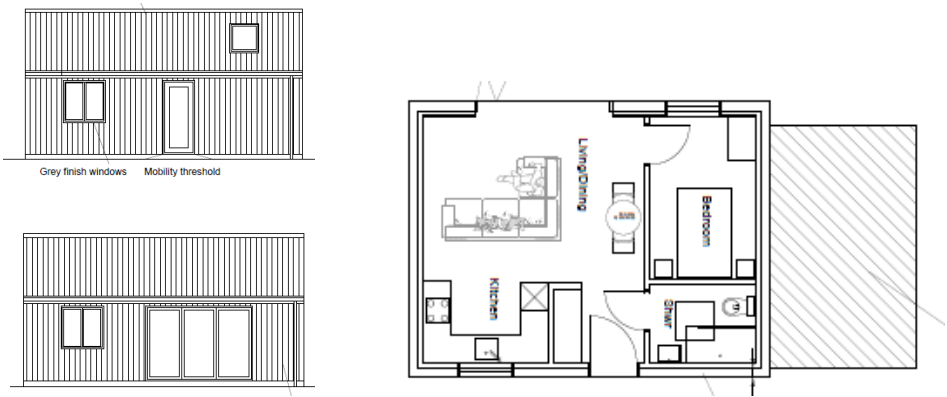
Figure 3.3 – Approved Plans



Hay Barn:



Storage/Workshop Building:



3.6 Pre-application advice

3.6.1 Pre-application advice was provided by Horsham District Council (ref PE/25/0199) regarding proposals for two new dwellings as an alternative to the above prior approval schemes.

Figure 3.4 – Pre-Application Plans



3.6.2 In summary the advice received confirmed the following:

- The site lies outside the built-up area boundary, where policies generally resist new residential development. Under Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF, the scheme is not acceptable in principle as it does not adjoin a settlement edge and does not meet criteria for essential countryside development.
- However, because the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the NPPF “tilted balance” applies. Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD) guidance may assist, but only where criteria such as adjacency to settlement edge and containment within defensible boundaries are met. Some criteria may be partially satisfied, but the proposal still requires a viable fallback to carry significant weight. The consented schemes would provide such a fallback once pre-commencement conditions have been discharged.
- In relation to designs for plot 1, the proposed height increase from 4.05m to 7.05m is excessive. The height should be reduced to a single or 1.5 storey building to better reflect the Class Q fallback and minimise impact.
- In relation to designs for plot 2, while the height increase is more modest, the design of the rear elevation is considered overly domestic, with extensive glazing that detracts from an agricultural character. A redesign of fenestration is recommended to achieve a more credible barn-conversion aesthetic.
- Overall, both dwellings would have a greater landscape impact than the Class Q conversions but could deliver higher architectural quality. Nonetheless, the scheme in its current form is unlikely to gain support without design revisions.
- No significant amenity impacts are identified, but details of boundary treatments and parking layout should accompany any application. Landscaping proposals (including hedgerows and field boundaries) will be needed to assess visual impact and integration with the rural setting.
- The development must demonstrate no harm to protected species and deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, supported by a BNG metric and ecological surveys.
- Water neutrality is a critical issue: all new development in the Sussex North Supply Zone must prove no increase in water consumption (NB – the water neutrality requirement has since been lifted).

3.6.3 A copy of the full pre-application response is provided at Appendix A.

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposals have been informed by the pre-application advice received from the Council and seek to respond positively to the comments made.
- 4.2 Whilst the existing buildings benefit from Class Q prior approval for conversion to residential use, the current proposal provides an opportunity to deliver a more coherent and better designed form of development. New-build dwellings allow improved internal layouts, higher environmental performance, more functional garden areas and a more appropriate relationship with the surrounding farmstead than would be achievable through conversion of existing structures.
- 4.3 The proposal therefore seeks permission for the demolition of the existing hay barn and workshop/storage buildings and their replacement with two detached dwellings. The development also includes alterations to the existing field boundary to allow for the enhancement of the ancient woodland buffer, together with significant Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 4.4 The two existing buildings on the site comprise a hay barn and a storage/workshop structure which together have a floor area of approximately 175sqm. Both buildings are of simple agricultural construction and are no longer required for farming purposes.
- 4.5 The proposed dwellings are positioned broadly within the footprint and immediate setting of the existing dwellings in order to maintain the established pattern of development within the farmstead. The layout has been designed so that the new houses relate closely to the existing farmhouse and the recently constructed dwelling known as Green Barn, forming a small cluster of residential buildings that reflects the traditional form of rural farm groups

Figure 4.1 – Proposed Layout



- 4.6 Each dwelling would be served by parking and turning space within its respective curtilage, accessed via the existing driveway from Mill Lane. The development therefore utilises the established access arrangements and would not require the creation of a new vehicular access onto the public highway.
- 4.7 In design terms, the dwellings are intended to reflect the rural character of the site and the surrounding farm buildings through the use of simple building forms, pitched roofs and a restrained palette of materials typical of rural Sussex. The scale of the dwellings has been carefully considered so that they sit comfortably within the farmstead context and do not appear overly prominent within the wider countryside.
- 4.8 The proposal represents an alternative to the prior approval granted under Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 for the conversion of the agricultural buildings to residential use. Whilst that fallback permission establishes the principle of two dwellings on the site, the current proposal provides an opportunity to deliver a more coherent form of development with improved design, layout and relationship with the surrounding buildings.

Figure 4.2 – Proposed dwelling on Plot 1

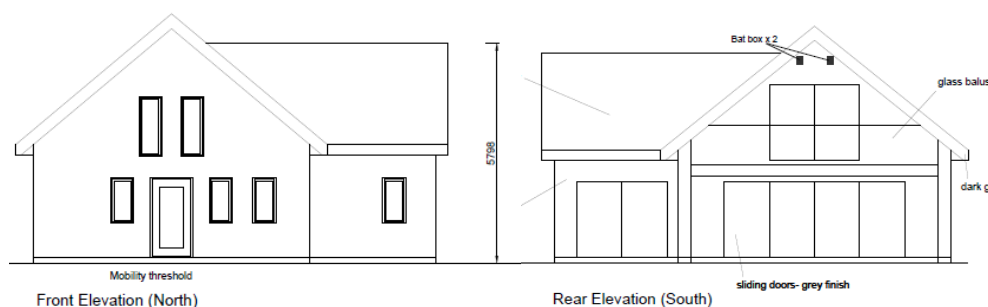
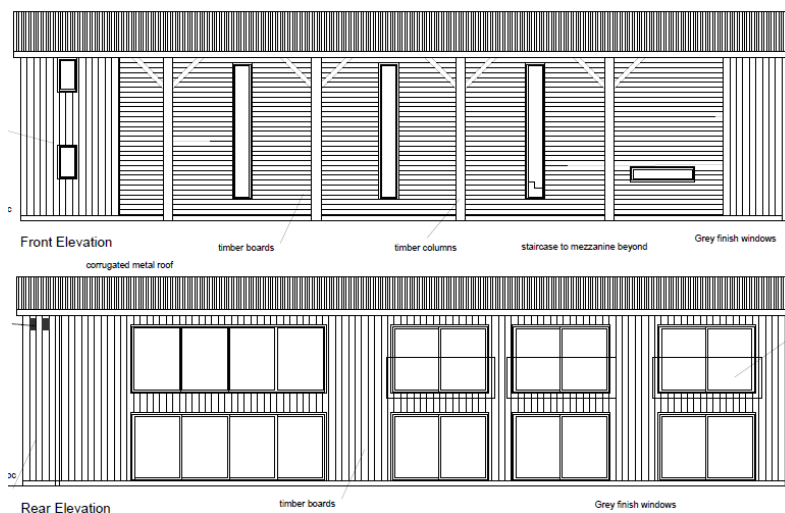


Figure 4.3 – Proposed dwelling on Plot 2



- 4.9 In relation to the plans for Plot 2, the applicant's preferred design is shown on drawings D979-06F and D979-07D (Figure 4.3). During the pre-application process it was suggested that glazing on the rear elevation may be excessive. However, the existing Mill Farmhouse features extensive glazing on its rear elevation (shown in Figure 2.3), which informed the design approach for the proposed dwelling.
- 4.10 It is therefore considered that the proposed glazing is consistent with the character of the immediate context. Nevertheless, in response to the Council's comments, alternative drawings (D979-06G and D979-07E) are also submitted should the authority consider a reduced glazing approach preferable.
- 4.11 Cycle stores would be provided within each plot and a dedicated area is provided adjacent to the access gate for the storage of refuse and recycling bins.
- 4.12 The houses have been positioned to lie outside the 15m buffer to the adjacent ancient woodland. The existing agricultural buildings, including those currently benefiting from prior approval for residential conversion which lie partly within the buffer, would be removed.
- 4.13 On-site BNG would be delivered, incorporating a resited field boundary to enable the nearest house to be sited outside of the 15m ancient woodland buffer. This will feature native trees and hedgerow providing feeding opportunities for wildlife. Existing artificial unvegetated, unsealed surfacing and buildings sited within the 15m buffer would be replaced with grassland. Existing modified grassland in poor condition would be improved to at least moderate condition (or a higher-distinctiveness habitat such as mixed scrub, traditional orchard or neutral grassland).
- 4.14 Bat and bird boxes would be attached to trees and the dwellings, and a log pile and hedgehog box would be sited close to the new planted boundary.

5 DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

- 5.1 The proposal seeks to replace two agricultural buildings which currently benefit from Class Q Prior Approval for conversion into residential use. Residential use on the site has therefore already been accepted in principle. The aim of this application is to provide two purpose-built, energy-efficient homes that respond sensitively to their rural surroundings and deliver an improved arrangement of internal spaces, curtilages and environmental performance compared with the fallback conversions. The statement explains the site context, design evolution and key considerations relating to layout, scale, appearance, landscaping, sustainability and access, demonstrating how the proposals accord with the relevant policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework and the Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan.

Design Approach

- 5.2 The design approach for the proposed dwellings is guided by the need to deliver a high quality scheme that respects the site's agricultural origins while providing modern homes of a standard not achievable under the fallback Class Q conversions. The objective is to create buildings whose form, materials and proportions are clearly derived from traditional rural outbuildings, ensuring that they sit comfortably within the existing farm group. At the same time, the dwellings are intended to provide well-planned internal accommodation, improved energy efficiency and an enhanced landscape setting. The proposals also aim to support ecological enhancement, maintain rural character and comply with the design principles set out within the Horsham District Planning Framework and the Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan.

Amount and Scale

- 5.3 The development proposes two detached dwellings of different sizes to reflect the differing scales of the agricultural buildings they replace. Plot 1 contains a modest two-bedroom dwelling of approximately 89.5 sqm gross internal area. Its compact scale is comparable to the existing two buildings it replaces and continues a small, unobtrusive built form appropriate for the location.
- 5.4 Plot 2 provides a larger barn-influenced dwelling of approximately 253sqm arranged over ground floor and mezzanine levels. This building reflects the proportions of the pole barn that currently occupies the site. While the proposed dwellings are larger than their existing counterparts, the increases are proportionate and allow the homes to function efficiently, remain visually convincing as barn-derived structures and achieve improved sustainability performance.

Layout

- 5.5 The layout has been shaped extensively by the need to protect the ancient woodland buffer and to work within established access arrangements. Both dwellings are positioned outside the required 15m buffer, ensuring that development does not encroach upon sensitive root protection areas or ecological habitats. The houses are arranged to maintain a coherent relationship with the farmstead, offering privacy between plots and providing south- and west-facing gardens that receive good levels of daylight. Their curtilages are defined naturally through the repositioning of the field boundary, creating a logical separation between domestic and agricultural land. Parking is provided on plot, with two spaces for Plot 1 and three for Plot 2, and sufficient space is included for cycle and bin storage. Access continues to be taken from the existing shared driveway, meaning that no new access points or alterations to Mill Lane are required.

Appearance

- 5.6 The designs draw directly from the simple utilitarian style of Sussex agricultural buildings. Both houses incorporate vertical timber cladding which provides a natural, visually recessive finish, while corrugated metal roofs echo traditional barn construction. Window openings are carefully proportioned and arranged to retain the impression of converted or repurposed rural structures, avoiding domestic suburban detailing. Contemporary elements, including aluminium fascias and minimalist features, are integrated subtly to offer a refined and high-quality finish without compromising the agricultural character. Plot 1 proposes a small, simple barn form reminiscent of an ancillary outbuilding, while Plot 2 reflects the volume and stature of a larger traditional hay barn. Together, the buildings form a cohesive architectural composition that is sympathetic to the rural landscape.

Landscaping

- 5.7 Landscaping plays a central role in ensuring the scheme assimilates into its countryside setting. A 15m woodland buffer will be retained and enhanced through new planting and ecological management, and the demolition of the existing building within this buffer represents a clear environmental benefit. The landscape scheme includes native hedgerows, tree planting and species-rich grassland designed to support ecological networks and deliver measurable Biodiversity Net Gain. Boundaries are defined through understated treatments such as post-and-wire fencing and native planting in order to avoid any suburbanising effects. Hard surfaces are limited and are proposed in natural, permeable materials that reflect the surrounding rural character. This approach ensures the development integrates successfully into the countryside in accordance with HDPF Policy 25 and Policy 32.

Sustainability

- 5.8 The proposed dwellings are designed to achieve significantly higher environmental performance compared with the Class Q fallback. They incorporate high levels of insulation, energy efficient heating and ventilation systems, and low water use fixtures. The dwellings also contribute to ecological enhancement through the incorporation of bat and bird boxes and the provision of wildlife-friendly planting. The choice of materials promotes durability and sustainability, with timber cladding and corrugated metal roof coverings providing long-life, low-maintenance finishes.

Access

- 5.9 Access to the site will continue to be provided via the existing driveway from Mill Lane, ensuring safe vehicle and pedestrian movement without altering the established access arrangement. Clear sightlines and safe entry and exit can be maintained, and each dwelling benefits from sufficient on-plot parking and turning space.
- 5.10 Cycle storage is integrated within each plot, and the layout allows convenient movement for residents and visitors. Entrances are designed with level or gently sloping approaches, and internal layouts allow future adaptation if required, ensuring that the dwellings meet the needs of a wide range of users.

6 APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues in the consideration of the proposals are considered to be as follows:

- Principle
- Design and scale
- Layout
- Ecology
- Arboriculture
- Biodiversity net gain
- Ancient Woodland
- Contamination

6.2 These are discussed below.

Principle of Development

6.3 The site lies outside the defined built-up area boundary where new residential development is ordinarily resisted under Policies 2, 3 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF).

6.4 However, the principle of residential use on the site has already been established through the approval of two Class Q Prior Approval applications. These consents confirm that two dwellings can lawfully be created on the site, subject to the discharge of pre-commencement contamination conditions. Applications to discharge these conditions have been submitted, and once approved, the fallback position becomes fully implementable.

6.5 This fallback is a material consideration of significant weight, demonstrating that the site is already considered suitable for residential occupation. The proposal does not introduce a new residential use but seeks to replace the consented conversions with two purpose-designed, energy-efficient dwellings that provide an enhanced internal layout, improved sustainability credentials, and better arrangement of external spaces.

6.6 Given the Council's lack of a five-year housing land supply, the NPPF "tilted balance" also applies. In this context, there is a clear planning benefit in delivering two high-quality homes on a previously developed site where residential use has already been accepted. Subject to

the assessment of other material considerations, the development is acceptable in principle.

Design and Scale

- 6.7 The proposed dwellings have been carefully designed to reflect the agricultural vernacular of the surrounding farmstead. The palette of materials which includes timber cladding; corrugated metal roofing; and simple barn-influenced forms, ensures the scheme sits comfortably within its rural setting while achieving a contemporary and high-quality architectural approach.
- 6.8 Plot 1 provides a modest two bedroom dwelling with a compact form mirroring the scale of the Green Barn, which is a recently constructed dwelling immediately to the north.
- 6.9 Plot 2 is larger and reflects the proportions of a traditional pole barn, and provides a family-sized home.
- 6.10 Both buildings adopt restrained detailing, low key elevations and a clear agricultural character, thereby meeting the requirements of Policies 32 and 33 as well as Neighbourhood Plan Policy 12. The scale increases over the Class Q fallback are proportionate and justified by the opportunity to produce better-designed, more efficient dwellings that still read as agricultural structures within the landscape. The massing relationship between the two plots is complementary and forms a coherent addition to the existing cluster of buildings

Layout

- 6.11 The proposed layout responds positively to the constraints and opportunities of the site. The dwellings are positioned so as to avoid encroachment into the 15m ancient woodland buffer, while also providing private garden spaces and sufficient separation from neighbouring properties to maintain residential amenity.
- 6.12 Each dwelling is served by on-plot parking along with bin and cycle storage, consistent with HDPF Policy 41. The arrangement allows for safe access and circulation and is compatible with the existing shared driveway onto Mill Lane. The repositioning of the field boundary provides a more logical curtilage arrangement, while enabling BNG to be delivered on-site.

Ecology

- 6.13 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) and Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) have been undertaken. These have confirmed that the site provides no significant roosting suitability for bats. Off-site trees and woodland display bat roost potential but these are unaffected by the proposed works.

- 6.14 The surrounding habitats provide some very limited reptile, bat foraging and commuting, and other mammal potential, whilst birds nests were noted within part of the hedgerow proposed for removal. Mitigation measures are therefore proposed to protect these species and the ancient semi-natural woodland.
- 6.15 Subject to the recommended mitigation measures being implemented, the proposals are not considered to result in adverse impacts on designated sites, priority habitats or protected species, and therefore accord with national and local ecological protection policies.

Arboriculture

- 6.16 The application is supported by a tree survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Method Statement, and Tree Protection Plan.
- 6.17 The proposals would require the removal of a section of hedgerow with emergency ash trees, both assessed as Category C.
- 6.18 The proposals do not encroach into any root protection areas or canopies of all other trees/hedgerows.
- 6.19 The proposed dwellings and their gardens would lie entirely outside the 15m ancient woodland buffer. The AIA noted that a parking space fell slightly within the 15m buffer so this has been moved south-eastwards to outside of the buffer.
- 6.20 Overall, the proposals require removal of a section of hedgerow with emergent ash trees which have been assessed as Category C. The proposals present a very low risk of direct harm to an ancient woodland and several high-value trees; these risks can easily be avoided through some limited and basic protection measures to small discrete areas. The proposals also move structures further away from the ancient woodland.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.21 The scheme provides an opportunity to deliver measurable biodiversity net gain (BNG) through the enhancement of land at the rear of the dwellings. This includes the re-siting of the field boundary to enable the houses to be sited outside of the ancient woodland buffer; the planting of a new native hedgerow incorporating trees; replacement of artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface and buildings with new developed land, buildings, and vegetated garden; and enhancement of existing modified grassland in poor condition to moderate condition (or a higher-distinctiveness habitat such as mixed scrub, traditional orchard or neutral grassland) in the Biodiversity Enhancement area.
- 6.22 Bat and bird boxes will be attached to the dwellings and suitable trees, and landscape planting

will focus on native and nectar-rich species to support pollinators.

- 6.23 These measures will ensure exceedance of the statutory 10% requirement, with a 39.02% habitat area gain and a hedgerow gain of 25.05%.

Ancient Woodland

- 6.24 The proposals require the removal of a 94m section of hedgerow (both assessed as Category C) with emergent ash trees, and the demolition of two existing buildings which are all located within the buffer zone, albeit all are separated from the ancient woodland by a surfaced track.
- 6.25 As mitigation and compensation, a new 140m length of hedgerow will be planted formed of native species and trees. The removal of the two existing buildings from within the buffer, the siting of the new dwellings outside of the buffer, and the relinquishment of the prior approval consent for a dwelling within the buffer, will result in a net reduction of development pressure on the woodland.
- 6.26 There is ample space for drainage infrastructure to be sited outside of the buffer.
- 6.27 Existing 'poor' modified grassland would be enhanced through in-seeding with a flowering lawn or general purpose meadow mix. This will be managed as a traditional meadow.
- 6.28 The above, alongside a range of basic protection measures employed during the construction phase, will ensure impacts are negligible.

Contamination

- 6.29 A preliminary contamination risk assessment has been undertaken given the historical agricultural use made of the site. This confirms that the risk of significant contamination of soil and/or groundwater appears generally low. There is however some uncertainty regarding soil conditions beneath the existing hardstanding and within the vicinity of the former tank. This can be addressed with the implementation of basic protection measures during development works and the removal of any fill and/or impacted soil down to the natural ground. Therefore the overall risk rating for the site posed by soil and/or groundwater contamination is low-moderate, and this may be reduced to low where any old fill materials beneath existing hardstanding and impacted soils within the former tank area are removed.
- 6.30 There is a potential risk posed by landfill gas and protection measures will be incorporated into the detailed design of the dwellings, similar to those incorporated into the design and build of the existing two dwellings at Mill Farm.
- 6.31 The submitted contamination report makes recommendations for the removal of waste and

surfacing materials which will be followed during the build process.

Overall Planning Balance

- 6.32 When considered against the Development Plan and the material considerations:
- The site benefits from an established residential fallback, carrying significant weight.
 - The scheme delivers high-quality, appropriately scaled dwellings that reflect local character.
 - Ecological assets, including the adjacent ancient woodland, are protected and enhanced, with the development positioned outside the 15m buffer and delivering significant biodiversity net gain.
- 6.33 In addition, the Council's lack of a five-year housing land supply engages the tilted balance in favour of sustainable development. In this case there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of delivering two well-designed homes.
- 6.34 Accordingly, the proposal represents sustainable development and should be supported. The Council's lack of a five-year housing land supply triggers the NPPF tilted balance, and there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

7 SUMMARY

- 7.1 The site already benefits from two Class Q prior approvals, establishing a strong fallback position for residential use. This carries significant weight and means the proposal is not introducing a new residential use but offering a higher-quality alternative. Given Horsham District Council's lack of a five-year housing land supply, the NPPF tilted balance also applies, further supporting the acceptability of development in principle.
- 7.2 The proposed dwellings are well-designed, taking clear cues from agricultural buildings through the use of timber cladding, corrugated metal roofs and simple barn-form massing. The scale of each dwelling is appropriate and respects the rural context, complying with local design policies.
- 7.3 The layout provides logical curtilages, adequate parking, and protects the amenities of neighbouring properties. The scheme also avoids the 15m ancient woodland buffer and removes existing buildings currently located within it, producing a net environmental improvement.
- 7.4 A clear strategy is in place to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain in excess of the minimum requirement and protect ecological interests, including enhancements to the woodland buffer and habitat creation.
- 7.5 Overall, the proposal represents a sustainable and well-integrated rural housing scheme. With substantial policy support arising from the established fallback, good design, environmental safeguards and the tilted balance, the development should be considered acceptable.

Appendix A



Mr and Mrs Robinson
Mill Farm
Mill Lane
Itchingfield
Horsham
West Sussex
RH13 0NP

Our ref: PE/25/0199
Your ref:
Officer: Jacques Burrowes
Email: jacques.burrowes@horsham.gov.uk
Tel: 01403 215 180
Date: 28 October 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

Location: Mill Farm, Mill Lane, Itchingfield, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0NP
Details: Erection of two dwellings (as an alternative to two dwellings granted Prior Approval under DC/24/1831 and DC/25/0816)

Thank you for your enquiry and my apologies that there has been some delay in regard to a response for this pre-application. I have now been able to review the site and submitted details, and can provide the following report:

Site and Associated Planning History

The application site is Mill Farm, Mill Lane, Itchingfield. The site is large with two dwellings currently on sited including Mill Farm and the Green Barn which itself was given planning permission under DC/23/0460 (Demolition of an agricultural building and the erection of a two-storey dwelling (as an alternative to prior approval reference DC/21/2075). Two previous Class Q applications (DC/24/1831; DC/25/0816) have been approved which are the subject of this pre-application advice

The dwellings are located on generous sized plot accessed via small private driveway. The site is east of public right of way (path number 1630) and Baystone Copse, an area of ancient woodland.

Relevant Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024):

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

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 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use

Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding

Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan:

Policy 11 – Windfall Development

Policy 12 – Design Parameters

ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

Section 5, Paragraph 84 of the NPPF (December 2024) states that “[p]lanning 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 a farm business, 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 subdivision of an existing residential building; or
- e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - i. is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
 - ii. would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

Policy 2 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) sets out the main growth strategy, focusing development in the main settlements. The HDPF outlines that the proposed settlement hierarchy is the most sustainable approach to delivering housing; where new development is focused in the larger settlements of Horsham, Southwater and Billingshurst; and limited new development is directed elsewhere, and only where it accords with an adopted Neighbourhood Plan. Specifically, Policy 3 of the Horsham District Planning Framework seeks to retain the existing settlement pattern and ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations as possible.

Policy 3 of the HDPF seeks to concentrate new development within existing settlement boundaries, with Policy 4 setting out a series of criteria which must all be met for the expansion of settlements. Itchingfield is classified by Policy 3 as an unclassified settlement, which are settlements with a limited level of services and facilities, but with good accessibility to larger settlements. Policy 4 of the HDPF outlines that the expansion of settlements outside the built-up area are supported where the site is allocated in the Local Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins an existing settlement edge; the level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type; the development is demonstrated to meet the identified local housing needs; the impact of development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive long term development; and the development is contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape and townscape character features are maintained and enhanced.

Policy 11 of INP states Development proposals for residential use on unidentified sites within the Built-Up Area Boundary will be supported if they are proportionate in scale, well-designed to complement the area's character, and do not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of existing or nearby dwellings.

As the site is located outside of any defined built-up area boundary, Policies 3 and 4 of the HDPF are of significant weight in the determination of the application. As stated within Policy 3 of the HDPF, development will be permitted within towns and villages that have defined built-up areas; with development in the countryside more strictly controlled through the provisions of Policy 4. This policy states that development outside of built-up areas will only be supported where the site is allocated in the Local Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins a settlement edge.

In addition, within this countryside location, the proposal is also considered against Policy 26 which seeks to protect the countryside against inappropriate development unless it is considered essential and appropriate in scale; whilst also meeting one of four criteria. This criterion includes supporting the needs of agriculture or forestry; enabling the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste; providing for quiet informal recreational use; or enabling the sustainable development of rural areas. The proposed development does not meet any of this criterion, nor is it considered to be essential to the countryside location and does not therefore comply with Policy 26 of the HDPF.

The Council is however currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, with the latest Authority Monitoring Report (December 2023) detailing a supply of 1-years. In such instances the Paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the NPPF states that where there are no relevant development plan policies in place, or the policies that are considered most important for the determination of applications are out of date (such as when a five year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated), planning permission should be granted 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.

In this case the most important policies contained within the HDPF, including Policies 2, 4 and 26 must be afforded reduce weight given the engagement of the 'tilted balance' within Paragraph 11d. In recognition of this, the Council published interim guidance on Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD). The FAD recognises that the Council is likely to receive applications outside of defined BUABs and on unallocated sites (such as this proposal) as it is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. Given this position and the principles behind HDPF Policy 4, The FAD confirms that applications which meet all of the criteria will be positively considered:

- The site adjoins the existing settlement edge as defined by the BUAB;
- The level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement the proposal relates to;
- The proposal demonstrates that it meets local housing needs or will assist the retention and enhancement of community facilities and services;
- The impact of the development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive long-term development; and
- The development is contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape character features are maintained and enhanced.

There are a few elements the proposal may be considered to have met. Any application submitted would be considered against the FAD during the planning balance.

It is noted that 2 previous prior approval Class Q application are permitted at the site for conversion of a single barn to single dwellinghouse each. However, water neutrality has yet to be addressed through the submission of an HRA application, and the Pre-Commencement condition has not yet been discharged. As such, the site does not currently benefit from a realistic fallback position, and this cannot be relied upon as a material consideration of significant weight when assessing the pre-

application scheme. In order for this to be considered a realistic fallback, an HRA application to address water neutrality would need to be submitted and approved, and the Pre-Commencement condition would need to be discharged.

Due to the location of the site, outside of the built-up area boundary and in an unsustainable location, the principle of development would be considered unacceptable, contrary to the overarching spatial strategy. However, acknowledging the above, if a realistic fallback position were in place, consideration will be given to whether the proposed 2 dwelling scheme would have more or less visual impact and landscape harm over the extant Prior Approval.

Design and Appearance

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF seek to ensure that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

Policy 12 of the INP states development proposals will be supported where their scale, nature, and location are appropriate, and their character and design meet key criteria: they must be of high-quality design and layout, contribute positively to both private and public spaces, and respect the character, scale, and identity of Barns Green and Itchingfield. Proposals should protect open spaces and gardens, avoid harm to the amenity of existing and future residents, ensure privacy, daylight, and security, and create safe, accessible, and well-connected environments. They should also preserve landscape features, support the parish's Green Infrastructure, use locally appropriate materials, and respond positively to the local vernacular.

Dwelling 1: Tool Shed

Dwelling 1 looks to create a larger barn than that sited under corresponding application DC/25/0816, with it being modelled in the same fashion as Green Barn to the north of the site, itself created under DC/23/0460. The proposed location is set slightly away from the original shed with it slightly moved to the south east by around 2.5m. The proposed is of a greater scale of that compared to that of the existing tool shed, increasing the height from 4.05m to 7.05m and increasing both in width and depth. The proposal looks to use similar materials to that under DC/23/0460 which should help the proposed barn assimilate neatly into the current environ as well be reflective of its agricultural context. However, there is a marked increase in height of 3m to 7.05m- typically, we would expect fallback proposals for Class Q developments to comprise a similar scale to that of the original conversion proposal as a means to ensure that the resultant development has no greater impact than the existing building. I would therefore advise that consideration is given to lowering the height of the dwelling to a single storey or 1.5 storey at most.

Indeed, the barns construction is considered like DC/23/0460 and to appear as an agricultural hay-barn that is a converted building, despite being a new-construction. There is some variation to the design which is welcomed so that the proposed is not a carbon copy of the Green Barn. It is noted that the proposed is cognisant of the ancient woodland that abuts the site to the west / north west with the build separated from interacting with this. There is considered to be a generous garden from the indicative plan. Though the plans do not explicitly show the parking arrangement, it is considered there would be space to implement this. It would be of benefit to include this in any future submission to accurately gauge the scale of any hardstanding. It would be considered at this preliminary stage that the proposed dwelling in terms of design is acceptable, though further consideration should be given to the overall height of the dwelling as above.

Dwelling 2: Pole Barn

Dwelling 2 also looks to create a larger barn than the dwelling afforded under DC/24/1831. Again, like Dwelling 1, there is a notable increase to height with a slight increase to depth though the width of the barn remains the same due to its already notable length. It is considered that the increase in height is modest by comparison as the barn increase to around 6.5m in height from around 4.8m whilst retaining the principal character of the original barn. This is a fairly small increase in height considering the dwelling is two storied. The barn is also shorter than the smaller footprint Dwelling 1 which is considered to help negate the perceived scale of Dwelling 2. The barn is also transformed to a new position which is now at angle instead of parallel to the track which is thought to be optioned to allow for a more thoughtful approach to the neighbouring amenity.

The design of the barn however is not considered to appropriately reflect an agricultural ethos. Whilst the front elevation is considered to be acceptable with an asymmetric design which is welcomed, the rear elevation features an abundance of glass that is not thought to be prototypical of a barn conversion, and would appear overtly domestic. This elevation detracts and makes the building looks decidedly suburban in character. It would be suggested that whilst the larger windows can be incorporated on the rear elevation, the amount of these at present is thought to diminish the quality of execution. It would be suggested that the fenestration on this barn is revised to more accurately reflect the characterful nature of agricultural barn conversion

Landscaping

No landscaping plan has been submitted at this stage. It would be beneficial to include one at submissions stage to evaluate the proposals landscaping efforts. It is however noted that a new field boundary would be established with native hedgerow and trees.

The proposal would have a larger impact compared to the Class Q developments owing to the increased footprints, scales and level of development including the instatement of residential curtilages. However it is considered that there would be a higher standard of dwelling provided and would likely be of more architectural merit compared to the Class Q developments.

Though it cannot be guaranteed that by implementing these changes that planning permission would be granted, these amendments would likely make the premise of the proposal more acceptable and therefore more likely to attain planning permission.

It is therefore considered that this proposal would not be granted planning permission if such an application was submitted. This barn at present would not meet the policies listed above.

Neighbouring Amenity

In respect of neighbouring amenity, it is acknowledged that the proposal would not appear to have any detrimental impact at this preliminary stage. The orientation of the proposed dwellings, coupled with the orientation of the existing dwellings on site is not thought to create a heightened impact on the existing situation or contribute to overlooking, overshadowing or being overbearing. The proposed dwellings are spaced appropriately from each other and its not thought there would be an issue relating to privacy. However, detailing on submission regarding the boundary treatment, such as timber fencing, or hedging would help the evaluate the relationship between the dwellings and ensure there is sufficient privacy.

Ecology

Policy 25 of the HDPF requires that development safeguards protected species, ensuring no net loss of biodiversity. Policy 31 of the HDPF provides that development which makes a positive contribution

to existing biodiversity, including the creation and management of new habitats where appropriate, will be supported.

Policy 31 of the HDPF states that development will be supported where it demonstrates that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate.

Should an application be submitted, it would need to demonstrate that the proposed development would have no adverse impact on protected species, such as bats, and its habitat and provide reasonable and necessary enhancements and mitigations where needed.

Highways Impacts

Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF promote development that provides safe and adequate access, suitable for all users.

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) operate their own pre-application advice service further details of which can be found through the following link:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/information-for-developers/pre-applicationadvice-for-roads-and-transport/>

This may be useful to understand the impact the proposal may have on an intensified use of the existing access, as well sustainable transport assessments, and any additional parking requirements, as HDC is not able to fully assess the impact that the development may have on highway and its use.

It is worth factoring into the development to make sure that the parking provision meets the standards outlined in West Sussex County Council Guidance on Parking at New Developments (September 2020). The application site is in PBZ1 with a 2 bedroom house requiring 1.7 spaces and a 5 bedroom house requiring 2.7 spaces. From indicative plans, this looks to be afforded though not expressly shown.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach introduced under the Environment Act 2021, to ensure that developments and land management leave the natural environment in a better state than it was before. It contributes towards nature recovery by helping to deliver habitat creation and enhancements as part of the design of new development.

There is now a statutory requirement to provide a minimum of 10% BNG on development sites. Further information can be found at: -

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/biodiversity-net-gain>

Water Neutrality

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

Any increase in water use over and above an existing evidenced use would need to be offset against the development. A Water Neutrality Statement would be required with any future submission, further details of which can be found through the following link:-

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/water-neutrality-in-horsham-district>

Conclusion

On the basis of the above, it is considered that further work is required to demonstrate there is a realistic and implementable fallback position for the two applications approved under prior approval. Without the fallback, the proposal would be considered to be contrary to the overarching spatial strategy and would likely be unacceptable in principle. However, if the fallback was viable, further revisions would need to be made to the current scheme relating to design and appearance of the dwellings appears too suburban in a rural location, as well as further information relating to ecology, water neutrality and biodiversity net gain. If an application was submitted, the following information would be required: -

- Location Plan
- Block Plan
- Proposed Floor and Elevations Plan
- Site Section Plans
- Planning Statement
- Water Neutrality Statement
- Biodiversity Net Gain Statement and relevant BNG Metric
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (including Bat Scoping Report and Great Crested Newt Survey)

The above comments are given as the opinion of the Case Officer and do not prejudice any outcome of a subsequent application. Should you submit a formal planning application, please quote reference number PE/25/0199 in your submission

Yours faithfully,

Jacques Burrowes
Planning Technician

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

Horsham District Council implemented a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule on 1st October 2017.

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge placed on new development. The funds raised will help to pay for a wide range of infrastructure to support development across Horsham District.

Most new development which creates net additional floorspace of 100m² or more, or creates a new dwelling, (including permitted development), is potentially liable for the levy.

How does it affect you?

Applications for CIL liable development which are determined on or after 1st October 2017 are required to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy (unless the development qualifies for relief or exemption).

Further information and the rates charged by Horsham District Council are set out in the CIL Charging Schedule which can be viewed online at www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/apply/cil

General Consent e.g. Permitted Development

Developments which are permitted by way of a general consent (such as permitted development) may still be liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy if they meet the above criteria.

In these circumstances, you must submit a Notice of Chargeable Development (CIL form 5), notify us of the person who will assume liability to pay the CIL and make any applications for relief or exemption, before the development is commenced.