



PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Siting of 3no. Shepherd Huts and associated works

at

Furnace Lakes
Guildford Road (A281)
Slinfold
West Sussex
RH13 0QZ

December 2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Planning permission is sought for the siting of 3no. shepherd huts and associated works on land forming part of Furnace Lakes. Two of the huts have already been sited and the application is therefore partly retrospective.
- 1.2 The application is a resubmission of DC/24/1959 and seeks to address the reasons for refusal.
- 1.3 The Applicant is the owner of Furnace Lakes which has historically been run as a fishery.
- 1.4 This statement provides the following information:
 - Description of the site and its surroundings
 - Details of the proposals
 - Planning background
 - Appraisal against all relevant planning policy.



2. Site Description and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 Furnace Lakes has historically comprised six fishing lakes forming part of 21 hectare estate. The estate was sold in two parts in 2023 with the applicants purchasing two of the lakes (Furnace Lake and Furnace Pond), a house and outbuildings spread across 10 hectares of land. Retained facilities for fishermen include a kitchen, lodge, toilet block and bait shop.
- 2.2 The application site relates to a 0.15 hectare area to the south-east of the largest of the two lakes (Furnace Lake). The remainder of the site, equating to 0.19 hectares, is the site access. The site has previously hosted 9 'swims' - 4 double swims and 5 single swims - which are small surfaced areas on the edge of the lake from which people fish. Fishermen typically stay overnight in a tent pitched on the swim.

Figure 2.1 - Site Location

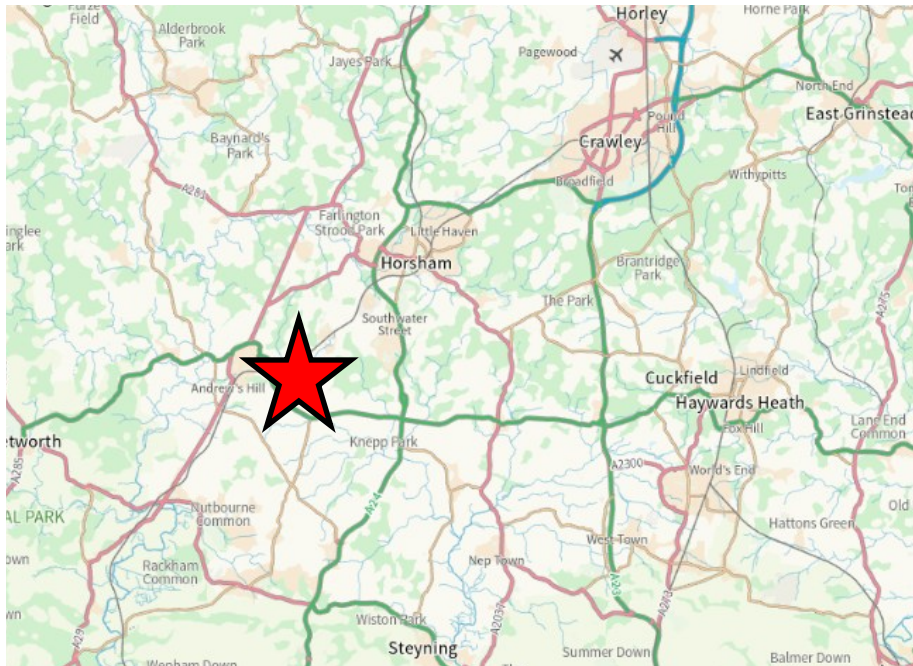


Figure 2.2 - Existing Site Plan



Figure 2.3 - Google Earth image from 2018



2.3 When the applicants purchased the lakes, the main part of the site comprised approximately 160sqm of surfaced area which accommodated the swims. A path leads from this area to a large car park where a wc block is located.

Figure 2.4 - WC Block and Facilities Building



Figure 2.5 - Example of a swim at Furnace Lake



Figure 2.6 - Further Site Photographs



Car Park



Path between car park and proposed shepherds huts



Swims on opposite side of the lake



Application site on the right hand side



Furnace Lake in the distance

- 2.9 Before the estate was split in two it typically hosted over 90 anglers a day at weekends and 60-80 anglers each weekday, all staying overnight.
- 2.10 Since the applicant took over ownership of Furnace Lake and Furnace Pond they have decided to reduce the amount of fishing undertaken on the estate. The previous owner experienced problems with unregulated anglers turning up to fish and it is the applicant's intention to now only accept regulated anglers in smaller numbers to avoid the problems of the past.
- 2.11 A small number of shepherds huts, which will host up to 6 people, are proposed to be sited on land which previously hosted 9 fishing swims (up to 18 people). These will provide a new source of income for the estate to help offset the loss resulting from a reduction in fishing numbers.
- 2.12 In relation to the remaining four lakes, these were purchased by a company not connected with the applicant and fishing there has ceased.

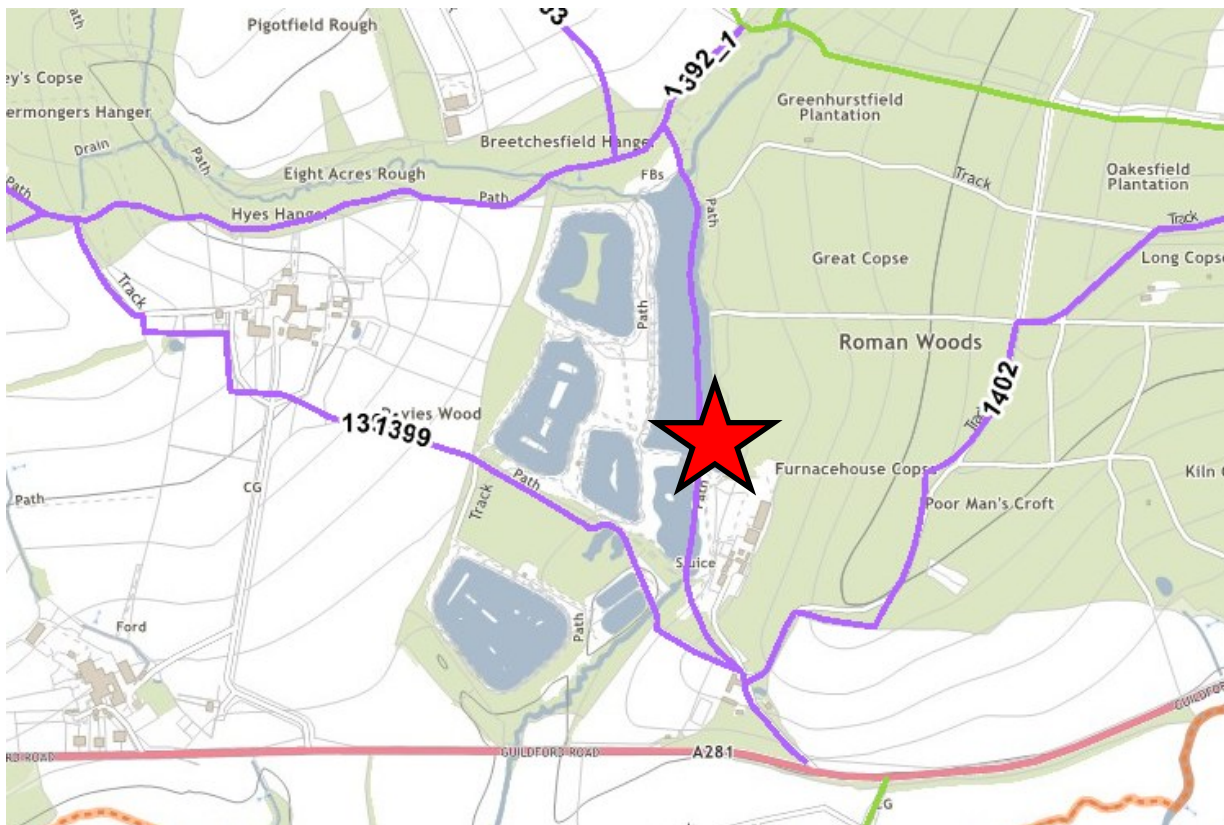
Figure 2.7 - Land within the applicant's ownership



- 2.13 The site is accessed via a driveway leading from the A281 Guildford Road. The driveway is shared with a residential property and footpath no. 1394 which passes north-south alongside Furnace Lake. plotted On Ordnance Survey mapping it is shown as passing through the lake, however on the ground it runs parallel to the lake edge approximately 20m away from it, separated by a fence.
- 2.14 The site is well connected to other footpaths that provide direct walking routes into Rudgwick village. The Downs Link long distance walking route is less than a mile away.

- 2.15 Public transport options include a Stagecoach bus service which stops approximately 0.5 miles away from the site entrance and runs between Horsham and Guildford. The nearest train station is at Christs Hospital which is a 15 minute taxi ride away.

Figure 2.8 - WSCC Definitive Map



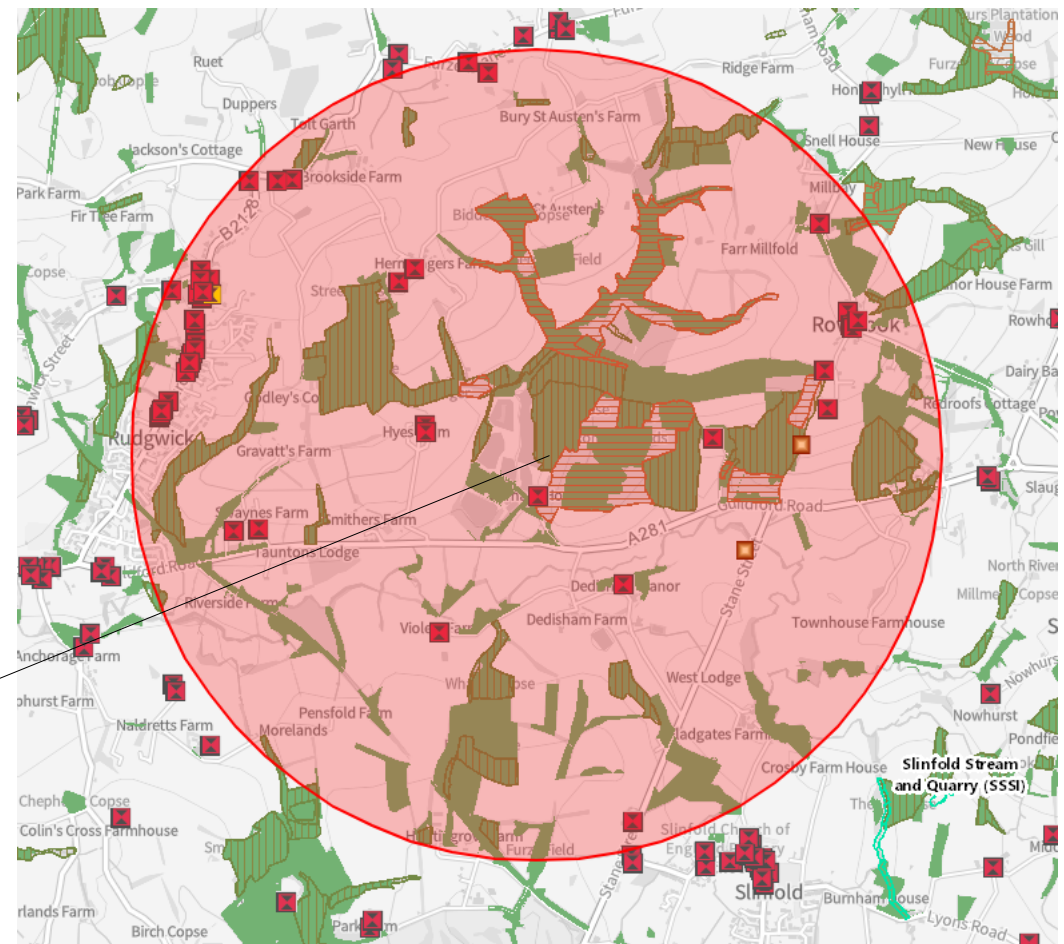
3. Planning Background

Environmental Designations

- 3.1 The main part of the site is located within an area mapped as being the Great Copse Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland, although Google Earth shows no woodland on the site since at least 2018.
- 3.2 Further afield there are a number of Ancient Woodlands and Priority Habitats within 2km of the site.
- 3.3 There is one listed building nearby which is the Grade II listed Furnace House located 175m to the south of the application site.



Figure 3.1—MAGIC Map showing designations within 2km of the application site



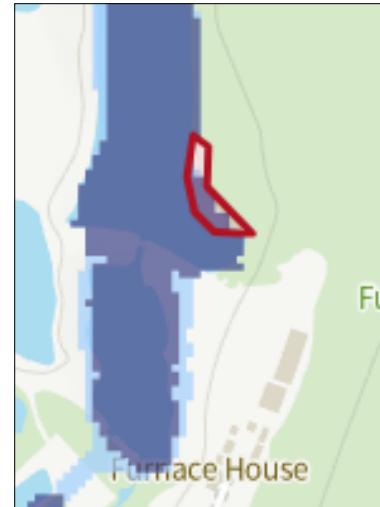
Legend

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England) | Special Areas of Conservation (England) | Grade II |
| Local Nature Reserves (England) | Special Protection Areas (England) | Grade II* |
| National Nature Reserves (England) | Scheduled Monuments (England) - points | RSPB Reserves (GB) |
| National Parks (England) | World Heritage Sites (England) | Ancient Woodland (England) |
| Ramsar Sites (England) | Buffer Zone | Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland |
| Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England) | World Heritage Site | Ancient Replanted Woodland |
| | Listed Buildings (England) | Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England) |
| | Grade I | |

Flood Risk

- 3.4 The entirety of the site lies within Flood Zone 1. Since the date of the previous planning application, flood risk mapping has been updated and the flood risk assigned to the site has reduced. Figure 3.2 shows the differences between the old and new mapping. All huts and pathways now lie entirely within Flood Zone 1.
- 3.6 The access, parking and location of the huts is at less than low risk of surface water flooding. A small section of the path between the huts and the parking is at risk of surface water flooding, although the applicants have never experienced this.

Figure 3.2 - Flood Risk Mapping



2024 Flood Risk Mapping



Updated Flood Risk Mapping

Updated Surface Water Risk Mapping

Planning History

- 3.8 Planning application reference DC/24/1959 sought permission for an identical scheme to the current application. This application was refused in March 2025 for the following reasons:
- 1. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the proposed development would not be adversely impacted by flood risk, as the proposal falls within Flood Zone 3 and is considered a more vulnerable use. The proposal would therefore not comply with Policy 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).*
 - 2. It has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the groundworks of the development and future pressure associated with the proposed recreational usage would not result in adverse impact on the designated Ancient Woodland, contrary to Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).*
- 3.9 This application now addresses both reasons for refusal and a discussion of how this is achieved is detailed in sections 4 and 5 of this report.
- 3.10 Planning permission reference RW/55/99 granted permission for the adjacent lake to be used for fishing. Fishing at the second lake that the applicants own, Furnace Pond, is covered by a Certificate of Lawfulness reference RW/33/96.

4. Proposed Development

- 4.1 As previously mentioned, the applicant's business plan involves continuing some fishing on Furnace Pond and Furnace Lake but in significantly reduced numbers than was previously the case. The previous owner experienced problems with unregulated anglers turning up to fish and it is the applicant's intention to now only accept regulated anglers in smaller numbers to avoid the problems of the past.
- 4.2 To replace the income lost from this reduction, the applicant wishes to add a small number of shepherd huts by the lakes, offering them as holiday lets to non-fishing guests. Two huts have already been added to the side of Furnace Lake and a further hut is also proposed. The huts have been sited on land which previously hosted 9 fishing swims. The swims historically hosted one or two people staying overnight in a tent, so in comparison the huts would host far fewer people.
- 4.3 Each hut measures 6.1m x 2.3m and comprise a double bed, small kitchenette and shower room. Each hut has a hot tub and firepit located outside
- 4.4 The huts have been positioned on existing areas of hardstanding with an area of decking to the front of each providing an outside sitting area. Approximately 300sqm of the existing hardstanding has been planted over with turf.
- 4.5 The huts use low energy white goods and light bulbs and have been sourced from a company in Dorset.

Figure 4.1 - Proposed Site Layout



Figure 4.2 - Shepherd Huts



- 4.5 Car parking for the huts is provided within the existing parking area for the lakes. As 9 angling spots are being removed as a result of the proposals with an associated reduction in the number of visitors to the site, there will not be a need for the car park to be increased in size. It is in any case very under utilised with plenty of parking spaces available at all times. Many guests do also arrive by train and taxi.
- 4.6 The two shepherds huts that have already been placed on the site have proven to be very popular with only a few vacant days each month. They are rated in the top 5% of properties on Airbnb with 250 5 star ratings.
- 4.7 The huts are typically occupied by couples with most coming from within the UK and some coming from abroad. Bookings are for a minimum 2 night stay.
- 4.8 Guests are able to cook their own dinner on site but many choose to visit the local pubs, including The Fox Inn and Chequers Inn in Rowhook which are less than a mile walk away via public footpaths. The Red Lion in Slinfold is also popular with guests.

Figure 4.3 - Local Pubs

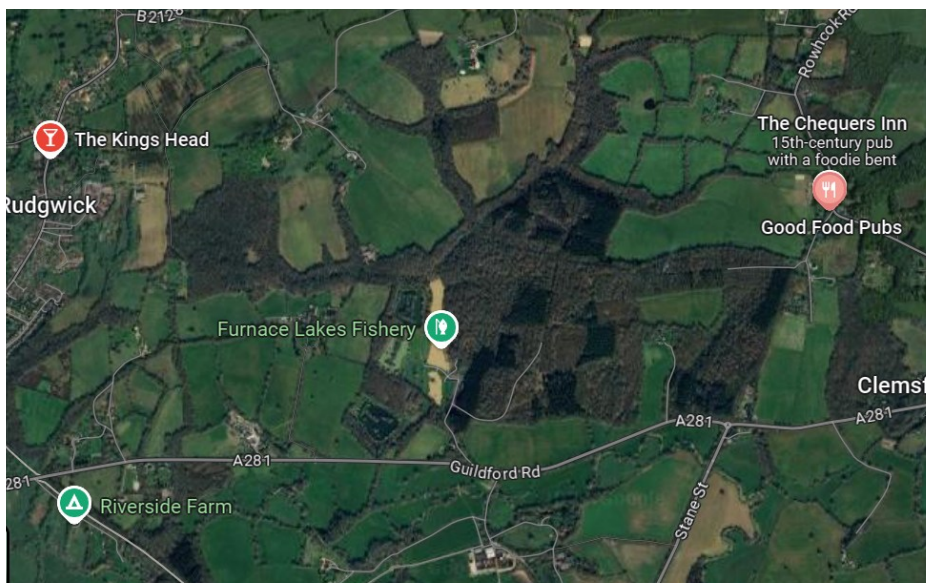


Figure 4.4- Airbnb Reviews

★★★★★ · 3 days ago We absolutely loved our stay at Heron's nest, it is peaceful and very quiet which was perfect for us- We love nature and enjoyed watching birds from the hot tub- we saw... Show more	★★★★★ · 1 week ago Great place 2nd time here would highly recommend,shepherds hut and views are excellent.
★★★★★ · 2 weeks ago Photos Amenities Reviews Location Show more	★★★★★ · 2 weeks ago
★★★★★ · 3 weeks ago Kate & Olly were great hosts, very friendly and helpful. The Sheppard's hut was well stocked with everything we needed and provided a very comfortable place to stay for a few... Show more	★★★★★ · 3 weeks ago The most peaceful stay in my the beautiful place. Kate and Olly were amazing hosts and were extremely responsive and always on hand if we needed anything. Stunning hut with... Show more
★★★★★ · 1 day ago Our time at Shepard's Hut Sussex was perfect, from the welcome package at check in to the goodbye packing up the car. We had a wonderful time, swimming in the lake and... Show more	★★★★★ · 2 days ago Mallard Hut has become our go-to retreat—this was our second visit, and it was just as wonderful as the first! The shepherd's hut is cosy, with a bed that's unbelievably... Show more
★★★★★ · 5 days ago This is by far the best Shepherds hut we have stayed in! The pictures don't do justice for how beautiful the surroundings are, it's the perfect retreat Photos Amenities Reviews Location	★★★★★ · 1 week ago An absolutely outstanding experience! We were looking for a relaxing and high quality stay in a beautiful and cosy location, and this exceeded our expectations. The hut was pristinely
★★★★★ · 1 week ago We recently stayed in the charming Mallard Hut surrounded by breathtaking natural beauty. The scenic landscape, with rolling hills and ample greenery, provided the perfect... Show more	★★★★★ · 1 week ago Do not hesitate to book here if you are looking for some peace and quiet. The hut is kitted out with everything you'll need and feels very spacious inside. There were people... Show more

- 4.9 Further information is provided with this application to address the previous reasons for refusal. In relation to the first reason for refusal, since the date of the decision notice, as noted previously, flood risk mapping has been updated and the risk assigned to the site has changed. Now only the lake edge falls within Flood Zone 2 with the rest of the site, including where huts and paths have been sited, all now lie within Flood Zone 1. A Flood Risk Assessment is provided with this application confirming the site to now be at low risk of flooding.
- 4.10 In relation to the second reason for refusal which related to impacts on the ancient woodland, the scheme has now been reviewed by an Arboriculturist and Ecologist and an Ancient Woodland Mitigation Strategy is provided with this application. The Strategy confirms the following:
- Aerial imagery confirms that all of the clearance and installation of hardcore fishing swims occurred between 2013 and 2018 under a previous owner. Since then, little change has taken place, and recent proposals have actually removed much of the hardcore and replaced it with woodchip.
 - The area has long been in established use for fishing, and although historic clearance reduced woodland quality, these actions pre-date the current application and were not carried out by the applicant. The works also occurred before the January 2020 cutoff often used when assessing biodiversity net gain (BNG) baselines, and the BNG assessment submitted appears to have been accepted by the local authority.
 - The proposals would reduce the total amount of surfaced land, restore some areas to soil, and lower visitor numbers, thereby reducing disturbance to wildlife. The ancient woodland designation shown on MAGIC maps does not accurately reflect on-the-ground conditions, covering areas that are not truly ancient woodland. Additionally, an existing footpath along the eastern boundary already creates disturbance and likely contributed to earlier habitat degradation.
- 4.11 Mitigation and enhancement measures are proposed following the mitigation hierarchy for biodiversity adopted under BS42020:2013 and NPPF paragraph 180a, to include:

Mitigation within the Proposal Site

- Remove non-native shrubs (e.g., pyracantha, rhododendron) and replant with suitable native species to improve habitat quality and soften views of the huts.
- Strengthen the partially native hedge along the footpath to create a more effective buffer and reduce disturbance.
- Allow disturbed ground around the huts to naturally regenerate, supplementing slow-developing areas with leaf mulch to support woodland species.

Enhancement of Grassland Glade

- Restore the modified grassland glade within the ancient woodland designation to a woodland or wooded glade through selective native planting, mowing with arisings removed, and introducing woodland wildflowers.
- Leave margins uncut to encourage natural colonisation by trees and shrubs, and add brash and deadwood piles to support wildlife.
- The area enhanced will exceed any habitat loss and aligns with national guidance for compensating impacts on ancient woodland.

Securing Long-Term Management

- The proposal creates an opportunity to restore the glade and secure its management long-term.
- Measures can be formalised through planning conditions, a S106 agreement, or a Conservation Covenant, supported by a detailed habitat creation and management plan.
- A 20–30-year management period is recommended to meet Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and ensure woodland establishment.

4.12 These two issues were the only causes of concern, with all other aspects of the proposals considered acceptable by the planning authority.

5. Planning Policy

5.1 Planning applications are required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the development plan comprises the Horsham District Framework and Rudgwick Neighbourhood Plan. The National Planning Policy Framework is also a material consideration.

Horsham District Planning Policy Framework (adopted 2015)

5.2 Policy 1 - Sustainable Development states that when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

5.3 Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.4 Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission, unless

material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

5.5 Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development encourages sustainable rural economic development and enterprise within the district in order to generate local employment opportunities and economic, social and environmental benefits for local communities. In the countryside, development which maintains the quality and character of the area, whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity will be supported in principle. Any development should be appropriate to the countryside location and must:

1) Contribute to the diverse and sustainable farming enterprises within the district or, in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, contribute to the wider rural economy and/or promote recreation in, and the enjoyment of, the countryside; and either

- a. be contained wherever possible within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion or, in the case of an established rural industrial estate, within the existing boundaries of the estate; or
- b. result in substantial environmental improvement and reduce the impact on the countryside particularly if there are exceptional cases where new or replacement buildings are involved. New buildings or development in the rural area will be acceptable provided that it supports sustainable economic growth towards balanced living and working communities and criteria a) has been considered first.

2. Demonstrate that car parking requirements can be accommodated satisfactorily within the immediate surrounds of the buildings, or an alternative, logical solution is proposed. Proposals for the conversion of rural buildings to business and commercial uses will be considered favourably over residential in the first instance.

5.6 Policy 11—Tourism and Cultural Facilities encourages measures which promote tourism and enhance local cultural facilities, including recreation based rural diversification. Any development should be of a scale and type appropriate to the location and should increase the range, or improve the quality of accommodation,, attraction or experiences for tourists, day visitors, business visitors, and residents in the District.

5.7 Support will particularly be given to proposals which:

1. Reinforce the local distinctiveness and improve existing facilities;
2. Focuses major tourism and cultural facilities in Horsham town centre;
3. Seek to ensure that facilities are available within the towns and villages in the district and are in keeping with their relationship with the urban area and countryside around them especially in and around the High Weald AONB and the South Downs National Park;
4. Develop the opportunities associated with rural diversification and rural development initiatives, particularly where they assist farm diversification projects, benefit the local economy, or enable the retention of buildings contributing to the character of the countryside; and
5. Do not result in the loss of a cultural resource.

Rudgwick Neighbourhood Plan (made 2021)

5.8 The Neighbourhood Plan has a number of objectives which it seeks to achieve. Of relevance to the application are the following objectives:

1. To ensure that future development is consistent with the largely rural character of the Parish.
3. To promote good design that is consistent with the character and heritage of the Parish.

benefits the countryside's landscape and economy in order to protect our valued landscape.

4. To promote a vibrant economy consisting of employment hubs which exist in harmony with residential areas.

5. To encourage non-motorised transport and ensure people can access important Local Facilities in this way.

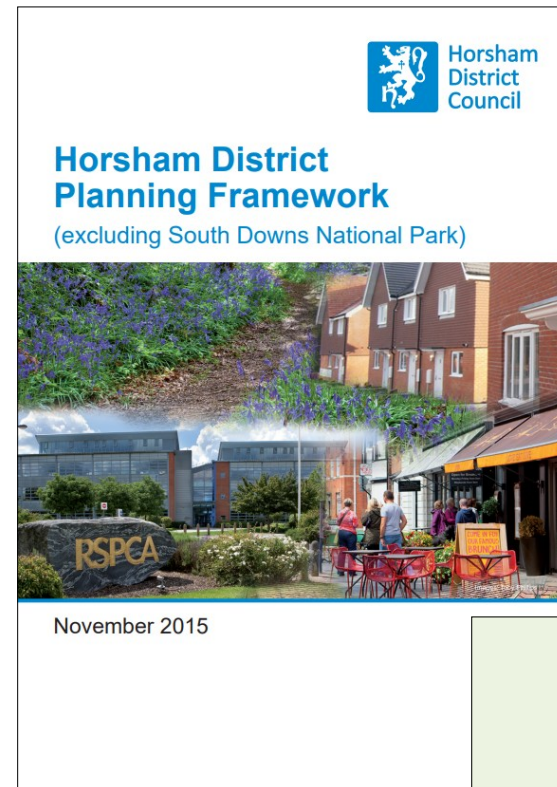
6. To promote sustainable motorised transport.

8. To ensure the longevity of existing facilities and to look favourably upon further facilities being provided to match emerging sports and leisure needs.

5.9 Policy RNP1 requires development to maintain the settlement pattern of the parish.

5.10 Policy RNP6 relates to materials and requires the common building styles across the Parish to be reflected.

5.11 Policy RNP.7 requires new development proposals to be designed with reference to the surrounding architecture.



RUDGWICK NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

For the period to 2031. (Referendum Version)



6. Planning Appraisal

6.1 The main issues in the consideration of this application are considered to be:

- **Principle of development**
- **Design and Appearance**
- **Trees and Landscaping**
- **Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain**
- **Amenity Impacts**
- **Highways**
- **Flood Risk**

6.2 These are discussed in more detail below.

Principle of development

- 6.3 The proposal is consistent with Policies 7, 10 and 11 of the HDPF which encourage tourism development that promotes the district as an attractive place to stay and visit. The small scale of the proposal is appropriate to the countryside location and provides a quiet place for visitors to stay without impacting on any neighbours.
- 6.4 While the location of the site would most likely require visitors to arrive by car, it would be possible for people to arrive by train and taxi. The site is well connected to Public Rights of Way which would also provide the opportunity for walking to nearby local services in Rudgwick. These include The Milk Churn café and Fox Inn pubs which are within a 2 mile walk. There is also a Co-Operative grocery store and pharmacy in Rudgwick for supplies.
- 6.5 The close proximity of the Downs Link also makes it an attractive destination for cyclists.
- 6.6 On the matter of principle, the previous case officer commented:

Due to the number of occupants and the nature of the huts, the proposal would not be expected to have a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside and as such there is considered to be no harmful conflict with Policy 26 of the HDPF. While the site is not particularly well located in respect of surrounding settlements, it benefits from direct access to the public right of way network, thus providing opportunity for the enjoyment of the countryside. With the above in mind, the proposal is considered in accordance with HDPF policies 10, 11 and 26 and the wider scope of the NPPF, thus the principle of development is acceptable.

- 6.7 The principle of the proposal was previously considered to be acceptable and there has not been a material change in circumstances since the previous application was considered.
- 6.8 The scheme would make a modest contribution toward the provision of visitor accommodation within the district. The Council's Visitor Study identified a strong demand for this type of accommodation with supply not able to meet weekend demand during the holiday season. The Study states that there is scope for significant expansion of this type of accommodation in rural parts of the district. The proposal would also cater for those wishing to visit outside of the typical holiday season, helping in a small way to support local businesses all year round.

Design and Appearance

- 6.9 The shepherds huts have been built to a high quality and are largely screened from view by the woodland backdrop. The huts are visible from the nearby public footpath but the site has historically had anglers' tents and fishing equipment on it for most of each year and the view now causes no greater harm. The scheme represents a low density and small scale form of tourist accommodation which has been designed and situated to be naturally screened within the landscape.
- 6.10 On the matter of design and appearance, in relation to the previous application the previous case officer commented:

The huts are visible from the nearby public footpath, but some level of visibility is expected as the site historically had fishing equipment and tents. The huts have been positioned on existing areas of hardstanding with an area of decking to the front of each providing an outside sitting area. Decking has also been provided for the siting of a hot tub at each hut. The planning statement states that approximately 300sqm of the existing hardstanding has been planted over with turf. The materials used for the huts are painted timber cladding for the walls (nb—they are corrugated metal) and black corrugated sheeting for the roof. The huts are considered to have limited visual impact on the surrounding landscape, and would be of modest size, comprising green painted timber exterior, sited atop a wheelbase. Overall, no objection is raised with regards to the design and appearance of the holiday-let accommodation. With the above in mind, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF in terms of design and appearance.

- 6.10 The proposal would not result in harm to the landscape character or the area generally. As such it complies with HDPF Policies 25, 32 and 33.

Trees and Landscaping

- 6.11 To address the previous reason for refusal relating to the impact of the proposals on the ancient woodland, an Ancient Woodland Mitigation Statement (AWMS) is provided with this resubmission. The tree officer previously commented that the site had been 'denuded over the past 10 years', however this is not accurate. Aerial imagery clearly shows clearance works and the installation of fishing swims having occurred since 2013, prior to the applicant's ownership. Therefore whilst the tree officer is correct in that pre-emptive works should not justify a development proposal, the works which would have caused harm to the ancient woodland were historic, unrelated to this application, and the site was already in use for fishing accommodation long prior to this application. The actions were not undertaken by the applicant.
- 6.12 The quantum of surfaced land in the application is reduced compared to the baseline on the site before. Areas of hardcore originally installed for fishing have either been removed and returned to soil, or replaced with more appropriate loose woodchip. The proposals also seek to reduce the number of users who visit this area of the site compared to an existing baseline. This would have the effect of reducing indirect disturbance e.g. of bats within the woodland edge. Likewise, the change from camping to huts would reduce incidental lightspill as tents would allow e.g. headtorch light through.

- 6.13 The ancient woodland designation on MAGIC runs all the way down to the carpark and includes both a smaller glade as well as the larger grassed area north-east of the parking. It is therefore not currently an accurate predictor of true ancient woodland at this site.
- 6.14 A footpath runs along the eastern boundary of the redline area, which already creates a line of disturbance here within the woodland and a relatively clear boundary beyond which the habitat was likely subject to disturbance and degradation even before 2013.
- 6.15 Nevertheless, a mitigation strategy is proposed and full details of this are provided within the AWMS. The enhancement and ongoing management could be secured by planning condition to create and manage the new woodland area in 'perpetuity', and manage the areas surrounding the shepherd's huts appropriately. The relevant agreement would be tied to a more detailed habitat creation, management and monitoring plan detailing responsibilities, habitat prescriptions, detailed plans and planting specifications. Such an agreement should cover 20-30 years, to reflect the current Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and to allow such time, that trees planted would be relatively mature and as such difficult and costly to remove. Such works would also by this point be readily visible from aerial imagery and as such, easy to monitor. As such this could be secured legally.
- 6.16 In summary, the site consists of an area originally forming part of the adjacent ancient woodland. The site was denuded of much of the vegetation and soil by a previous owner prior to 2018. Such works likely had an impact on the remaining trees as well as effectively removing much of the woodland habitat.
- 6.17 The proposals would not exacerbate the above impacts and over time would help to alleviate the worst of the historical impacts on trees, whilst allowing some limited regeneration of woodland edge. Alongside the re-creation of ancient woodland further east proposed within the Ancient Woodland Mitigation Strategy, the proposals are considered to result in an overall significant Arboricultural gain in the long-term and would secure better ongoing management of the surroundings for the benefit of trees and ecology.

Ecology

- 6.18 An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey has been undertaken and this confirmed that habitats present include artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface, developed land; sealed surface, modified grassland, ruderal/ephemeral, willow scrub, native hedgerow, individual trees and most likely modified grassland. Habitats onsite are common and widespread and mostly of low ecological value. Individual mature trees and offsite adjacent woodland and lake have higher ecological value.
- 6.19 Most of the proposals lie within 15m of ancient woodland. However, the scale of activity within this area will be significantly reduced from a potential of 9 anglers plus partners, to a maximum of 6 people staying in the huts. Much of the site has been historically surfaced, some of which has now been removed and grassed. The new works are also above-ground surfacing only. The submitted AWMS sets out a mitigation strategy for the ancient woodland, as discussed above.
- 6.20 Recommendations to avoid ecological impacts include the removal of invasive species, protection and buffering of the adjacent ancient woodland, a pre-works site check for badgers, covering of trenches at night, minimising and controlling lighting, maintaining the proposed working area as a short sward prior to commencement, careful vegetation clearance, and habitat enhancements particularly adjacent to the ancient woodland.
- 6.21 In relation to the BNG proposals these include a belt of mixed scrub, enhancement of modified grassland, planting of new native trees and hedgerow. These measures result in a 10.45% net gain for habitat units, and a 350% net gain for hedgerow units.

Amenity Impacts

- 6.21 The huts are sufficiently distant from the nearest residential properties to avoid any adverse impacts on neighbouring residents or footpath users. The nearest house belongs to the applicants, with the next closest property being over 350m away with a number of trees and other buildings in between. The proposal would not result in increased usage of the driveway as traffic associated with the huts would be offset by the reduced number of anglers that can be accommodated around Furnace Lake.
- 6.22 The proposal is smaller in scale than the historical use made of the site and is likely to appeal to people wanting a quiet break in the countryside so noise is likely to be limited and imperceptible. Two of the huts have been occupied by visitors for a number of months and the applicant is not aware of any noise complaints having been made.
- 6.23 In relation to the previous application, the case officer considered the proposal to not have a harmful impact on residential amenity.

Highways

- 6.24 The site is accessed off Guildford Road via an existing driveway that requires no alteration to service the proposal.
- 6.25 Traffic generated by huts is likely to be limited and less than the site has historically generated. It is likely that the huts will appeal to people wanting to enjoy the countryside on foot or bike, but for those that do want to venture out in their car during their stay trips are likely to be localised.
- 6.26 Due to the size of the huts and sleeping arrangements they are only suitable for couples or individuals who are likely to arrive in a shared car. Ample space for cars is available within the existing car park which is underutilised. Again, as the proposal would reduce the number of people on site in comparison with the historical use it is likely that the proposal would result in fewer parking spaces being required.

Flood Risk

- 6.27 As previously stated, since the date of the previous application flood risk mapping has been updated and the entirety of the site now lies within Flood Zone 1.

7. Summary

- 7.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the proposal for three shepherd huts at Furnace Lakes represents an appropriate, low-impact form of rural tourism development that aligns with both local and national planning policy. The principle of development has previously been accepted, and no material changes have occurred that would alter this position.
- 7.2 The proposal makes effective use of previously surfaced fishing swims, reduces overall activity on the site compared with historic angling use, and enhances the quality and diversity of visitor accommodation within the district. The shepherd huts are modest in scale, sensitively designed, and largely screened within the landscape, resulting in no harmful visual, amenity or transport impacts.
- 7.3 Crucially, the application provides robust and comprehensive evidence to address the previous reasons for refusal. Updated flood risk mapping confirms that the huts and access lie entirely within Flood Zone 1, while the submitted Ancient Woodland Mitigation Strategy and ecological assessments demonstrate that the scheme will not harm ancient woodland or biodiversity. Instead, the proposals secure long-term habitat restoration, a reduction in disturbance, and significant net gains for biodiversity.
- 7.4 Overall, the development represents a sustainable rural diversification project that will support the local economy, improve the site's environmental condition, and offer high-quality visitor accommodation without creating adverse impacts. The proposal is therefore considered compliant with the Horsham District Planning Framework, the Rudgwick Neighbourhood Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, and planning permission should be granted accordingly.

