

Design & Access Statement

Proposed Development: Construction of a new barn building with new internal access road
Site: Renvyle Farm, Okehurst Lane, Billingshurst, West Sussex

Applicant: Mr David Walton **Date:** July 2026

1. Introduction

This Design & Access Statement accompanies the planning application for the construction of a new barn building at Renvyle Farm, Okehurst Lane, Billingshurst. The proposal includes a single barn structure, together with a new internal access road and associated operational space.

The statement explains the design rationale, access arrangements, and the functional need for the development, including clarification regarding the replacement of an existing barn that has recently collapsed during high winds.

2. Site Context

2.1 Location

Renvyle Farm is an established agricultural holding located to the south of Okehurst Lane, approximately 1.5km west of Billingshurst. The site includes grazing land, farm tracks, and a small cluster of agricultural buildings.

2.2 Existing Structures

A long-standing agricultural barn on the site **collapsed during recent high winds**, resulting in the loss of essential storage and operational space. The proposed warehouse is intended as a **replacement building**, matching the **same overall footprint** as the former barn, with a minor repositioning to accommodate a safer internal access route.

2.3 Surrounding Area

The surrounding landscape is rural, characterised by open fields, hedgerows, and dispersed farmsteads. Built form is limited and agricultural in nature.

2.4 Planning Designations

- The site lies **outside the Built-Up Area Boundary**.
- It is **not allocated** for commercial development.
- It is within a countryside location where development must support rural or land-based enterprises.

3. The Proposal

The application seeks permission for:

- A replacement barn building on the footprint of the former barn (with minor repositioning).
- A new internal access road to improve circulation and safety.
- Associated hardstanding, parking, and manoeuvring areas.
- Landscaping and boundary enhancements.

Purpose of the Building

The warehouse is **solely for the operational needs of Renvyle Farm**. It will:

- Support storage of equipment, feed, materials, and machinery.
- Provide secure space for farm-related processing, maintenance, and administration.
- Improve operational efficiency and resilience following the loss of the previous barn.

The building will not be rented out, leased, or made available for commercial tenants. It is not a speculative commercial development.

4. Planning Policy Context

The previous refusal referenced:

- **HDPF Policies 10, 25, 26**
- **Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan Policies Bill 1 and Bill 10**

This statement addresses these policies by demonstrating:

- The proposal is a **replacement agricultural building**, not new commercial development.
- The development is essential to the functioning of the farm.
- The repositioning is minor and justified by access and safety requirements.
- The design minimises landscape impact and respects rural character.

5. Design Justification

5.1 Replacement of Existing Barn

The former barn was a long-standing agricultural structure integral to the farm's operations. Its collapse has created an urgent operational need for replacement storage and workspace.

The proposed warehouse:

- **Matches the footprint** of the former barn.
- Is **repositioned slightly** to allow the internal access road to be safely diverted.
- Maintains the scale and agricultural character of the original structure.

This ensures continuity of farm operations and avoids unnecessary expansion into open countryside.

5.2 Use

The building is for **agricultural and farm-related operational use only**. It is not intended for:

- Commercial rental
- General industrial use
- External business occupation

This directly addresses concerns regarding commercial development outside the built-up area.

5.3 Amount and Scale

The scale is modest and consistent with typical agricultural barns. Allowing separation of different farm processes and storage types.

5.4 Layout

The building is positioned to:

- Replace the former barn footprint
- Improve internal circulation
- Allow safe vehicle movements
- Retain existing field boundaries and hedgerows

5.5 Appearance

The design adopts a traditional agricultural aesthetic:

- Vertical metal cladding in recessive colours
- A shallow pitched roof
- Minimal glazing
- Simple, functional detailing

This ensures the building reads as part of the existing farmstead.

5.6 Landscaping

Enhancements include:

- Strengthening hedgerows
- Native planting
- Sensitive lighting strategy
- Retention of existing trees

These measures reduce visual impact and enhance biodiversity.

6. Access

6.1 Vehicular Access

Access is via the existing farm entrance on Okehurst Lane. The new internal road is required to:

- Improve safety
- Provide efficient circulation
- Accommodate modern farm vehicles

6.2 Parking and Servicing

Parking and turning areas are provided adjacent to the building, designed for farm vehicles and small service vehicles only.

6.3 Inclusive Access

All units will have level access and wide openings suitable for equipment, machinery, and mobility needs.

7. Response to Previous Refusal Reasons

7.1 Countryside Location & Built-Up Area Boundary

The proposal is a **replacement agricultural building**, not new commercial development. Its countryside location is essential because:

- It forms part of the operational farm holding.
- It replaces a barn that previously stood on the site.
- It supports land-based agricultural activity.

7.2 Contribution to Sustainable Farming (HDPF Policy 10)

The warehouse directly supports:

- Farm storage
- Machinery maintenance
- Feed and equipment management
- Operational resilience

This is fully aligned with Policy 10(a) and (b).

7.3 Not for Commercial Rent

The building is **not speculative** and **not available for rent**, addressing concerns about inappropriate commercial expansion.

7.4 Landscape and Countryside Protection

The design minimises impact through:

- Replacement footprint
- Agricultural form
- Recessive materials
- Landscape planting

This aligns with Policies 25 and 26.

8. Sustainability

Sustainability is a core principle underpinning the design and operational intent of the proposed replacement warehouse at Renvyle Farm. The development has been designed to minimise environmental impact, support long-term farm resilience, and align with the sustainability objectives of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

8.1 Reuse of Existing Footprint

The proposal replaces a barn that has recently collapsed during severe winds. By utilising **the same overall footprint** (with only a minor repositioning to accommodate the internal access road), the development:

- Avoids unnecessary land take
- Minimises soil disturbance
- Retains the existing field pattern
- Reduces embodied carbon compared with constructing on a new site

This approach represents a sustainable use of land and supports Policy 25's emphasis on conserving landscape character.

8.2 Energy Efficiency

The new building will incorporate modern construction methods and materials that significantly improve energy performance compared with the former barn, including:

- High-performance insulated cladding
- Airtight construction to reduce heat loss
- LED low-energy lighting
- Potential for future integration of solar PV on the roof structure

These measures reduce operational energy demand and support the farm's long-term sustainability.

8.3 Sustainable Farm Operations

The warehouse is **solely for the operational needs of Renvyle Farm** and will not be rented out. Its purpose is to:

- Improve storage efficiency
- Reduce vehicle movements between dispersed storage locations
- Provide secure, weather-resilient space for equipment and feed
- Support the farm's ability to operate year-round

By consolidating operations on-site, the development reduces transport emissions and enhances the sustainability of the farm business.

8.4 Materials and Construction

Where possible, construction materials will be:

- Locally sourced
- Durable and low-maintenance
- Recyclable at end of life

The simple agricultural form ensures efficient use of materials and reduces waste.

8.5 Landscape and Biodiversity

The proposal includes:

- Strengthening of hedgerows
- New native planting
- Sensitive, low-level lighting
- Retention of existing trees

These measures enhance biodiversity and contribute positively to the ecological network of the area.

8.6 Climate Resilience

The replacement building is designed to withstand future extreme weather events, addressing the vulnerability highlighted by the collapse of the previous barn. This includes:

- Robust structural design
- Improved wind resistance
- Secure storage to protect feed and equipment during adverse weather

This resilience supports the long-term sustainability of the farm enterprise.

9. Conclusion

The proposed warehouse at Renvyle Farm is a **replacement agricultural building**, required due to the collapse of the previous barn. It maintains the same footprint, with a minor repositioning to accommodate a safer internal access route. The building is essential to the functioning of the farm and will not be rented out or used for external commercial purposes.

The design is appropriate to its rural setting, supports sustainable farm operations, and complies with the aims of HDPF Policy 10 and relevant neighbourhood plan policies.

The proposal represents a necessary and proportionate form of rural development, and it is respectfully requested that the Local Planning Authority support the application.

