



# Planning, Design & Access Statement

Formation of agricultural access and  
hardstanding

Grainingfold Farm, Horsham Road,  
Five Oaks, RH14 9AT

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## Contents

|     |                                        |    |
|-----|----------------------------------------|----|
| 1.  | Introduction                           | 3  |
| 2.  | Site Description                       | 4  |
| 3.  | Background & Relevant Planning History | 5  |
| 4.  | Proposal                               | 6  |
| 5.  | Planning Policy                        | 7  |
| 6.  | Planning Considerations                | 8  |
| 7.  | Principle of Development               | 8  |
| 8.  | Landscape & Design                     | 9  |
| 9.  | Transport & Access                     | 10 |
| 10. | Trees                                  | 11 |
| 11. | Ecology                                | 12 |
| 12. | Biodiversity Net Gain                  | 13 |
| 13. | Amenity                                | 14 |
| 14. | Conclusion                             | 15 |



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This planning statement is prepared on behalf of our client, Ms S Hart, in support of a full planning application for the creation of an agricultural vehicular access and hardstanding. The access will provide access to our client's land and the neighbouring farm which comprises the fields to the east and south-east of the site.
- 1.2. This Planning, Design & Access Statement will provide an assessment of the proposed development in relation to the main planning matters to be considered in the context of national and local planning policy requirements.



## 2. Site Description

- 2.1. The application site is located to the south of Horsham Road (A264) and comprises part of a wider agricultural parcel of land measuring 0.15ha located to the north of Grainingfold Farm House. The wider land is within arable hay production.

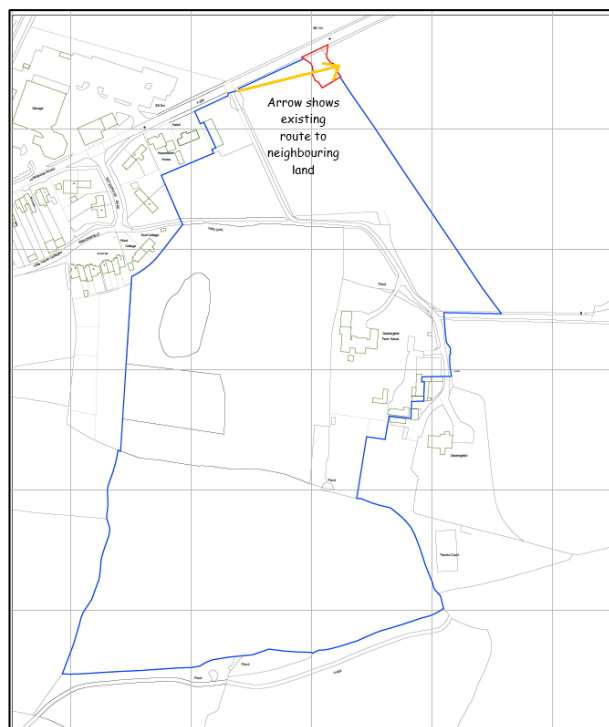


Figure 1: Location plan extract showing location of the site

- 2.2. Our clients land, the neighbouring farm to the east and the residential properties of Grainingfold Farm and Grainingfold are currently accessed from Horsham Road via a single width residential track. This track is very narrow particularly for tractors needing to turn off the Horsham Road and enter straight into the agricultural field to the east.
- 2.3. The neighbouring farm to the east which comprises 10.5 hectares of arable land currently uses our client's access and land to access their farm as shown by the blue arrow in Figure 1 above. This is by way of an informal agreement between the two landowners.
- 2.4. Planning permission has recently been granted under application DC/25/0336 on the neighbouring site to the east for the creation of a new farm access on their land to serve their farm. This was approved on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2025.
- 2.5. Following discussion between the two neighbouring landowners, it has been agreed that a shared vehicular access in the location proposed under this application which serves our clients land and the neighbouring farm land would be more preferable to the scheme previously permitted under application DC/25/0336.



### 3. Background & Relevant Planning History

- 3.1. There are no relevant planning applications relating to the red edged application site, however the planning history relating to the wider site is shown below.

| Planning Reference | Proposal                                                                                                  | Decision               |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| DC/23/1873         | Prior Notification for change of use of agricultural building to two dwelling houses                      | Approved<br>04.12.2023 |
| DC/23/1602         | Demolition of agricultural building and erection of two dwellings                                         | Approved<br>02.05.2025 |
| DC/22/1591         | Demolition of agricultural building and erection of two dwellings                                         | Refused<br>04.11.2022  |
| DC/22/0479         | Demolition of existing agricultural building and erection of two dwelling houses                          | Refused<br>29.04.2022  |
| DC/20/1477         | Prior Notification for change of use of agricultural building to a single dwellinghouse                   | Approved<br>10.12.2020 |
| DC/20/0877         | Prior Notification for change of use of agricultural building to two dwelling houses and associated works | Approved<br>18.08.2020 |
| DC/20/0372         | Prior Notification for change of use of agricultural building to two dwelling houses and associated works | Refused<br>17.04.2020  |



#### 4. Proposal

- 4.1. The application seeks full planning permission for the creation of a new vehicular access and hardstanding from Horsham Road (A264) which will provide access to our client's agricultural land to the west and the neighbouring farm land to the east.
- 4.2. The proposed access and hardstanding has been designed as a bellmouth and would measure approximately 21 metres wide at its widest point, enabling a tractor manoeuvrability space to pull off the road and into the two areas of farmland.
- 4.3. The proposed access would have visibility splays of 2.4m x 62.9m to the west and 2.4m 67m to the east based on the DMRB requirements for a 40mph road.
- 4.4. Three timber five bar gates will be installed, one set back from the road to allow for a tractor to pull off the road and one each providing access into the two agricultural fields. New native hedgerow would be installed to the east, west and south of the access.
- 4.5. Part of the hedgerow along the frontage of the site will be removed to accommodate the proposed vehicular access.
- 4.6. The proposal will meet the 10% biodiversity net gain requirement by providing new native species hedgerow adjacent to the proposed access and hardstanding. Off-site biodiversity improvements will also be provided on the land identified on the location plan, at Grainingfold Farmhouse.



## 5. **Planning Policy**

- 5.1. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 and Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (2024)**

- 4: Decision Making
- 12: Achieving Well Designed Places
- 15: Conserving the Natural Environment

### **Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) (HDPF)**

- 5.2. The Planning Inspectorate has requested that the new Horsham District Local Plan 2023 - 2040 that was submitted for examination be withdrawn on the basis that it had not complied with the 'Duty to Cooperate'.
- 5.3. Following recent changes to Government guidance regarding the 'Duty to Cooperate', the Council is in discussions with the Planning Inspectorate regarding re-opening the Local Plan examination.
- 5.4. The relevant Development Plan however currently continues to be the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) 2015 which provides both the strategic and development focused policies for the District.
- Policy 1: Sustainable Development
  - Policy 10: Rural Economic Development
  - Policy 26: Countryside Protection
  - Policy 33: Development Principles

### **Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan (June 2017) (BNP)**

- Policy BILL 1: Billingshurst Built-Up Area Boundary

## 6. Planning Considerations

- 6.1. This section sets out the merits of the proposal and its compliance with national and local planning policy.

## 7. Principle of Development

- 7.1. The application site is outside any settlement boundary and therefore would be considered against the countryside policies within the HDPF and the BNP.
- 7.2. Policy 26 of the HDPF advises that the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must therefore be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of four criteria. The proposal should also be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location, not lead to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and conserve the key characteristics of the landscape.
- 7.3. In this case the proposed access and hardstanding would support the needs of two agricultural enterprises, providing independent vehicular access to the two neighbouring parcels of farm land. The proposal is therefore considered to be essential to its countryside location, and meet the needs of agriculture in accordance with policy 26.
- 7.4. The new access would allow tractors to pull safely off the road before entering the agricultural land, which is currently difficult, owing to the immediate left turn in the field.
- 7.5. The access would enable a separate route for tractors from both neighbouring agricultural holdings sites to use. This would overcome the existing conflict with the use of the existing access by residential traffic and agricultural vehicles, along with pedestrians using the public right of way. The access and hardstanding would therefore safeguard the continued agricultural use of our client's site for hay production.
- 7.6. A new access in this location, situated close to the more built up area of Five Oaks to the west is considered less visually intrusive than a new vehicular access located further west along Horsham Road which is within the more open countryside. The scale of the hardstanding is appropriate to the character and location of the area, and would not harm the key characteristics of the landscape.
- 7.7. The proposal would not cumulatively lead to any increase of traffic or movement in compliance with this requirement of policy 26 of the HDPF.



## 8. Landscape & Design

- 8.1. Policies 32 and 33 requires development to be of a high quality and conserve the natural and built environment. The scale, massing and appearance of development is required to be of a high standard and relate sympathetically with the landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site.
- 8.2. The bell mouth hardstanding will be constructed of tarmac. This will be similar to the appearance of the existing accesses along the Horsham Road and will not therefore appear out of keeping with the character or appearance of the area.
- 8.3. The native hedgerow planting to the east and west of the access and hardstanding will assist in softening the appearance of the proposed development and integrating it within the surrounding agricultural land.
- 8.4. The proposed access and hardstanding will therefore conserve the rural landscape characteristics of the area in accordance with policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF.



## 9. Transport & Access

- 9.1. The proposed access has been designed as a bell mouth arrangement, and would measure 21 metres wide to enable manoeuvrability of tractors pulling off the road and into the farmland.
- 9.2. The proposed access would have visibility splays of 2.4m x 62.9m to the west and 2.4m 67m to the east based on the DMRB requirements for a 40mph road. This would provide for safe access and egress for farm vehicles to access the two neighbouring areas of farm land.
- 9.3. The proposed access would improve the existing access situation for farm vehicles on the two neighbouring sites, and would ensure the safe operation of the highway network.



## 10. Trees

- 10.1. The proposal would involve the removal of a section of hedge adjacent to the road in order to facilitate the construction of the proposed access. It is however proposed to plant new native species hedgerow adjacent to the eastern and western side of the proposed access and hardstanding which will assist in integrating it into the rural appearance of the surrounding area.



## 11. Ecology

- 11.1. Policies 25 and 31 of the HDPF requires development to safeguard the existing designated sites and species to ensure no net loss of biodiversity.
- 11.2. This application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and presents the findings of an ecological walkover survey undertaken by the Ecology Co-op in August 2025.
- 11.3. The land to the north of Grainingfold Farm is proposed to support a new access track and is comprised of an area of un-managed other neutral grassland, fringed to the north with a native, species-rich hedgerow.
- 11.4. The PEA details that the site has the potential to support populations of reptiles, habitat for nesting birds and foraging habitat for bats. In addition, the small areas of hedgerow proposed to be impacted to the north of the site have the potential to support populations of dormice. Reptile precautionary measures and dormouse nest surveying has been recommended within the PEA.
- 11.5. In relation to dormice the area is too small to accommodate a full dormouse presence/absence survey to be undertaken using nest tubes. Therefore, it is recommended that a hand search for summer nests is undertaken by a licensed ecologist. This hand search will be undertaken during three visits to the site, ideally during the winter months when there is less vegetation within the hedges, making the search easier. If fruiting hazel is present, then a nut search will be conducted alongside a check for nests. If summer nests are found, confirming the presence of dormice, a dormouse mitigation strategy will be developed.
- 11.6. The PEA also recommends mitigation to protect nesting birds, which includes the avoidance of any hedge clearance within the bird nesting season, (March to August).
- 11.7. The proposal will not cause any harm to protected species and includes mitigation measures and enhancements in line national and local planning policy requirements.



## 12. **Biodiversity Net Gain**

- 12.1. The Environment Act 2021 and other secondary legislation requires a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to be achieved on all developments. Policy 31 of the HDPPF pre-dates the statutory legislation for BNG but requires development to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity.
- 12.2. A BNG Report, BNG Metric and Conditions Assessment has been submitted in support of this application.
- 12.3. The BNG Report confirms that the BNG baseline of the site is 0.59 habitat units, and 0.24 hedgerow units. The overall off-site calculated baseline is 1.16 habitat units is located at Grainingfold Farmhouse and comprises modified grassland in good condition, and orchard trees that were planted on the site in 2016.
- 12.4. The proposal will incorporate new habitat on the site which will comprise native hedgerow planting to the east and west of the site access. In addition to this some off-site land at Grainingfold Farmhouse, as shown in green on the location plan will be improved to provide neutral grassland.
- 12.5. The BNG Assessment concludes that the once the habitat creation measures are taken into account, the scheme would result in a net increase of 0.09 habitat units (+16.01%) across the site. In respect of linear features, the scheme would result in a net increase of 0.03 (+11.58%) hedgerow units across the site.
- 12.6. The biodiversity net gain trading rules would also be satisfied. The development has been designed to maximise onsite opportunities to enhance biodiversity net gain, and meets the statutory 10% BNG requirement.

### 13. Amenity

- 13.1. Access to the land is currently via a single residential access directly off Horsham Road and which serves two properties. The creation of a new access directly off Horsham Road will cease the requirement for farm vehicles to use the residential access, to the benefit of those residents.
- 13.2. There are no residential properties within close proximity of the proposed access and therefore the proposal would cause no harm to the neighbouring residential amenity.



## 14. Conclusion

- 14.1. It can be concluded that the proposed access and hardstanding which would serve two neighbouring agricultural enterprises, would be essential to its countryside location, and meet the needs of agriculture in accordance with policy 26.
- 14.2. The proposed development would meet the requirements of 10% biodiversity net gain through additional on-site native hedgerow planting and off-site neutral grassland improvement.
- 14.3. The development would not cause any harm to the landscape character of the area, the highway network, protected species, important trees or neighbouring amenity and would therefore comply with national and local planning policies.

