

TITLE: **Planning Support Statement**  
APPLICANT: Zaibatsu Developments Ltd  
LOCATION: Land south of Sunningdale, Horsham Road, Steyning  
ISSUED: Thursday, 13 August 2026

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**Appendices:**

Appendix 1.0 - Independent Design Review Panel Feedback

# 1. Introduction

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- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Axiom Planning on behalf of Zaibatsu Developments Ltd in support of a full planning application concerning land south of Sunningdale, Horsham Road, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3AA (“the site”).
- 1.2. The application proposes the erection of Scarp House: a detached five-bedroom dwelling of exceptional architectural and landscape quality, together with a detached garage, swimming pool, a new vehicular access from Horsham Road, comprehensive landscape and ecological enhancement, sustainable drainage and associated works.
- 1.3. The proposal has been conceived and developed as a National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) Paragraph 84(e) dwelling. It is not a conventional countryside house. It is a site-specific, landscape-led work of architecture that combines a distinctive built form with long-term woodland, hedgerow, meadow and wetland enhancement.
- 1.4. The purpose of this Statement is to identify the relevant statutory and policy framework, draw together the design and technical evidence, address the matters raised through pre-application engagement and independent design review, and explain why planning permission should be granted.
- 1.5. The planning case is advanced on a robust alternative basis. First, the Council’s pre-application officer and the Inspector at nearby Wappingthorn Lodge considered this part of Horsham Road not to be isolated for the purposes of Paragraph 84. On that analysis, Paragraph 84 does not impose a policy prohibition on the proposed home, while its exceptional design attracts significant weight under NPPF Paragraph 139.
- 1.6. Secondly, if the decision-maker concludes that the site is physically isolated from a settlement in the sense established by the courts, the proposal satisfies both limbs of Paragraph 84(e). The fourth and final Design Review Panel report expressly concludes that the proposal meets the high bar set by Paragraph 84(e), including the requirements for truly outstanding architecture, wider rural design value, significant enhancement of the immediate setting and sensitivity to local character.
- 1.7. The proposal is acknowledged to conflict with the locational elements of the adopted development plan, principally Policies 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework. That conflict is addressed directly rather than obscured.

- 1.8. Horsham District Council's Authority Monitoring Report 2024/25 identifies only 1.7 years of deliverable housing land supply. The most important policies for determining housing applications are therefore out-of-date for the purposes of NPPF Paragraph 11(d), and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged.
- 1.9. The development delivers exceptional design, a significant beneficial effect on landscape character, measurable biodiversity gains substantially above the statutory minimum for area habitats and hedgerows, a comprehensive water-management strategy, strong regulated operational-carbon reduction and a high-quality additional home. The identified benefits are not generic; they arise from the specific, independently reviewed and technically coordinated proposal.
- 1.10. When the development plan, NPPF and all other material considerations are read together, the limited locational harm and modest transport disadvantage do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the proposal's benefits. Material considerations indicate that permission should be granted.

## Documents Submitted

- 1.11. The principal application documents reviewed in preparing this Statement are identified below. The application forms, ownership certificates and Community Infrastructure Levy forms will be completed through the application process and are not reproduced in this list.

| Topic                | Document                                                                | Date / reference      |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Application drawings | A-001 – Scarp House – Existing Location Plan                            | Current drawing issue |
| Application drawings | A-002 – Scarp House – Existing Site Plan                                | Current drawing issue |
| Application drawings | A-003 – Scarp House – Proposed Location Plan                            | Current drawing issue |
| Application drawings | A-004 – Scarp House – Proposed Site Plan and Residential Curtilage Plan | Current drawing issue |
| Application drawings | A-100 – Scarp House – Ground Floor Plan                                 | Current drawing issue |
| Application drawings | A-101 – Scarp House – First Floor Plan                                  | Current drawing issue |
| Application drawings | A-102 – Scarp House – Roof Plan                                         | Current drawing issue |
| Application drawings | A-103 – Scarp House – Basement and Detached Garage Plans and Elevations | Current drawing issue |
| Application drawings | A-104 – Scarp House – Proposed South and East Elevations                | Current drawing issue |
| Application drawings | A-105 – Scarp House – Proposed North and West Elevations                | Current drawing issue |
| Application drawings | A-106 – Scarp House – Proposed Contextual Elevations                    | Current drawing issue |
| Application drawings | A-107 – Scarp House – Proposed House Section                            | Current drawing issue |

|               |                                                                           |                                        |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Design        | Stage 3 – Design and Access Statement, Scarp House (Parts 1–2)            | 19 June 2026                           |
| Design review | Sunningdale, Steyning – DRP Feedback                                      | 4 April 2025                           |
| Design review | Scarp House – DRP Feedback                                                | 26 November 2025                       |
| Design review | Scarp House – DRP Feedback                                                | 24 February 2026                       |
| Design review | Scarp House – DRP Feedback                                                | 3 July 2026                            |
| Landscape     | Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, ref. DPLC/471/LVIA                | 10 June 2026                           |
| Landscape     | 2591 Scarp House Landscape Summary                                        | May 2026                               |
| Landscape     | 2591-REA001-L101 – Existing Site Plan                                     | May 2026                               |
| Landscape     | 2591-REA001-L104 D – GA Landscape Plan, Rev D                             | May 2026                               |
| Landscape     | 2591-REA001-L201 – Boundary Elevations                                    | May 2026                               |
| Landscape     | 2591-REA001-L401 C – Tree, Hedge & Seed Plan, Rev C                       | May 2026                               |
| Landscape     | Scarp House Tree, Whip and Seed Plant Schedule, Rev B                     | May 2026                               |
| Landscape     | Scarp House Landscape Management Plan, Rev B                              | August 2026                            |
| Ecology       | Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, ref. 241104-PEA-01c                     | 19 June 2026                           |
| BNG           | Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, ref. 241104-BNG-01a                     | 30 April 2026; updated<br>17 June 2026 |
| BNG           | Biodiversity Net Gain Metric – Scenario 1 (inclusive of enhancements)     | June 2026                              |
| Arboriculture | Arboricultural Impact Assessment, ref. AIA.SH.1005.V2                     | 6 May 2026                             |
| Arboriculture | Arboricultural Impact Plan, ref. AIP.SH.1005.V2                           | May 2026                               |
| Arboriculture | Arboricultural Method Statement, ref. AMS.SH.1005.V2                      | May 2026                               |
| Arboriculture | Tree Protection Plan, ref. TPP.SH.1005.V2                                 | May 2026                               |
| Arboriculture | Arboricultural Report Addendum, ref. AA.SH.1005.V1, and pipeline addendum | 12 June 2026                           |
| Drainage      | Flood Risk Assessment, ref. 14007, Issue 2                                | June 2026                              |
| Drainage      | Drainage Strategy Plan, ref. 14007/1100 P3                                | May–June 2026                          |
| Highways      | Transport Statement, ref. 14007, Issue 2                                  | May 2026                               |
| Energy        | Energy Statement, Version 2.1                                             | 17 April 2026                          |
| Energy        | Approved Document O – Dynamic Thermal Modelling                           | 22 May 2026                            |
| Energy        | Building Regulations Compliance Report                                    | 2026                                   |

## 2. Site Description

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- 2.1. The site lies on the eastern side of Horsham Road, north of Steyning. It comprises a substantial private amenity parcel associated with Sunningdale rather than an operational agricultural holding.
- 2.2. The existing land is predominantly amenity grass and productive garden, with a polytunnel, well, greenhouse, shed and other modest ancillary structures. Its baseline character is enclosed and domestic, with relatively limited intrinsic biodiversity value within the principal grassed area.
- 2.3. Sunningdale lies immediately to the north and Nash House lies to the south. Development along Horsham Road is sporadic and low-density, with individual dwellings and rural properties separated by vegetation and open land.
- 2.4. The site is strongly contained by mature vegetation. A substantial predominantly hazel hedgerow follows Horsham Road. Mature hedgerows and trees define the southern and eastern boundaries, while woodland, shaws and tree groups contribute to enclosure within the wider landscape.
- 2.5. The ground is generally level to gently varying, with recorded levels broadly between approximately 23 metres and 26 metres AOD. An ordinary watercourse or ditch follows the north-western part of the site.
- 2.6. The existing vehicular access serving Sunningdale lies to the north. The application proposes a separate access from Horsham Road approximately 43 metres south of that access, avoiding reliance on a shared domestic entrance.
- 2.7. No public right of way crosses the site. Public footpaths and other routes within the wider study area have been assessed through the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The proposed dwelling is not visible from the assessed public rights of way.
- 2.8. The site lies outside the defined built-up area boundary for Steyning and is therefore within the countryside for the purposes of the adopted development plan. The centre of Steyning is approximately 1.5 miles away by road.
- 2.9. The site is outside the South Downs National Landscape, whose boundary lies approximately 800 metres to the south. It is not within a conservation area and no surveyed tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

- 2.10. The nearest designated heritage assets are the Grade II listed buildings at and around Wappingthorn Farm Dairy, approximately 200–270 metres to the north, and Huddlestone Farmhouse further to the north-east. Mature vegetation, intervening development and the road network substantially limit visual connection.
- 2.11. The site lies within the Low Weald National Character Area and the Wiston Low Weald landscape character area. The defining characteristics include a gently undulating pastoral landscape, small and medium-sized fields, hedgerows, shaws, woodland, scattered dwellings and farmsteads, rural lanes, ponds and stream valleys.
- 2.12. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and the submitted Flood Risk Assessment identifies low risk from all assessed sources of flooding. Localised surface-water susceptibility is confined principally to the ditch and the lower northern edge, away from the proposed dwelling and access.
- 2.13. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal records no priority habitat within the site. The boundary vegetation provides potential nesting-bird, bat-foraging and commuting habitat, together with limited opportunities for reptiles, great crested newt, dormouse and hedgehog. These features have shaped the avoidance, mitigation and enhancement strategy.
- 2.14. The site lies within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone and within the zone of influence considered in relation to the Arun Valley internationally designated sites. The current planning position on water neutrality is addressed in Section 6 of this Statement.

### 3. Planning History

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- 3.1. No previous formal planning application affecting the application site has been identified on the Council's online planning portal. The relevant history is therefore the extensive pre-application and design-review process, together with the nearby Wappingthorn Lodge appeal.

#### **PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT**

- 3.2. Horsham District Council issued written pre-application advice under reference PE/25/0072 on 30 June 2025. The proposal at that stage was materially different: it was described as a three-bedroom dwelling using a shared access and was supported by preliminary landscape proposals.
- 3.3. The Council identified conflict with the adopted spatial strategy and countryside policies, and considered the site remote rather than isolated because it lies between Sunningdale and Nash House within a sporadically developed part of Horsham Road.
- 3.4. The Council accepted that neighbour amenity was unlikely to be harmed and that the proximity of listed buildings was unlikely to create an adverse heritage effect. It welcomed the proposed sustainability approach but sought a clearer architectural narrative, stronger rural typology, further landscape and visual evidence, a satisfactory access solution, ecology and BNG evidence, drainage and, at that time, a water-neutrality statement.
- 3.5. The application now before the Council has been comprehensively redesigned. It proposes a five-bedroom house with a new independent access; it is accompanied by final landscape, ecology, BNG, arboricultural, drainage, transport, energy and overheating evidence; and it has undergone three further stages of design review following the initial Council advice.
- 3.6. The former applicant-side requirement for a bespoke water-neutrality statement has also changed materially. Natural England withdrew its Sussex North position statement on 31 October 2025. Current applications are no longer required to provide a bespoke water-neutrality statement or offset payment, although the Council remains responsible for any necessary Habitats Regulations assessment.

#### **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

- 3.7. The scheme has been reviewed on four occasions by The Design Review Panel. The process is a central part of the design evidence because it demonstrates iterative, independent and multidisciplinary scrutiny rather than a single assertion of exceptional quality.

| Date             | Stage                                   | Planning significance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 April 2025     | Initial in-person review and site visit | The Panel recognised potential but sought a clearer client-led narrative, simplification and stronger integration of architecture, landscape, water and rural typology.                                                                                                          |
| 26 November 2025 | Second review                           | The revised Scarp House concept, landscape relationship and material strategy were examined. Further consolidation and technical coordination were encouraged.                                                                                                                   |
| 24 February 2026 | Third review                            | The Panel found significant progress, particularly in the landscape strategy, but considered the architectural narrative, composition, scale, garage and sustainability integration required further resolution before the first limb of Paragraph 84(e) was met.                |
| 3 July 2026      | Fourth and final desktop review         | The Panel concluded that the proposal now meets the high bar set by Paragraph 84(e), is truly outstanding, raises rural design standards, significantly enhances its setting and is sensitive to local character. Remaining comments were refinements, not threshold objections. |

- 3.8. The Design and Access Statement and current application drawings comprise the scheme considered at the fourth review. The final Panel report therefore represents the most recent and relevant independent design assessment.
- 3.9. The report states that the design is iterative, coherent, convincing and site-specific. It confirms that the architecture and landscape are integrated, that the scarp concept is legible, that the setting is significantly enhanced, and that the proposal has wider value for rural design.
- 3.10. The Panel's final suggestions are properly understood as refinements to an already qualifying design. They are not treated in this Statement as conditions precedent to meeting Paragraph 84(e).

## NEARBY APPEAL

- 3.11. The most relevant nearby decision is the appeal at Wappingthorn Lodge, Horsham Road, reference APP/Z3825/W/24/3341171, allowed on 10 December 2024.
- 3.12. The Inspector concluded that the Wappingthorn Lodge site was not isolated for the purposes of Paragraph 84 because of sporadic development along Horsham Road and its relationship to Steyning. The Inspector nevertheless found conflict with Policies 4 and 26 and acknowledged car dependence.
- 3.13. The appeal was allowed under the tilted balance because the adverse impacts did not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The decision is not a direct precedent: it concerned the conversion of existing buildings and benefited from the reuse of previously developed land. Its relevance lies in its assessment of this local stretch of Horsham Road, the

limited weight to spatial-policy conflict in a severe housing shortfall and the operation of Paragraph 11(d).

## 4. The Proposal

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### OVERVIEW

- 4.1. The application proposes Scarp House, a detached five-bedroom dwelling conceived as a low, landscape-led composition of connected forms beneath a dominant sloping planted roof. The house is arranged over basement, ground and first-floor levels, with a detached garage and pool integrated into the overall composition.
- 4.2. The proposed dwelling has a total gross internal area of 527 sqm, comprising 259 sqm at ground-floor level, 172 sqm at first-floor level, 96 sqm at basement level.
- 4.3. The proposal is located toward the western part of the site, close enough to Horsham Road to avoid an unnecessarily long driveway while retaining substantial landscape to the east. Its siting maintains separation from Sunningdale and Nash House and allows the majority of the land to perform as an enhanced, semi-natural landscape.
- 4.4. The design derives from the wider geological and topographical language of the South Downs scarp and its Low Weald footslopes. It does not imitate an historic farmhouse. Instead, it interprets local landform, flint, timber, layered vegetation and rural enclosure through a contemporary architectural language.
- 4.5. Three linked geometries create changes in direction, framed views, daylight and a sequence of internal and external spaces. The building is visually anchored by substantial knapped-flint walls and is drawn into the landscape by the sloping green roof, planted landform and controlled transition between domestic curtilage and wider habitat.
- 4.6. The proposed finished floor level is approximately 24.5 metres AOD. The earthworks strategy balances approximately 1,200 cubic metres of cut and 1,200 cubic metres of fill, avoiding the export or import of a net volume of soil and allowing the building and landscape to be formed together.

### ARCHITECTURE AND MATERIALS

- 4.7. The principal material palette comprises locally resonant knapped flint, timber structure and cladding, high-performance glazing, restrained metal fascias and external louvres, and a planted roof. The palette is durable, tactile and rooted in the material character of the Low Weald and the southern edge of the District.

- 4.8. The flint walls provide mass, craft and permanence. Timber introduces warmth and a lower-carbon structural and finish material. The green roof continues the landscape over the building, supports biodiversity, attenuates rainwater and reduces the visual distinction between architecture and landform.
- 4.9. The detached garage has been integrated into the arrival sequence and design language. It provides secure parking, cycle storage and ancillary accommodation without competing with the principal dwelling.

## **LANDSCAPE STRATEGY**

- 4.10. The landscape proposals are integral to the development rather than a screen added after the architectural design. They convert a predominantly amenity landscape into a connected mosaic of woodland shaws, native hedgerows, meadow, orchard, scrub, wetland, swales, pond and future veteran trees.
- 4.11. The residential curtilage is deliberately contained, ending at the pool edge. Beyond it, the landscape is managed as a more naturalistic and ecologically productive setting. This distinction avoids an extensive suburban garden and preserves the wider land as part of the rural landscape framework.
- 4.12. The planting strategy proposes 49 new trees in total, including 42 outside the residential curtilage. The tree, whip, hedge and seed plans provide the species, quantities and spatial arrangement, while the Landscape Management Plan secures establishment and long-term stewardship.
- 4.13. A naturalistic pond and planted swales form part of the landscape and sustainable drainage strategy. They provide attenuation, seasonal wetland habitat and a visible expression of water management.

## **ACCESS AND PARKING**

- 4.14. A new access is proposed from Horsham Road approximately 43 metres south of the existing Sunningdale access. The access is 4.8 metres wide with 6-metre kerb radii and provides visibility splays derived from measured traffic speeds.
- 4.15. Three car-parking spaces are provided, together with secure cycle storage for at least two cycles. The layout accommodates turning, servicing, refuse collection and fire-appliance access.

## **DRAINAGE, ECOLOGY AND ENERGY**

- 4.16. Surface water is managed through a coordinated SuDS system comprising the planted roof, swales and raingardens, permeable driveway construction, attenuation within the permeable sub-base and the landscape pond. Discharge is restricted to the existing greenfield rate before entering the boundary ditch.
- 4.17. Foul drainage is proposed through a package treatment plant with treated effluent discharged to the ditch, subject to the Environment Agency's binding rules and any required ordinary-watercourse consent.
- 4.18. The development retains the principal ecological corridors, protects boundary features and incorporates species-specific enhancements. The submitted BNG Assessment demonstrates 16.74% habitat-unit gain and 65.31% hedgerow-unit gain. The applicant will additionally secure 0.01 off-site watercourse unit so that the watercourse trading position also exceeds the statutory 10% requirement.
- 4.19. The energy strategy follows a fabric-first approach and incorporates very low U-values, airtight construction, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, a ground-source heat pump and a 5 kWp photovoltaic array. The submitted modelling demonstrates a 77.9% reduction in regulated carbon emissions against the Part L 2021 notional baseline.
- 4.20. Dynamic thermal modelling confirms that all relevant zones are at low risk of overheating and satisfy the relevant Approved Document O and CIBSE TM59 criteria without active cooling. The glazing, natural ventilation, MVHR and targeted louvre strategy form part of the passive environmental design.
- 4.21. External lighting will be deliberately limited and controlled. A condition can secure a low-level, downward-directed, warm and time-controlled scheme that protects boundary vegetation, bat corridors, neighbour amenity and the rural night-time environment.

## 5. Planning Policy

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### STATUTORY DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

- 5.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires regard to the development plan and other material considerations.
- 5.2. The NPPF is a material consideration. It does not displace the statutory priority afforded to the development plan, but its policies, together with housing-land-supply evidence and other considerations, can indicate that a decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

### NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 5.3. The current operational NPPF was published in December 2024 and amended in February 2025. The later draft Framework published for consultation is not adopted policy and is not relied upon in this Statement.
- 5.4. Paragraphs 7–11 establish the objective of sustainable development and the presumption in its favour. Paragraph 11(d) requires permission to be granted where the most important policies are out-of-date unless the application of protective policies provides a strong reason for refusal, or the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole.
- 5.5. Paragraph 39 requires authorities to approach decision-taking positively and creatively. Paragraph 56 confirms that otherwise unacceptable development may be made acceptable through conditions where the relevant tests are met.
- 5.6. Paragraphs 61 and 73 seek a sufficient supply and variety of homes and recognise the contribution of small sites. Paragraph 83 recognises the role of housing in maintaining or enhancing the vitality of rural communities.
- 5.7. Paragraph 84 requires isolated homes in the countryside to be avoided unless an identified exception applies. Paragraph 84(e) applies where the design is of exceptional quality because it is truly outstanding, reflects the highest standards in architecture, helps raise rural design standards, significantly enhances its immediate setting and is sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

- 5.8. Paragraphs 115 and 116 address sustainable transport, safe and suitable access and the threshold for refusing development on highway grounds. Paragraph 110 recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions vary between urban and rural areas.
- 5.9. Paragraph 131 identifies the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places as fundamental. Paragraphs 137 and 138 encourage early engagement and appropriate use of design-review tools. Paragraph 139 requires significant weight to be given to outstanding or innovative designs that promote high levels of sustainability or raise design standards, provided they fit with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.
- 5.10. Paragraphs 187 and 193 require development to conserve and enhance the natural environment, recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, minimise biodiversity impacts and integrate measurable net gains.

## THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 5.11. The development plan comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015, the Steyning Neighbourhood Plan 2019–2031, and the relevant county minerals and waste plans. The latter do not raise a material issue for this single dwelling.

| Policy     | Subject                                                     | Application to proposal                                                                         |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HDPF 1     | Sustainable Development                                     | Presumption in favour; positive decision-making.                                                |
| HDPF 2–4   | Strategic Development, hierarchy and settlement expansion   | Direct most housing to defined settlements; principal locational conflict.                      |
| HDPF 24–26 | Environmental protection, landscape and countryside         | Protect countryside character, landscape pattern, landform, tranquillity and rural qualities.   |
| HDPF 30–31 | Protected landscapes, green infrastructure and biodiversity | Protect South Downs setting; maintain and enhance GI and biodiversity.                          |
| HDPF 32–33 | Quality of new development and development principles       | Context-led design, sense of place, scale, massing, materials, amenity and function.            |
| HDPF 35–37 | Climate change, energy and sustainable construction         | Energy efficiency, renewable technologies, climate resilience and sustainable design.           |
| HDPF 38    | Flooding                                                    | Avoid increased flood risk and apply SuDS.                                                      |
| HDPF 39–41 | Infrastructure, sustainable transport and parking           | Safe access, proportionate transport response and adequate parking.                             |
| SNDP1      | Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity                       | Protect and enhance natural capital, landscape features, biodiversity and carbon sequestration. |
| SNDP2      | Responsible Environmental Design                            | Integrate hedges, trees, ponds, corridors, SuDS, energy efficiency and renewables.              |

|       |                           |                                                                                              |
|-------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SNDP3 | Contribution to Character | Make a positive contribution to local character and respect scale, mass, form and materials. |
|-------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- 5.12. The site lies outside the Steyning built-up area boundary. A new dwelling is not allocated and is not essential to an agricultural or forestry use. The proposal therefore conflicts with the settlement strategy in Policies 3 and 4 and with the restrictive locational element of Policy 26.
- 5.13. The proposal nevertheless strongly accords with the development plan's design, landscape, biodiversity, climate, drainage, amenity, highway and parking policies. The degree of conflict is therefore focused on location and principle, rather than the environmental or technical acceptability of the development.

## **EMERGING PLAN**

- 5.14. The Horsham District Local Plan 2023–2040 remains under examination. Proposed Main Modifications are subject to consultation between 13 July and 24 August 2026, with further hearing stages to follow. The emerging plan is not adopted and its policies may change; it is therefore afforded only such limited weight as its stage and consistency with national policy justify.

## **HOUSING LAND SUPPLY AND THE PRESUMPTION**

- 5.15. The Council's Authority Monitoring Report 2024/25, published on 19 December 2025, identifies 1.7 years of deliverable housing land supply. The shortfall is acute.
- 5.16. Under NPPF Paragraph 11(d) and Footnote 8, the policies most important for determining the housing application are out-of-date. The tilted balance is engaged.
- 5.17. The Steyning Neighbourhood Plan remains part of the development plan and carries statutory weight. The application does not rely on its age to disapply it. Instead, the proposal demonstrates strong compliance with its environmental-design policies and addresses any spatial conflict through the NPPF and the planning balance.

## **WATER NEUTRALITY AND HABITATS REGULATIONS**

- 5.18. Natural England withdrew its Sussex North Water Neutrality Position Statement on 31 October 2025. For applications submitted from 1 November 2025, Horsham District Council no longer requires an applicant to submit a bespoke water-neutrality statement, pay into the former offsetting scheme or enter a water-neutrality obligation.
- 5.19. The Council remains the competent authority for the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and will undertake any necessary screening or Appropriate Assessment. The

proposal's rainwater harvesting, efficient fittings and wider water-management strategy provide additional environmental benefits, while compliance with the optional Part G standard of 110 litres per person per day can be secured by condition.

## 6. Material Planning Considerations

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### DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK AND PRINCIPLE

- 6.1. The starting point is the development plan. The proposal is a new dwelling outside the built-up area boundary and therefore conflicts with the locational strategy in HDPF Policies 3, 4 and 26.
- 6.2. That conflict is material, but it is not the end of the decision. Policy 26 also seeks development of an appropriate scale that protects and enhances the countryside's landscape pattern, ecology, tranquillity and landform. The proposal performs strongly against those qualitative objectives.
- 6.3. The NPPF is a material consideration of substantial importance. Paragraph 84(e), Paragraph 139, the final independent design-review conclusion and the severe housing-land-supply shortfall provide policy and evidential support capable of justifying a decision other than strict conformity with the locational strategy.
- 6.4. The proposal is small-scale in housing terms, comprising one home. It will not cause settlement coalescence, create a new suburban estate or establish a pattern of ordinary speculative housing. Its justification depends on the exceptional and site-specific qualities demonstrated by this application.

### ISOLATION AND THE ENGAGEMENT OF PARAGRAPH 84(E)

- 6.5. The NPPF does not define "isolated". In *Braintree District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2018] EWCA Civ 610, the Court of Appeal rejected an interpretation based simply on access to services and focused the policy on physical separation from a settlement. *City & Country Bramshill Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government* [2021] EWCA Civ 320 confirms that the assessment remains a matter of planning judgment applied to the physical context.
- 6.6. The Council's pre-application officer considered that the site was remote rather than isolated because it lies between Sunningdale and Nash House within a sporadically developed part of Horsham Road. The Wappingthorn Lodge Inspector reached the same broad conclusion about the locality.
- 6.7. On that locally informed assessment, the proposal is not an "isolated home" to which the opening restriction in Paragraph 84 applies. Paragraph 84(e) is then not required as an exception to a national policy prohibition.

- 6.8. That conclusion does not deprive the exceptional design of weight. The scheme has been independently assessed against the Paragraph 84(e) standard and the final Panel concludes that it meets it. The same qualities attract significant weight under Paragraph 139 and are central to the overall planning balance.
- 6.9. If the decision-maker instead concludes that the site is physically isolated from a settlement, owing to the fact that the sporadic form of local development fails to comprise a “settlement”, Paragraph 84 is directly engaged. In that event, the proposal falls within Paragraph 84(e) for the reasons set out below. The application therefore has a coherent policy route on either reasonable view of isolation.

### **EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY AND THE HIGHEST STANDARDS IN ARCHITECTURE**

- 6.10. Exceptional quality is not established merely by describing a building as unusual or attractive. It requires a rigorous relationship between site analysis, concept, form, materials, environmental performance, landscape and delivery.
- 6.11. Scarp House is the product of a long, iterative process involving four independent reviews and coordinated input from architecture, landscape, planning, ecology, arboriculture, highways, drainage and energy specialists.
- 6.12. The final design has a clear conceptual origin. It interprets the relationship between the Low Weald and the South Downs scarp through a planted roof descending into the landscape, massed flint walls, controlled changes in direction and a sequence of sheltered and open spaces.
- 6.13. The concept does not depend on artificially claiming that the site itself is a steep scarp. It draws from the wider geological and landscape condition and translates it into an architectural response that is specific to this location, its materials, enclosure and horizon.
- 6.14. The composition is legible and disciplined. The building is not a collection of conventional domestic elevations. Connected forms, fracture points and shifts in geometry create controlled light, framed views and spatial hierarchy while retaining a coherent overall silhouette.
- 6.15. The material strategy reflects high standards of craft and durability. Knapped flint gives the building weight and local resonance; timber provides warmth, structure and reduced embodied impact; glazing and metalwork are carefully controlled; and the green roof performs architecturally, ecologically and hydrologically.

- 6.16. Environmental design is integral. The form, orientation, fabric, glazing, natural ventilation, louvres, MVHR, ground-source heat pump, PV, green roof and rainwater strategy have been modelled and coordinated rather than appended as generic technologies.
- 6.17. The fourth Design Review Panel report concludes that the proposal is truly outstanding, reflects the highest standards in architecture and meets the high bar set by Paragraph 84(e). That is independent professional evidence to which the decision-maker should give substantial weight in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 138.

## **RAISING STANDARDS OF RURAL DESIGN**

- 6.18. The proposal has wider value beyond the quality of a single house. It demonstrates how a substantial contemporary dwelling can be justified in a rural setting without resorting to pastiche, generic neo-vernacular styling or reliance on screening alone.
- 6.19. It raises standards by integrating architecture and landscape from the outset; limiting domestic curtilage; treating water as a visible landscape and ecological resource; using local materials in a contemporary way; combining energy performance with spatial quality; and committing the wider land to long-term habitat and landscape management.
- 6.20. The four-stage review process provides a replicable model for design evolution. Concerns were identified, tested and resolved through independent scrutiny. The resulting evidence will assist the Council and future rural applicants in understanding what a genuinely landscape-led and technically coordinated response entails.
- 6.21. The final Design Review Panel expressly concludes that the proposal helps raise standards of design more generally in rural areas. The first limb of Paragraph 84(e) is satisfied.

## **SIGNIFICANT ENHANCEMENT OF THE IMMEDIATE SETTING**

- 6.22. The immediate setting is presently a private amenity landscape with grass, productive-garden elements, modest structures and mature boundary vegetation. Its enclosure is valuable, but the central land has limited ecological diversity and lacks the layered structure characteristic of the wider Low Weald.
- 6.23. The proposal does more than preserve this baseline. It establishes new woodland shaws, reinforces hedgerows, creates meadow and scrub, introduces an orchard, establishes wetland and pond habitat, plants future veteran trees and connects habitats across the site.
- 6.24. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment concludes that the proposal will have a Moderate beneficial and Significant effect on landscape character. That conclusion is

important: the landscape effect is not simply neutral or successfully mitigated; it is materially beneficial.

- 6.25. The visual effect is assessed as Negligible beneficial and Insignificant overall. The house is not visible from the assessed public rights of way. Changes from Horsham Road are principally the new access and momentary glimpses of the architecture within its enhanced landscape setting.
- 6.26. The curtilage boundary at the pool edge is a key planning control. It prevents the whole site becoming suburban garden and allows the larger area to read and function as semi-natural rural landscape.
- 6.27. The BNG Assessment independently quantifies part of the enhancement: 16.74% habitat-unit gain and 65.31% hedgerow-unit gain, together with an off-site watercourse unit commitment to secure more than 10% watercourse gain.
- 6.28. The final DRP report concludes that the proposals significantly enhance the immediate setting and are sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area. The second limb of Paragraph 84(e) is satisfied.

## **SENSITIVITY TO LOCAL CHARACTER**

- 6.29. The defining local characteristics are the Low Weald's hedged and wooded enclosure, small-scale pastoral pattern, shaws, mature trees, ponds and watercourses, dispersed settlement, rural lanes, farmsteads, locally distinctive flint and timber, tranquillity and the nearby presence of the South Downs.
- 6.30. The siting retains the road-side pattern of dispersed development without extending Steyning or creating a new settlement edge. The dwelling remains within a strongly vegetated parcel between existing properties.
- 6.31. The landscape strategy restores and strengthens hedges and shaws, establishes pasture-like meadow and scattered trees, introduces a pond and seasonal swales, and avoids an extensive ornamental garden.
- 6.32. The architecture uses flint, timber and planted roofscape to respond to local materiality and landform without copying a historic building. Its contemporary expression is therefore locally grounded rather than placeless.

- 6.33. The proposal protects long views, the setting of the South Downs and the quiet rural experience of nearby paths and lanes. A controlled lighting condition will protect the night-time environment.

## **LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT**

- 6.34. The final Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment prepared by David Parfitt Landscape Consultancy follows established professional methodology and assesses 13 representative viewpoints within an 800-metre study area.
- 6.35. The assessment identifies the site as strongly enclosed by the Horsham Road hedgerow, southern and eastern boundaries, mature trees and surrounding vegetation. The theoretical visibility was tested using a nine-metre model and verified in the field.
- 6.36. Effects are limited to four viewpoints: three around the proposed access on Horsham Road and one near Nash House where new tree canopies will become visible. The dwelling itself is absent from the remaining assessed public views.
- 6.37. The assessment finds no adverse effect on the South Downs National Landscape, public rights of way, Wappingthorn Farm Dairy, Huddlestone Farmhouse or the wider Wiston Low Weald character area.
- 6.38. The proposed planting and management follow the relevant landscape-character guidance by restoring hedgerows and shaws, creating woodland links, planting isolated trees, improving ponds and streamside habitat and reducing the appearance of an amenity or paddock landscape.
- 6.39. The proposal accords with HDPF Policies 25, 26, 30 and 31 and SNDP1–3 in landscape and character terms.

## **ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN**

- 6.40. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by Tom Haley Ecology identifies no priority habitat within the application site and no likely adverse effect on statutory or non-statutory designated sites arising from the scale and pathways of the proposal.
- 6.41. The development retains and protects the principal boundary habitats. Sensitive construction methods, nesting-bird timing or checks, precautionary methods for reptiles, amphibians and dormouse, and protection of the ditch can be secured through a Construction Environmental Management Plan or equivalent condition.

- 6.42. External lighting will avoid illumination of boundary hedgerows and tree lines used by foraging and commuting bats. Integrated bird, bat, hedgehog and invertebrate features will be delivered within the building and landscape.
- 6.43. The BNG Assessment demonstrates 16.74% area-habitat gain and 65.31% hedgerow gain. These figures materially exceed the statutory 10% minimum and represent a substantial environmental benefit.
- 6.44. The metric identifies a residual 0.01 watercourse-unit requirement. The applicant commits to purchasing and allocating that unit through the appropriate statutory mechanism so that the watercourse position also exceeds 10%. The Biodiversity Gain Plan and any necessary legal agreement or register allocation can secure delivery.
- 6.45. Long-term landscape and habitat management will be secured for the statutory period. The proposal accords with HDPF Policy 31, SNDP1 and SNDP2, NPPF Paragraph 193 and the statutory BNG regime.

#### **TREES, HEDGEROWS AND LANDSCAPING**

- 6.46. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment records 29 individual trees and seven groups within influencing distance. No surveyed tree is protected by a TPO and the site is outside a conservation area.
- 6.47. The dwelling and principal hard landscape have been designed to avoid root-protection-area incursions to retained trees. The only identified access within the RPAs of T5 and T7 concerns controlled removal of an existing lightweight shed.
- 6.48. The new access and visibility splays require removal and pruning within TG7 and removal of TG6. Facilitation pruning is also required to T1. These effects are acknowledged and are addressed by the current Arboricultural Method Statement, Tree Protection Plan, supervision and replacement planting.
- 6.49. The substantial replacement and new planting - 49 trees in total, reinforced hedgerows, woodland shaws and long-term management, provides a strong quantitative and qualitative response to the limited losses.
- 6.50. Any separate Hedgerow Regulations consent or ordinary procedural approval required for the works will be obtained. Planning conditions can secure tree protection, arboricultural supervision and implementation of the approved landscape scheme.

## **HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

- 6.51. The site is not within a conservation area and contains no designated heritage asset. The nearest listed buildings are separated by distance, Horsham Road, existing development and substantial vegetation.
- 6.52. The Council's pre-application advice concluded that the proposal was unlikely to harm the setting or significance of the nearby listed buildings. The final LVIA likewise identifies no adverse setting effect.
- 6.53. The extent of heritage information is proportionate to the site's significance and the nature of the proposal. No standalone Heritage Statement or archaeological assessment is necessary on the current evidence.
- 6.54. The use of flint and timber is informed by local character, but the planning justification does not rely on falsely presenting the proposal as a reconstruction of historic development.

## **ACCESS AND HIGHWAY SAFETY**

- 6.55. The Transport Statement prepared by GTA Civils & Transport assesses a new access serving a single five-bedroom dwelling.
- 6.56. A seven-day automatic traffic count recorded 85th-percentile speeds of 46.3 mph southbound and 44.4 mph northbound. The access provides visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 131 metres and 2.4 metres by 123 metres, all within land under applicant or highway control.
- 6.57. A review of the five-year personal-injury collision record identified no recorded incident within a 300-metre study area. A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit identified no road-safety problem.
- 6.58. Swept-path analysis confirms that the site can accommodate turning, fire access and servicing. Refuse collection will occur from the kerbside in accordance with the local arrangement.
- 6.59. The development is forecast to generate approximately one two-way movement in each peak hour and four two-way movements over the day. It will not create a severe residual impact on the highway network.
- 6.60. The proposal therefore provides safe and suitable access and accords with HDPF Policies 40 and 41 and NPPF Paragraphs 115 and 116.

## **ACCESSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT**

- 6.61. The location is rural and future occupiers will rely principally on the private car. There is no continuous footway to Steyning and the road environment limits routine walking and cycling. This is an adverse consideration and is not understated.
- 6.62. The distance to Steyning remains relatively short, and the town provides a broad range of services. Secure cycle storage and electric-vehicle infrastructure support lower-emission travel where practical.
- 6.63. The NPPF recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport vary between urban and rural areas. For one dwelling, the transport disadvantage attracts limited to moderate weight rather than amounting to a highway reason for refusal.

## **PARKING**

- 6.64. Three on-site parking spaces are proposed, satisfying the standard identified in the Transport Statement. Secure space for at least two cycles is integrated with the garage.
- 6.65. The site provides adequate turning so vehicles can enter and leave Horsham Road in forward gear. Parking will not spill onto the highway or harm the rural lane.

## **FLOOD RISK, SURFACE WATER AND FOUL DRAINAGE**

- 6.66. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment confirms that the dwelling is within Flood Zone 1 and at low risk from fluvial, tidal, groundwater, sewer, reservoir and surface-water flooding.
- 6.67. Localised surface-water susceptibility associated with the northern ditch does not affect the dwelling or access. The development will not displace water toward neighbouring land.
- 6.68. Infiltration testing indicates that shallow soakaways are unsuitable. The strategy therefore uses a treatment train of green roof, swales and rain gardens, permeable paving, sub-base storage and pond attenuation before controlled discharge to the existing ditch.
- 6.69. The design accommodates the 1-in-100-year event plus 45% climate-change allowance and restricts discharge to 0.6 litres per second, equivalent to the calculated 1-in-2-year greenfield rate.
- 6.70. Foul drainage is proposed through a package treatment plant, with treated effluent discharged to the ditch. The installation will comply with the Environment Agency's binding rules and any permit or ordinary-watercourse consent required.

- 6.71. The private drainage infrastructure will be maintained by the owner. Detailed design and maintenance arrangements can be secured by condition. The proposal accords with HDPF Policy 38 and national flood-risk policy.

## **RESIDENTIAL AMENITY**

- 6.72. The siting, orientation, boundary vegetation and separation from neighbouring dwellings prevent unacceptable overlooking, loss of light, overbearing effect or noise impact.
- 6.73. The Council's pre-application advice expressly identified no unacceptable neighbour-amenity effect. The revised independent access further reduces interaction with Sunningdale.
- 6.74. Future occupiers will benefit from generous, adaptable accommodation, strong daylight and outlook, direct access to private outdoor space and a clear distinction between domestic amenity and the wider managed landscape.
- 6.75. A construction-hours condition and detailed lighting condition can address temporary and operational amenity matters.

## **SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY AND WHOLE-LIFE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.76. The Energy Statement prepared by Achieve Green applies the energy hierarchy: demand is reduced through the fabric and form before efficient systems and renewable generation meet the residual load.
- 6.77. The proposed ground floor, walls and roof are modelled at U-values of approximately 0.12 W/m<sup>2</sup>K. High-performance windows, low thermal bridging, airtight construction and MVHR substantially reduce heat demand.
- 6.78. The heating and hot-water strategy uses a ground-source heat pump. A 5 kWp photovoltaic array supplies renewable electricity. The regulated baseline is reduced from approximately 3.3 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per annum to approximately 0.7 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per annum.
- 6.79. The resulting 77.9% regulated carbon reduction materially exceeds ordinary regulatory compliance and weighs positively under HDPF Policies 35–37 and NPPF Paragraphs 131 and 139.
- 6.80. The material approach prioritises durable, local, recycled and timber products where practicable, alongside design for efficient use and responsible construction-waste management. The balanced earthworks strategy further reduces vehicle movements and material export.

- 6.81. Dynamic thermal modelling assesses the whole dwelling and confirms that all relevant rooms pass the applicable TM59 criteria and are at low risk of overheating without air-conditioning. The targeted external louvre arrangement reduces glare and solar gain while preserving useful daylight.
- 6.82. The combined strategy demonstrates that sustainability is a design generator expressed in the architecture, not a collection of subsequent technologies.

### **LIGHTING AND DARK SKIES**

- 6.83. The site's rural night-time character and ecological boundaries require a restrained lighting response. No elaborate external illumination is necessary.
- 6.84. A condition can require a detailed scheme limited to safety and access needs, using low-level, downward-directed and warm-spectrum fittings with timers or sensors, no upward light and no illumination of the eastern and southern boundary corridors.
- 6.85. With that control, the proposal will safeguard bats, neighbour amenity, tranquillity and the rural night-time environment.

### **AGRICULTURAL LAND**

- 6.86. The site is in private garden and amenity use associated with Sunningdale rather than productive agricultural use. The proposal does not remove an operational agricultural holding or materially affect best and most versatile agricultural production.

### **HABITATS REGULATIONS AND WATER EFFICIENCY**

- 6.87. The current Natural England and Horsham position removes the former requirement for an applicant-led water-neutrality statement or offset. The Council will undertake the necessary Habitats Regulations assessment as competent authority.
- 6.88. The proposal nevertheless embeds rainwater harvesting, low-consumption fittings, landscape water reuse and SuDS. Compliance with the optional Part G standard of 110 litres per person per day can be secured by condition.
- 6.89. There is no evidence that the proposal would cause an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley Habitats Sites once the current regulatory process is applied. The application of NPPF protective policies does not provide a strong reason for refusal.

## **CIL, PLANNING OBLIGATIONS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- 6.90. The proposal creates a new dwelling and will be subject to the Community Infrastructure Levy process.
- 6.91. The single dwelling does not trigger an affordable-housing requirement. No general infrastructure obligation has been identified beyond any mechanism required to allocate the 0.01 off-site watercourse unit and secure statutory BNG.
- 6.92. The use of conditions is appropriate for detailed materials, landscape and habitat management, tree protection, drainage, lighting, energy measures, ecological mitigation, water efficiency, parking and cycle storage.

## 7. Planning Balance

- 7.1. The proposal conflicts with the development plan's spatial strategy because it is a new dwelling outside the built-up area boundary. That conflict attracts weight under Section 38(6).
- 7.2. The location also creates a degree of car dependence. Limited hedgerow and tree-group removal is required for the new access and visibility splays, and the BNG metric requires the purchase of a small off-site watercourse unit.
- 7.3. Those harms are identified, quantified and capable of being mitigated. They must be weighed against the application's substantial design, landscape, ecological, environmental and housing benefits.

| Type                   | Consideration                                                                                                | Indicative weight                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Adverse considerations | Conflict with HDPF Policies 3, 4 and the locational element of Policy 26.                                    | Moderate                         |
| Adverse considerations | Rural accessibility and principal reliance on the private car.                                               | Limited to moderate              |
| Adverse considerations | Localised hedgerow/tree-group removal for safe access.                                                       | Limited; compensated and managed |
| Adverse considerations | 0.01 off-site watercourse unit required.                                                                     | Neutral once secured             |
| Benefits               | Truly outstanding architecture meeting the highest standards and the final DRP's Paragraph 84(e) assessment. | Substantial                      |
| Benefits               | Exemplar value that raises rural design standards.                                                           | Substantial                      |
| Benefits               | Moderate beneficial and Significant effect on landscape character.                                           | Substantial                      |
| Benefits               | 16.74% habitat gain, 65.31% hedgerow gain and >10% watercourse gain once the committed unit is secured.      | Substantial                      |
| Benefits               | 49 new trees, restored hedgerows and shaws, meadow, orchard, pond, swales and long-term stewardship.         | Substantial                      |
| Benefits               | 77.9% reduction in regulated carbon emissions and low overheating risk without active cooling.               | Significant                      |
| Benefits               | Safe access, SuDS, controlled discharge, water efficiency and no identified technical reason for refusal.    | Positive                         |
| Benefits               | One additional high-quality home during an acute 1.7-year housing-land-supply shortfall.                     | Moderate                         |
| Benefits               | Construction expenditure, skilled employment and use of local services.                                      | Limited positive                 |

- 7.4. If the site is treated as isolated, the proposal satisfies Paragraph 84(e) and national policy expressly provides the exception. If the site is not isolated, as the Council and nearby appeal Inspector previously considered, Paragraph 84 does not impose a national policy restriction and the exceptional design attracts significant weight under Paragraph 139.
- 7.5. There is no strong reason for refusal arising from the NPPF's protective policies. The site is outside the South Downs National Landscape; no heritage harm is identified; ecology is protected and substantially enhanced; flood risk is low; and the current Habitats Regulations and water-efficiency route can be satisfied.
- 7.6. The Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land. The relevant policies are out-of-date and Paragraph 11(d) requires permission unless the adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole.
- 7.7. The locational conflict and transport disadvantage are real but limited in scale because the proposal is one dwelling on a contained site close to Steyning. They do not approach the weight of the independently verified design, significant landscape enhancement, measurable ecological uplift and high environmental performance.
- 7.8. The adverse impacts do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The tilted balance therefore indicates that permission should be granted.
- 7.9. The conclusion is consistent with Section 38(6). Although the proposal is not in full conformity with the development plan's locational strategy, material considerations, particularly Paragraphs 84(e), 139 and 11(d), the final design-review evidence and the technical benefits, decisively indicate a decision otherwise than strict adherence to that conflict.

## 8. Conclusion

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- 8.1. This Statement has assessed the proposed Scarp House against the development plan, the NPPF and all material considerations.
- 8.2. The proposal is acknowledged to conflict with the adopted spatial strategy because it would introduce one dwelling outside the Steyning built-up area boundary. The Statement has not sought to minimise or avoid that issue.
- 8.3. The application nevertheless demonstrates exceptional and site-specific circumstances. Four stages of independent design review have transformed the scheme. The final Design Review Panel concludes that it meets the high bar in Paragraph 84(e), is truly outstanding, reflects the highest architectural standards, raises rural design standards, significantly enhances its immediate setting and is sensitive to local character.
- 8.4. The landscape is not mitigation for an otherwise ordinary house. It is an integrated design component that changes a low-diversity amenity parcel into a managed network of woodland shaws, hedgerows, meadow, orchard, scrub, wetland, pond and future veteran trees.
- 8.5. The LVIA identifies a Moderate beneficial and Significant effect on landscape character and a Negligible beneficial visual effect. Ecology is protected and enhanced; the BNG package materially exceeds 10%; retained trees are safeguarded; and localised vegetation loss is comprehensively compensated.
- 8.6. The proposal provides a safe access, adequate parking, low flood risk, a complete SuDS strategy, acceptable foul drainage, no unacceptable neighbour or heritage effect, and a controlled lighting response.
- 8.7. The energy strategy achieves a 77.9% reduction in regulated carbon emissions and the dwelling passes dynamic overheating modelling without active cooling. These credentials are integral to the design and contribute to its exemplary rural value.
- 8.8. Horsham District has only 1.7 years of deliverable housing supply. Paragraph 11(d) is engaged. There is no strong reason for refusal under the NPPF's protective policies and the identified adverse impacts do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 8.9. Whether the site is regarded as isolated or not, the national policy position supports approval: Paragraph 84(e) is satisfied if the exception is required, while Paragraph 139 affords significant weight to the outstanding, sustainable and contextually integrated design in any event.

- 8.10. Material considerations indicate that planning permission should be granted notwithstanding the limited conflict with the development plan's locational policies.
- 8.11. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted without delay, subject to the imposition of reasonable and necessary conditions and any mechanism required to secure the committed biodiversity gain



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