



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/0084

Barnards Nursery, Rock Road, Washington, West Sussex,

DESCRIPTION:

Permission in Principle for the demolition of existing structures/buildings and erection of 1no. dwelling.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

HRA/21/0004	Application under Regulation 77 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 in respect of Prior Approval consent DC/20/1363.	Application Refused on 01.06.2022
DC/25/1584	Permission in Principle for the demolition of existing structures / buildings and erection of up to 4no. dwellings.	Application Refused on 08.12.2025

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site is located to the east of Rock Road, outside of any defined built-up area boundary. The site is therefore located within the countryside in policy terms.

The site is currently occupied by redundant nursery infrastructure, including several large glasshouse frames and ancillary outbuildings, many in poor structural condition. The site has a made access track leading into the site from Rock Road to the west. The site is bound by tall conifer trees on the western and southern boundaries, and established trees to the east.

The existing glasshouse structures are substantial and occupy a significant proportion of the site. Land beyond the application site is comprised of agricultural land and farm buildings, with some residential dwellings to the north and south arranged sporadically. The defined built-up area of Storrington and Sullington is located some 450m away to the west.

There are no statutory or locally designated heritage assets on the site. Whilst the site lies outside of the South Downs National Park, it lies circa 160m to the east of the boundary.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

This application seeks Permission in Principle (PiP) for the redevelopment of the former Barnards Nursery site following the demolition of existing horticultural buildings and glasshouses to create 1 dwelling.

The site comprises a former commercial nursery use and includes a number of dilapidated glasshouse structures, associated sheds, and hardstanding. The proposal seeks to establish the principle of redevelopment for the demolition of these buildings for a residential development of 1 dwelling, with matters of layout, access, design and landscaping reserved for a later Technical Details Consent stage should Permission in Principle be granted.

This application is an amendment to DC/25/1584 which sought Permission in Principle for the creation of 4 dwellings. This application was refused on 08/12/2025 for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposed development would be sited within an unsustainable location in the countryside, outside of a defined built-up area boundary, and on a site not allocated for housing development within the Horsham District Planning Framework, or a made Neighbourhood Plan. Furthermore, the proposed development is not essential to its countryside location. Notwithstanding the absence of a five-year land housing supply, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) at paragraph 11(d), it is not considered that there are any material considerations in this instance which would outweigh harm arising from conflict with Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policies 1 and 8 of the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan (2019).*
- 2. The proposal, by reason of the introduction of up to four dwellings on this rural site, would result in a suburban form and intensity of development that would not reflect the dispersed and low-density pattern of built development in the surrounding countryside. The amount of development proposed would require a layout and residential presence that would appear at odds with the rural character of the area and would erode the open, transitional qualities of the site. The development would therefore result in harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and would fail to conserve or enhance the landscape character of the locality, contrary to Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the design and character principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).*

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs
Policy 17 - Exceptions Housing Schemes
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking

Storrington and Sullington Neighbourhood Plan (2019):

Policy 1 – A Spatial Plan for the Parishes
Policy 8 – Countryside Protection
Policy 14 – Design
Policy 15 – Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 17 – Traffic and Transport

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council is currently in the process of reviewing its development plan however at this stage the emerging policies carry only limited weight in decision making. As the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for the determination of this application must be considered as to whether they are 'out of date' (NPPF paragraph 11d). This

includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, whether the Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (NPPF footnote 8).

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the supply currently calculated as being 1.7 years. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing development within the District (unless footnote 7 or Paragraph 14 applies to relevant applications), with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying only moderate weight in decision making.

All other policies within the HDPF as itemised above have been assessed against the NPPF and are considered to be consistent such that they continue to attract significant weight in decision making.

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

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development

Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy

Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion

Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change

Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use

Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction

Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality

Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection

Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection

Strategic Policy 16: Protected Landscapes

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 32: Conversion of Agricultural and Rural Buildings to Commercial, Community and Residential Uses

Strategic Policy 37: Housing Provision

Strategic Policy 38: Meeting Local Housing Needs

Policy 41: Rural Exception Homes

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Parish Design Statement:

Planning Advice Notes:

Shaping Development in Horsham District (SDPAN)

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:

Southern Water: Comment (02/02/26)[Summary]

No objection. Conditions advised

WSCC Highways: Comment (10/02/26) [Summary]

The LHA is limited in its ability to comment on an application for PIP. In principle, the LHA would not raise any objections to an application at this site, subject to the submission of sufficient information at Technical Details Stage.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

7 letters of Objection have been received from 1 address, objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- Conflict with Local Plan spatial strategy and countryside protection policies.
- Unsustainable location with poor accessibility to local services.
- Highway safety and access concerns.
- Parking
- Adverse impact on local character and appearance of the area.
- Over development of the site
- Amenity impacts (noise, privacy, light pollution).
- Ecological and drainage considerations.

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

- Use of previously developed land
- Current buildings are unattractive
- Proposal would be proportionate, in keeping with the surrounding residential context, and far less intrusive than the existing buildings
- Would significantly improve the appearance of the site and its surroundings.

Matters raised that are not for consideration at PIP stage

A number of representations mirror those submitted under DC/25/1584 raise concerns relating to highways safety, parking, access, design, landscaping, trees, residential amenity (privacy, light and noise), habitat disturbance, drainage, lighting, and construction management.

It is important to note that this application has been submitted as a Permission in Principle (PiP). In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017, only the location, land use and amount of development can be considered at this stage.

All detailed technical matters, including access arrangements, parking, layout, scale, design, landscaping, ecology, drainage, and construction impacts, fall to be considered at the subsequent Technical Details Consent stage, should Permission in Principle be granted.

These concerns are therefore not determinative for this application but will require full assessment if a Technical Details Consent application is submitted.

Parish Comments:

Washington Parish Council:

None received

Member Comments:

Councillors Claudia Fisher, Emma Beard and Joan Grech wish for it to be heard at Committee if minded to approve. If however, the recommendation is for refusal, Councillors are satisfied that it can be decided under delegated authority.

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

The Permission in Principle consent route is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for residential development, which separates the consideration of matters of "principle" for the proposed development, from the "technical details" of the development. As such, the Permission in Principle route has two stages: the first being the "Permission in Principle" stage (subject of this current application), which establishes whether the site is suitable in-principle; and the second being the "Technical Details consent" stage which is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.

The scope of the Permission in Principle application (being the first stage) is limited to location, land use, and amount of development.

Location:

Policy 2 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) sets out the overarching growth strategy, focusing development within the District's main settlements. The adopted settlement hierarchy represents the most sustainable approach to accommodating growth, directing the majority of new housing to Horsham, Southwater and Billingshurst, with only limited development elsewhere, and only where it accords with an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy 3 seeks to retain the existing settlement pattern and ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations possible. Policy 4 supports limited settlement expansion outside built-up area boundaries only where: the site is allocated in the Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins an existing settlement edge; the scale of growth is appropriate to the settlement; the proposal meets identified local needs; and the development is contained within defensible boundaries that respect landscape character.

In this countryside location, Policy 26 is also engaged. It seeks to protect the rural area against inappropriate development unless it is essential to a countryside location and meets one of the following criteria: supporting agriculture or forestry; enabling mineral extraction or waste disposal; providing for quiet informal recreation; or enabling the sustainable development of rural areas.

Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) similarly advises that isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless specific exceptions apply—such as for rural workers, heritage benefits, the reuse of redundant buildings that enhance their setting, subdivision of existing dwellings, or design of exceptional quality.

The application site lies outside any defined Built-Up Area Boundary, and therefore in planning policy terms forms part of the countryside, where new development is strictly controlled. The proposal seeks permission in principle for up to four dwellings following demolition of former nursery buildings.

Accordingly, the proposal conflicts with the spatial strategy of Policies 2, 3 and 4 of the HDPF, which direct new growth to the most sustainable settlements to minimise reliance on the private car and promote access to services.

The Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate the site for development, and it does not adjoin an existing settlement edge. It is identified within the NP as countryside where only limited forms of development are supported. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies 1 and 8 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The applicant advances that the site is located close to the Montpelier Gardens / Luckings Yard allocated sites under Policy 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan, and cites examples of developments that have been approved associated with the use of this policy. However, these examples are located directly adjacent to these sites, and are therefore considered to be justified in the assessment of being 'within and around' these sites. By contrast, the application site is located some 0.6km (at its nearest edges) to these allocations, and therefore does not accord with the wording of the policy.

The applicant advocates that the site constitutes previously developed land. However, given the site is / was formerly in an agricultural use (horticulture), the site would not meet the definition of previously developed land according to the glossary in the NPPF.

Nevertheless, the site is located in an unsustainable rural location, remote from day-to-day services and public transport connections. Any residential redevelopment would be heavily dependent on the private car and would not represent a sustainable pattern of growth.

The reduction from the refused four dwellings to one materially lessens the suburbanisation concerns previously identified. Unlike the earlier cul-de-sac form submitted under the refused application, a single dwelling could theoretically be accommodated without creating a dense enclave.

However:

- The policy conflict was not solely about scale, but about introducing a new residential planning unit in an unallocated countryside location.
- The existence of former nursery buildings does not establish a residential fallback or justify replacement housing.

Accordingly, while the character harm is reduced, the strategic locational harm remains unchanged.

Although it is recognised that the Council currently cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, recent appeal decisions for single dwellings outside built-up area boundaries (e.g. DC/20/2086 – Lancasters Cottage, Partridge Green; and DC/20/2128 – Marringdean Barn, Billingshurst) confirm that such shortfall does not automatically justify development in unsustainable locations. In those cases, Inspectors acknowledged limited economic and housing benefits, but found these outweighed by conflict with the adopted spatial strategy.

In this context, the proposal does not satisfy the criteria for countryside development under Policy 26, nor does it meet the exceptions listed in NPPF paragraph 84. While the proposal would make limited contribution to housing supply through the reuse of brownfield land, these benefits are insufficient to outweigh the significant conflict with the spatial strategy of the Development Plan.

It is therefore concluded that the principle of development is unacceptable, as the proposal would constitute unsustainable residential development in the countryside, contrary to Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Policies 1 and 8 of the Neighbourhood Plan and the overarching principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Land Use:

The application relates to the demolition of existing commercial nursery buildings and the provision of 1no. dwelling on the site. From the information available, it is understood that this dwelling would be a private market dwelling.

The block plan suggests that the dwelling would be to the east of Rock Road, positioned centrally within the plot. The development site would be located to the south of a residential dwelling known as Newlands, with the wider land to the east in agricultural use.

During the site visit it was observed that the existing glasshouse buildings are substantial in scale and occupy a significant proportion of the site. While their removal and the redevelopment of the site could offer some visual and environmental improvement, this consideration is not sufficient to outweigh the conflict with the adopted spatial strategy and the unsustainable location of the site.

Officers note that the site previously benefited from a prior approval consent to convert the agricultural building(s) to residential use (permitted at appeal under DC/20/1363- granted 16.12.2021). However, more than three years has lapsed since the granting of the prior approval, and there is no evidence before the Council to suggest that the consent was completed within this time period. Therefore, there remains no viable fallback as an alternate to the proposal.

As outlined above, residential development within the countryside location, on a site not allocated for development within the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan, would be contrary to the overarching spatial strategy expressed through Policies 3 and 4 of the HDPF and Policy 1 of the Storrington and Sullington Neighbourhood Plan. The provision of a residential dwelling on the site is therefore considered to result in inappropriate development within an unsustainable location, with the proposed land use not considered appropriate for these reasons.

Amount of Development:

Policies 25 and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves and enhances landscape character and ensures that proposals reflect the locally distinctive character of settlements. Policy 32 requires high quality design. Proposals should consider landscape 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.

The current application seeks Permission in Principle for the erection of 1no. dwelling, representing a reduction from the previously refused scheme for up to four dwellings under application DC/25/1584. This reduction in scale is acknowledged and materially alters the nature of development proposed. The earlier scheme raised concerns that the creation of a small residential enclave would introduce a suburban form of development that would not reflect the dispersed settlement pattern of the surrounding countryside. The present proposal, being limited to a single dwelling, would not give rise to the same degree of suburbanisation or intensity of built form.

However, within the context of a Permission in Principle application, the consideration of “amount” is not confined solely to visual or layout impacts. It must also address whether the scale of development proposed is appropriate having regard to the site’s countryside location and its position outside the defined settlement hierarchy.

The site presently contains a collection of former horticultural buildings which, while substantial, are utilitarian in character and associated with a historic commercial use. Their presence does not establish a residential character to the site, nor does their removal justify the introduction of a new dwelling as a direct replacement in land-use terms. The proposed development would therefore represent not simply a reduction or rationalisation of built form, but the establishment of a permanent residential planning unit where none presently exists.

The surrounding built pattern along Rock Road is characterised by sporadic, loosely related dwellings set within large plots and interspersed with open land. This pattern reflects incremental rural evolution rather than planned expansion. Introducing even a single new dwelling within the application site would extend residential encroachment into an area that presently reads as part of the countryside gap between built form, thereby altering that transitional character.

In this regard, the quantum of development must be considered in strategic as well as physical terms. Although limited to one dwelling, the proposal would contribute to incremental growth outside the settlement boundary in a manner that conflicts with the Development Plan’s objective of directing new housing to defined sustainable locations. The amount of development is therefore not neutral in policy terms; it would establish a precedent for residential use that is unrelated to the settlement strategy and would cumulatively erode the distinction between settlement and countryside if repeated elsewhere.

Accordingly, while the reduction to one dwelling lessens the visual and character concerns associated with the previous proposal, the amount of development proposed is still not considered appropriate in

principle given the site's location and the objectives of the Development Plan to prevent unplanned incremental development in the countryside.

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 paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

Other Environmental Considerations:

Sustainable Transport

The site lies in a location where walking and cycling to key services would be impractical for most residents, and there are no realistic public transport options. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy 40 of the HDPF.

Climate Change:

Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) require that development mitigates the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reduced flood risk, lower water consumption, enhanced biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), which requires that local plans and decisions support the transition to a low carbon future and minimise vulnerability to climate impacts.

Given the outline nature of this Permission in Principle application, limited technical detail has been provided at this stage. At the detailed design stage, it is anticipated that the following measures could

be incorporated to ensure the development builds resilience to climate change and reduces carbon emissions:

- Water consumption limited to 110 litres per person per day, in line with Policy 37 and Building Regulations Part G;
- Integration of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and permeable surfacing to manage surface water runoff;
- Provision of electric vehicle charging points for the dwelling;
- Refuse and recycling storage incorporated within the layout;
- Opportunities for biodiversity net gain, to be delivered through new landscaping and habitat creation; and
- Improved energy performance of the dwellings in accordance with, or exceeding, Building Regulations Part L requirements.

Full details of these measures would be expected at the Technical Details Consent stage, where conditions can be imposed to secure their implementation. Subject to these future provisions, the proposed development could suitably reduce its impact on climate change and would accord with Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Ecology and 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.

Given the outline nature of this Permission in Principle application, detailed ecological information has not been submitted at this stage. Should the principle of development be supported, ecological survey work and appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures would be required at the Technical Details Consent stage to ensure compliance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), the NPPF (2024), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

The site also falls within the scope of the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regime. A minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity value will be required to be demonstrated at the Technical Details Consent stage, through submission of a habitat baseline assessment and Biodiversity Metric calculation in accordance with the Environment Act 2021 and the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (General) Regulations 2024.

At this stage, it is considered that the site provides scope to deliver BNG through appropriate landscaping and habitat creation as part of any detailed design, and that the requirements of Policy 31 and national BNG legislation could reasonably be met.

The matters of scale, design, layout, and access for the proposed development are reserved for consideration under the subsequent "Technical Details" application.

Employment / Former Commercial Use

The site was formerly in commercial horticultural use but has been vacant for a considerable period (estimated at around 20 years). No supporting evidence has been provided concerning the loss of employment use; however, given the longstanding redundancy of the site and the absence of any current economic activity, it is considered that the proposal would not result in the loss of an active or viable employment site. The site is not safeguarded for employment use in the HDPF or the Neighbourhood Plan. Detailed consideration of economic impact would therefore not be proportionate or necessary at this Permission in Principle stage, which is limited to the assessment of location, land use, and amount of development.

Conclusions and Planning Balance

The application seeks Permission in Principle for the demolition of the existing nursery structures and the erection of 1no. dwelling at Barnards Nursery, Rock Road, Washington.

In considering a Permission in Principle application, the Local Planning Authority is required to assess only the matters of location, land use and amount of development. Detailed matters relating to layout, appearance, access, landscaping, drainage and environmental mitigation would be subject to consideration at any subsequent Technical Details Consent stage and do not form part of this determination.

Whilst the site contains substantial former horticultural buildings and can be described as previously developed in physical terms, the proposal would introduce a new residential use on land that lies outside any defined Built-Up Area Boundary and is not allocated for development within either the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) or the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan (2019). The site does not form a logical extension to the settlement pattern and would instead represent an encroachment of residential development into the countryside, contrary to the spatial strategy which seeks to focus growth within sustainable settlement locations.

The reduction in scale from the previously refused scheme to a single dwelling is acknowledged and lessens earlier concerns regarding intensity of development. However, even at this limited scale, the proposal would establish a new residential planning unit in a location where such development is not supported in principle and would incrementally erode the distinction between settlement and countryside. Furthermore, whilst the development may provide some economic benefits, such as local employment opportunities and associated revenue to local business and Council tax contribution, these are short term benefits and not considered out of the ordinary for development in general. As such, these benefit is afforded limited weight.

It is recognised that the removal of the existing nursery structures could result in a modest visual improvement to the site. Nevertheless, this benefit does not outweigh the fundamental policy conflict arising from the introduction of an unsupported residential land use in an unsustainable countryside location.

At present, the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, and its adopted Local Plan (the Horsham District Planning Framework, 2015) is more than five years old. Consequently, paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) is engaged, which establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF does not apply in this case, as the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan is more than five years old

In these circumstances, planning permission should be granted unless:

- the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusal; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

The proposed development would make a modest contribution to the District's housing supply, utilising previously developed land and improving the visual appearance of a disused site. These factors weigh in favour of the proposal.

However, the site lies within the open countryside, well outside any defined Built-Up Area Boundary, and in a location that is remote from day-to-day services and facilities. The introduction of a single dwelling in this location would represent an unsustainable pattern of development, contrary to the spatial strategy of the Horsham District Planning Framework and the sustainability principles of the NPPF. The site is also not identified within the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan, and the proposal would therefore conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan's spatial approach to

directing development. The proposal would therefore represent a clear conflict with the development framework, to which granting consent would undermine the Council's spatial strategy. This factor is attributed significant harm.

Having regard to the scale of the proposal, the limited contribution it would make to housing supply, and the identified harm to the rural character and sustainable spatial pattern of the District, the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the NPPF as a whole.

Accordingly, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in this case, and the proposal is not acceptable in principle.

Although the Council is presently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and the presumption in favour of sustainable development in paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) is engaged, the limited benefits associated with the delivery of a single dwelling would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the harm arising from conflict with the Development Plan's spatial strategy.

Ultimately, the proposal would not represent sustainable development when assessed against the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

Recommendation: Application Refused

Reason for Refusal:

- 1
- The proposed development would be sited within an unsustainable location in the countryside, outside of a defined built-up area boundary, and on a site not allocated for housing development within the Horsham District Planning Framework, or a made Neighbourhood Plan. Furthermore, the proposed development is not essential to its countryside location. Notwithstanding the absence of a five-year land housing supply, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) at paragraph 11(d), it is not considered that there are any material considerations in this instance which would outweigh harm arising from conflict with Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policies 1 and 8 of the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan (2019).

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/26/0084

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

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location & Block plan		PAS 388 / 100 REV C	13.01.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Daniel Holmes Date: 18/02/2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 24.02.2026