



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/1147

Morlands Farm, Wheatsheaf Road, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9AT

DESCRIPTION:

Demolition of part of the existing barn and conversion of the remainder to a dwelling with associated alterations, garden, garage and parking.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

None relevant.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The site is located two miles northeast of Henfield Village and to the south of Wheatsheaf Road, accessed via a private road. The barn is part of Morlands Farm, a small holding which was formally home to the horticultural business, Sussex Prairies. Directly to the north is the former Dutch Barn which is also part of the farm and was converted to residential use in 2019. Other residential properties lie further north towards the junction with Wheatsheaf Road on the other side of the lane. The site is bounded by mature field oaks and dense hedgerows to the south and east screening anything other than the face of the main barn from view from public vantage points. The site is not situated within a conservation area and is outside of any special landscape designations.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The application building comprises a single storey agricultural storage barn, associated with Sussex Prairie Gardens which is now closed to the public. The existing building has a total GIA of 445m². The main structure is constructed from a timber frame under a corrugated sheet roof and believed to have been constructed around 1910. The application seeks to convert the main part of the building to a dwellinghouse and utilise part of the existing lean to on the western side at the southern end to provide an outside seating area. The lean-to at the northern end would be demolished. Part of the building at the northern end would provide a garage. Parking exists to the front of the building, with access direct from Wheatsheaf Road. The proposed dwelling would have a GIA of 211m².

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development

Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection

Policy 28 - Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside

Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development

Policy 33 - Development Principles

Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets

Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport

Policy 41 - Parking

Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2016-2031):

Policy 3 – Design

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development

Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy

Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection

Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality

Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles

Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport

Policy 25: Parking

Policy 45: Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside

Policy 46: Ancillary Accommodation

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Planning Advice Notes:

Facilitating Appropriate Development

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:

HDC Environmental Health: Comment [Summary]

Buildings with a commercial or agricultural land use history can be subject to significant contamination risks arising from their use, construction and storage of machinery equipment fuels or other chemicals. Potentially hazardous materials may also be incorporated into made ground, yards and hard standings. The Structural Appraisal report notes the use corrugated cement fibre sheeting to form the roof covering.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Planning Practice Guidance, information is required on these matters and a preliminary risk assessment including a site walkover should be provided to ensure the site can be made safe and suitable for the development.

Ecology Consultant: No Objection [Summary]

We are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application.

The mitigation measures identified in the Bat Scoping Letter (The Ecology Co-Op, March 2026) should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. This is necessary to conserve and enhance protected and Priority species particularly those recorded in the locality.

Southern Water: Comment [Summary]

Our investigations indicate that Southern Water can facilitate water supply to service the proposed development. Southern Water requires a formal application for a connection to the water supply to be made by the applicant or developer.

No soakaways should be connected to the public surface water sewer.

The Environment Agency should be consulted directly by the applicant regarding the use of a septic tank drainage which disposes of effluent to sub-soil irrigation.

WSCC Highways: No Objection [Summary]

The Local Highway Authority does not consider that the proposal for a single dwelling would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

1 letter of Support has been received from 1 address, supporting the application on the following grounds:

- Sympathetically designed and compliments the area and existing "Dutch" barn

Parish Comments:

Support.

Member Comments:

None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

The application is located outside of the designated built-up area boundary and is therefore within a countryside location.

Policy 2 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) sets out the main growth strategy, focusing development in the main settlements. The application site is situated outside of any of the defined settlements as categorised under Policy 3 of the HDPF and therefore is considered to be in a countryside location in policy terms.

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.

The HDPF outlines that the proposed settlement hierarchy is the most sustainable approach to delivering housing; with new development focused in the larger settlements of Horsham, Southwater and Billingshurst; with limited new development elsewhere, 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. The site is located outside any of the District's defined built-up area boundaries (BUAB) and does not form part of Horsham's adopted development plan. As a result, residential development in this location would conflict with the requirements of Policy 4 and would not usually be considered acceptable in principle.

In 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. These include development that enables the sustainable development of rural areas, but do not include any explicit provision for reuse of existing buildings.

Policy 10 of the HDPF states that proposals for the conversion of rural buildings to business and commercial uses will be considered favourably in the first instance.

Policy 32 of the Draft Local Plan states that conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to residential use will be supported where: it can be demonstrated that the current use is no longer necessary, and the building is appropriate for conversion given its existing site, architectural merit, character and setting.

The application is located outside of the designated built-up area boundary and is therefore within a countryside location, contrary to Policies 4 and 26 of the HDPF. The proposal involves the part-demolition of the existing building and conversion of the remainder of the building and conversion of the remainder of the building to a 3-bed dwelling, with associated alterations, garden, garage and parking. For development outside of settlement boundaries, NPPF Policy S5 (1)(c) states that the reuse, extension or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the existing building, will be supported unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects.

The proposed development would represent a conversion of an existing lawful building, the building is already in situ and appears suitable for conversion, with appropriate and sensitive alterations (subject to material planning considerations). The previous use of the building was as a café and storage; however, it hasn't been demonstrated why the business is no longer viable as no marketing information has been provided. It is further acknowledged that isolated homes should be avoided unless the development meets one or more criteria from NPPF Policy HO11. Policy HO11(1)(c) is the most relevant to this application, with the development utilising an existing building, previously used as a café, barn and garage as part of Sussex Prairies. It is acknowledged that the site is not isolated in the truest sense, owing to the siting of residential properties to the northwest, northeast and south.

It is acknowledged that the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and this would trigger NPPF S5(1)(j) where the proposal would contribute towards addressing an evidenced unmet housing need. However, S5(1)(j)(i) states that where development is proposed to address an unmet need, it must also be '*physically well-related to an existing settlement*'. It is considered that the proposed development is approximately 2km, as the crow flies, to the nearest settlement of Henfield, which is classified as a small town and larger village by Policy 3 of the HDPF. The application site is physically separated from the built-up settlement by open countryside and does not constitute a natural extension to the settlement, resulting in a clear distinction between the application site and the existing settlement.

NPPF Policy CC2(1)(a) requires developments to contribute to climate change mitigation by taking opportunities to improve walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, and infrastructure is provided to support the transition to zero-emission vehicles. In this application, the reliance on the private car would not encourage sustainable patterns of movements. NPPF Policy TR3 furthers that development should be located and designed to support sustainable travel choices, reduce dependence on private

vehicles, make efficient use of transport infrastructure and minimise environmental and highway impacts.

The applicant notes that the above policies do not require development to be served by walking routes and public transport, rather they simply require that opportunities are taken to make development more sustainable in the interests of climate change. It is appreciated that the previous café use could attract multiple vehicular movements to and from the site, more so than the proposed use as a single dwelling, thereby representing a significant improvement. However, while it is acknowledged that there is an extensive public footpath network in the surrounding area, the shortest route is 3km to the nearest settlement with services and facilities, so this is not considered reasonable. These footpaths are also not suitable or accessible for everyday use due to being unpaved and unlit. The surrounding walking routes are not considered to provide a realistic option to meet the day-to-day needs of potential occupiers, and it is therefore considered that the location of the site limits opportunities for sustainable travel. The development would therefore result in the occupants relying on the use of a car for the majority of day-to-day movement.

An appeal decision for Lancasters Cottage (DC/24/0669) – for one dwelling outside the built-up area boundary – was refused due to the location not being considered sustainable by the Inspector. The Inspector highlighted that *‘there is no footpath, nor is there a separate cycleway. Even if traffic levels are low, it is still unlikely that this would be an attractive walking or cycling option for future occupiers, particularly in the dark or in poor weather. It is unlikely that future occupiers would use the bus services that would also require travelling this route. While there is a public right of way opposite the site, it is still some distance until the next village. Although there is a footpath from Littleworth to Partridge Green, this would not overcome the issues that exist between the site and Littleworth.... Even taking account of its rural location, the appeal site is not in a location which would allow for ready use of means of travel other than the private car.’*

The applicant notes NPPF Policy L3 which requires that *‘substantial weight should be given to the benefits where a development proposal would achieve one or more of the following: b. making better use of vacant and underutilised land and buildings (such as: by bringing back into residential use empty homes and other suitable buildings’*. It is acknowledged that the proposed development would represent a conversion of an existing lawful building, with the building existing and appearing suitable for conversion, with appropriate and sensitive alterations. It is further acknowledged that the development would not be isolated in the truest sense due to the surrounding residential development. Of these developments is the Dutch barn to the north of the site. Prior approval consent was granted in 2017 (ref: DC/17/0906) to convert the Dutch barn to a 3-bed dwelling. This conversion to residential use is acknowledged and would form a material consideration in the assessment of the proposal, however, while this is one consideration, it is considered that the unsustainable location as detailed above would be of greater weight when allowing new residential development in the countryside.

With the above in mind, the principle of the proposal is resisted. The appropriate degree of weight to be assigned to conflict with these policies is detailed further below.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves, and enhances the landscape and townscape character from inappropriate development. Proposals should take into account townscape characteristics, with development seeking to provide an attractive, functional and accessible environment that complements the locally distinctive character of the district. Buildings should contribute to a sense of place, and should be of a scale, massing, and appearance that is of a high standard or design and layout which relates sympathetically to the landscape and built surroundings.

Woodmancote Parish Council Design Policy 3 states that *the scale, design, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials of all development proposals, including alterations to existing buildings will be required to reflect the architectural and historic character and scale of the surrounding buildings and is appropriate to the plot size.*

Following the closure of the public gardens the buildings are no longer required for agricultural purposes. The existing building is a single storey agricultural storage barn associated with Sussex Prairie Gardens which is now closed to the public. The building has a GIA of 445m², and is constructed from a timber frame, under a corrugated sheet roof, constructed around 1910. The Structural Appraisal accompanying the application states that the unit is in very good condition, despite its age, and is suitable for conversion.

The building is wholly contained within the existing, predominantly well-screened site boundaries and set back from the main road. The proposed dwelling would appear in some views from the private land and public footpath that runs alongside the boundary, however, in most views, it would be screened from the public. The site is not situated within a prominent countryside location, with the previous use of the site as a café and gardens, and a number of residential dwellings located nearby. Therefore, there would be no impact on the character and appearance of the area outside the application site.

The existing gross internal floor area of the building is approximately 445m². The proposed dwelling including the part-demolition, would have a GIA of approximately 211m². The proposed building would have a reduced floor area, and the curtilage area is of sufficient size to accommodate this. The proposal makes use of an existing building on site, which appears suitable for conversion with appropriate and sensitive alterations, with the building partially demolished. The overall scale of the building would be reduced, with a reduction of 214m² over the existing building, due to the partial demolition of the building, and the appearance is considered to be an improvement.

New windows and doors are well considered and result in a dwelling of high quality. The addition of a brick chimney has been purposefully oversized to avoid over domesticating the character of the original building. The abstract form of the chimney is reminiscent of a dovecote or grain drying vent, continuing the agricultural language of the design. The layout of the dwelling appears open and flexible to change. The existing character of the agricultural buildings are maintained, to avoid an overly domestic or urban character. The massing and form and choice of materials reflect the appearance of the existing and adjacent buildings within the agricultural setting. Corrugated metal roofs and dark stained timber cladding will match the existing and reinforce a utilitarian agricultural character.

The proposal is therefore considered to be of a design, form and scale which is appropriate to the existing character and appearance of the area, and which would not harm the character and appearance of the wider area. It is therefore considered that the visual impact of the proposal is acceptable and would accord with the above policies.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 32 of the HDPF states that development will be expected to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe, and adaptable environment that contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves. Policy 33 continues that development shall be required to ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land.

The nearest dwelling is the Dutch Barn, as approved under DC/17/0906, this sits immediately to the north. The proposed dwelling has been designed to have outlook to the east, west and south to ensure there is no loss of privacy to the dwelling to the north. The northern part of the dwelling, would have a garage and passageway, providing more perceived separation between the habitable sections of both dwellings. Both of the properties benefit from reasonably sized private garden areas. It is therefore considered that there would be no harmful amenity impacts as a result of the proposal. It is also noted that one letter of support for the proposal has been received.

Highways Impacts:

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

The site is accessed via a privately maintained access road off Wheatsheaf Road. The private road is of good standard and serves the existing reequipments of the site sufficiently. The existing access arrangements will continue, with existing large metal gates off the lane at the southeast end of the barn

leading to an area of hardstanding where parking can accommodate three vehicles which would be sufficient to serve the likely demand. It is noted that an internal garage is also proposed, which could accommodate an additional parking space. There would be sufficient facilities for vehicles to turn within the site and exit in a forward gear. WSCC Highways did not consider that the proposed dwelling would materially alter vehicular movements along Wheatsheaf Road, the previous use as an agricultural storage building with café and seating area would be considered to have generated a greater number of vehicular trips. The LHA did not consider the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network. No objections were raised.

Ecology:

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.

The Planning Statement states that the site is currently hard surfaced. A Bat Scoping Assessment was provided, which confirmed that assessment was undertaken in February 2026. The report confirmed that the building has no suitability for roosting bats, considering the condition of the building. As such, it was concluded that the proposed development would not impact on roosting bats, and no further surveys were recommended. The site can be enhanced for bats by placing bat boxes on nearby trees or buildings at a height of 3m or higher. Ecology confirmed there were no objections with the proposal and confirmed their agreement that no further surveys were required. Enhancement measures, such as bat boxes, could be secured by condition and implemented in full in the event that permission were to be granted.

Water Neutrality:

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality.

On 31st October 2025 Natural England formally withdrew the 2021 Position Statement, citing a package of measures that they were satisfied would safeguard the Arun Valley sites. Principal amongst these measures is a reduction in the Southern Water abstraction licence 'by March 2026'. However, given the licence change has not yet taken place Horsham District Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, cannot yet be certain that new development will not result in adverse impacts on the Arun Valley sites.

To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000 litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching. Natural England standing advice dated 10 November 2025 raises no objection to using these savings to enable development to come forward. The standing advice clarifies that it functions as Natural England's formal response pursuant to Regulation 63(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to all relevant planning applications which seek to achieve water neutrality using the above Southern Water savings.

Officers have undertaken an Appropriate Assessment which demonstrates that the anticipated increase in mains water consumption from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day.

Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby complying with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and N6 of the NPPF.

Drainage and Flood Risk:

The application site is located outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3 and is not impacted by surface water flooding. The planning statement states that there is existing foul drainage on site for the café toilets and it will be necessary that any new system meets the needs of the 3-bedroom dwelling proposed. It is considered that the site would have some connection to foul drainage due to its previous use. Surface water will be fed into the existing pair of large ponds which connect to each other and overflow into soakaways within the garden- details of which could be suitably dealt with by way of condition in the event that permission were to be granted.

Other Matters:

Contaminated Land:

Environmental Health were consulted and commented that commercial and agricultural buildings can be subject to significant contamination risks arising from their use, construction and storage of machinery equipment fuels or other chemicals. In accordance with the recommendations of the Planning Practice Guidance, information is required in the form of a Preliminary Risk Assessment to ensure the site can be made safe and suitable for residential development. Details relating to contamination and former uses of the site could therefore be dealt with by way of condition in the event that permission were to be granted.

Climate Change:

Policies 35, 36 and 37 require that development mitigates to the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reducing flood risk, reducing water consumption, improving biodiversity and promoting sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect the requirements of Chapter 14 of the NPPF that local plans and decisions seek to reduce the impact of development on climate change. The proposed development includes the following measures to build resilience to climate change and reduce carbon emissions:

- Requirement to provide full fibre broadband site connectivity
- Refuse and recycling storage
- Cycle parking facilities
- Electric vehicle charging points
- Air quality mitigation strategy

Subject to these conditions, the application could suitably reduce the impact of the development on climate change in accordance with local and national policy in the event that permission were to be granted.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed. Off-site

gains (on unregistered sites) and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

The Applicant has demonstrated that the development is exempt from the requirement to achieve a minimum 10% BNG by reason of:

- The development qualifies as 'self-build or custom housing' under Regulation 8 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Conclusions:

Planning permission is sought for the demolition of part of the existing barn and conversion of the remainder to a dwelling with associated alterations, garden, garage and parking. As the site is not allocated for development within the HDPF or a made neighbourhood plan, owing to the site's location outside the built-up area boundary, the principle of development is contrary to Policies 1, 2, 4, and 26 of the HDPF and S5, CC2 and TR3 of the NPPF (2026).

The Council's most recent Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) confirms that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The latest AMR also confirms that the Council is not currently able to demonstrate a Housing Delivery Test score higher than 75%. The NPPF (2026) states that such shortfalls establish an "evidenced unmet need" for housing across the District (in accordance with Policy S5 and Annex D). S5(j)(i) goes on to state that where an unmet need is identified, development should be "*physically well-related to an existing settlement (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure*". As per the preceding sections of the report, Officers are of the view that the development is not physically well-related to an existing settlement. Therefore, a formal planning balance is required to weigh the benefits of housing delivery against any policy conflict and site-specific harm.

As above, the Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note (SDPAN) was endorsed at Cabinet on 17 September 2025. The SDPAN recognises at 5.12 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 5-year housing land supply. Given this position and the principles behind HDPF Policy 4, it will consider positively applications that meet all of the criteria:

- 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.

The site is located in a countryside location, though not isolated in the truest sense, it is a relatively remote location that does not adjoin the settlement edge. Therefore, the proposal fails on the first criterion and therefore the development does not benefit from the provisions of the SDPAN.

In the context of the Council's current 5-year housing land supply position, the provision of housing as a general principle is a matter of significant weight. However, because this proposal would provide for one dwelling, it makes no meaningful contribution toward recovering this shortfall. As such, the weight attributable to this specific scheme's housing delivery is tempered to moderate weight.

It is acknowledged that any development would bestow socio-economic benefits, such as the creation of temporary jobs during the construction phase in the short-term, and local expenditure and contribution to the local economy in the medium to long-term arising from increase occupancy. However, this is not a particularly unique benefit that would result from this development. Nonetheless, this benefit is afforded *limited weight* in the overall planning balance.

The proposal's ability to demonstrate an absence of adverse ecological harm and acceptable highways impact (among others) are neutral considerations that demonstrate general policy compliance rather than positive benefits weighing in favour of the scheme. No other discernible benefits would arise from the granting of this permission.

As per the preceding sections of this report, the granting of this permission would conflict with Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF. This conflict with the development plan is afforded *significant weight*, as it would undermine the strategic process of allocating housing sites for development in appropriate locations, and the democratic process of selecting sites within Neighbourhood Plans.

While the Council's 5-year housing land supply deficit establishes an 'evidenced unmet need' under Policy S5 and Annex D of the Framework, this does not grant automatic support for unsustainable development in unallocated locations. The site fails to meet the locational criteria of the Council's SDPAN, which would not be well-related to an existing settlement, contrary to NPPF (2026) S5(1)(j)(i), CC2 and TR3, and the proposal would result in demonstrable adverse impacts on the character and settlement strategy of the local area. This harm would not be sufficiently outweighed by the moderate benefit of providing one market dwelling, in the context of the Council's housing land supply deficit. Furthermore, exceptional circumstances do not exist to justify a departure from the spatial strategy, such as the site being a conversion of an existing lawful building. The proposal therefore fails to constitute sustainable development, and the application is recommended for refusal.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

Horsham District Council has adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule which took effect on 1st October 2017.

It is considered that this development constitutes CIL liable development.

Use Description	Proposed	Existing	Net Gain
District Wide Zone 1	210.2m2	445m2	0m2
		Total Gain	0m2
		Total Demolition	234.5m2

Please note that the above figures will be reviewed by the CIL Team prior to issuing a CIL Liability Notice and may therefore change.

Exemptions and/or reliefs may be applied for up until the commencement of a chargeable development.

In the event that planning permission is granted, a CIL Liability Notice will be issued thereafter. CIL payments are payable on commencement of development.

Recommendation: Application Refused

Reason for Refusal:

1. The development would be located beyond a defined built-up area on a site not allocated within the Development Plan and would not be essential to this countryside location. The development would therefore be contrary to the overarching spatial strategy and hierarchy approach of concentrating development within defined settlements and advocating a planned approach to settlement expansion, contrary to policies 1, 2, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015). Notwithstanding the absence of a five-year land housing supply, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026) it is not considered that there are any material considerations in this instance which would outweigh harm arising from conflict with Local and Neighbourhood Plan policies in these regards.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/26/1147

Schedule of plans/documents **not approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan		280/PL/000	07.08.2026
Site plan	Existing	280/PL/001	07.08.2026
Site plan	Proposed	280/PL/002	07.08.2026
Floor plan	Existing ground	280/PL/100	16.07.2026
Roof plan	Existing	280/PL/101	16.07.2026
Elevation plan	Existing north east and south east	280/PL/150	16.07.2026
Elevation plan	Existing north west and south west	280/PL/151	16.07.2026
Section plan	Existing	280/PL/160	16.07.2026
Floor plan	Proposed ground	280/PL/200	16.07.2026
Roof plan	Proposed	280/PL/201	16.07.2026
Elevation plan	Proposed north east and south east	280/PL/250	16.07.2026
Elevation plan	Proposed north west and south west	280/PL/251	16.07.2026
Section plan	Proposed	280/PL/260	16.07.2026
Design & Access Statement	Design and Access Statement	NONE	16.07.2026
Supporting Statement	Planning Statement	NONE	16.07.2026
Supporting Statement	Bat Scoping Letter Report	NONE	16.07.2026
Supporting Statement	Structural Appraisal	NONE	22.09.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Bethan Tinning Date: 30.09.2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 02.10.2026