



APPLICATIONS & APPEALS SERVICES

**RETENTION OF ENLARGED ANNEXE ACCOMMODATION
THROUGH THE CONVERSION OF FURTHER
OUTBUILDING SPACE**

AT

**HILLS FARM, THE VILLAGE, ASHURST, STEYNING,
WEST SUSSEX BN44 3AS**

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

September 2026



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APPENDICES

NJA-1 Details of planning permission AH/7/01

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This supporting Planning, Design and Access Statement accompanies retrospective applications for planning permission and Listed Building Consent for the retention of enlarged annexe accommodation through the conversion of further outbuilding space at Hills Farm, The Village, Ashurst, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3AS.
- 1.2 The application regularises the physical extent of accommodation now provided within the outbuilding. The use remains ancillary to Hills Farm and does not create a separate independent dwelling or planning unit.
- 1.3 Planning permission was historically granted under reference AH/7/01 for the conversion of a barn into a granny annexe. The present proposal builds upon that established planning history and retains the annexe relationship secured by the earlier permission.

1.4 This supporting Planning, Design and Access Statement sets out the detail of the proposal which is described and appraised having regard to the following aspects:

- Physical Context - describes Hills Farm, the listed farmhouse, the annexe outbuilding, courtyard and wider rural setting.
- Planning Context - records the planning history and identifies the national, adopted and emerging local policies relevant to the proposal.
- Use - explains the continued ancillary residential use of the accommodation in association with Hills Farm.
- Amount and Scale - explains the extent of retained accommodation and its relationship to the existing outbuilding and host dwelling.
- Layout - considers the arrangement within the existing building, its courtyard position and its relationship with the farmhouse.
- Appearance - considers the retained rural form, roof profile, materials and architectural character of the outbuilding.

- Landscape - considers the established farmstead group, mature landscaping and countryside character.
- Access - confirms the continued use of the existing gated access, circulation and parking serving Hills Farm.

1.6 The Statement will demonstrate that the proposed development accords with the relevant planning policies and is acceptable in all respects.

2.0 PHYSICAL CONTEXT AND PLANNING HISTORY

Physical Context

2.1 Hills Farm is situated in a rural area located between the villages of Ashurst and Bines Green. The property lies on the eastern side of the B2135 which links the two villages. There is a gated access from the road leading into the large site.

2.2 The site contains Hills Farmhouse, a two-storey Grade II listed building, together with a group of traditional range of buildings originally comprising a barn, stables and other outbuildings. The Listing description reads as follows:

C17 or earlier timber-framed house with the timbering exposed at the back but front refaced on ground floor with red brick and above tile-hung. Half-hipped roof, originally of Horsham slabs with a pentice behind, but the front replaced with slates. Casement windows. Two storeys. Two windows.

The outbuilding to the south of the barn was granted permission in 2001 to be converted into a granny annexe. Since that time, other buildings in the range have been incorporated into the annexe.

2.3 The outbuildings are low-profile, timber-clad rural buildings with tiled roofs. The scale, materials and courtyard relationship are characteristic of the historic farmstead. The retained and converted accommodation is contained within this existing building envelope and does not introduce a separate residential curtilage.

2.4 The farmhouse and outbuildings are set within a spacious, landscaped plot with mature trees and vegetation. Existing access, parking and garden arrangements are retained.

Planning History

2.5 The full planning history shown on the Horsham District Council property history record is:

- AH/7/01 - Conversion of barn into a granny annexe. Status: Permitted.
- DC/12/2277 - Removal of link extension and enlargement to form first floor extension over, extension over single-storey extension, first-floor balcony and extension of chimney (Full Planning). Status: Refused.
- DC/12/2278 - Removal of link extension and enlargement to form first floor extension over, extension over single-storey extension, first-floor balcony and extension of chimney (Listed Building Consent). Status: Refused.
- DC/14/0561 - Loft conversion to existing Grade II listed building (affects the setting of a listed building). Status: Refused.
- DC/14/0562 - Loft conversion to existing Grade II listed building (Listed Building Consent; affects the setting of a listed building). Status: Refused.

2.6 The AH/7/01 decision notice dated 4 September 2001 expressly permitted the conversion of the barn into a granny annexe (Appendix NJA-1). Condition 2 required the accommodation to be occupied solely for purposes

incidental to the occupation and enjoyment of Hills Farm as a dwelling and prohibited its use as a separate unit of accommodation. The current proposal maintains that ancillary basis.

2.7 The 2014 delegated assessment describes the wider site as a spacious rural plot containing the Grade II listed farmhouse, a small courtyard and surrounding stable buildings. That description assists in confirming the long-established farmstead form and the close relationship between the application building and Hills Farm.

2.8 The following photos illustrate the range of buildings which are the subject of this application and the wider site:



The Farmhouse



The original annexe and adjacent building



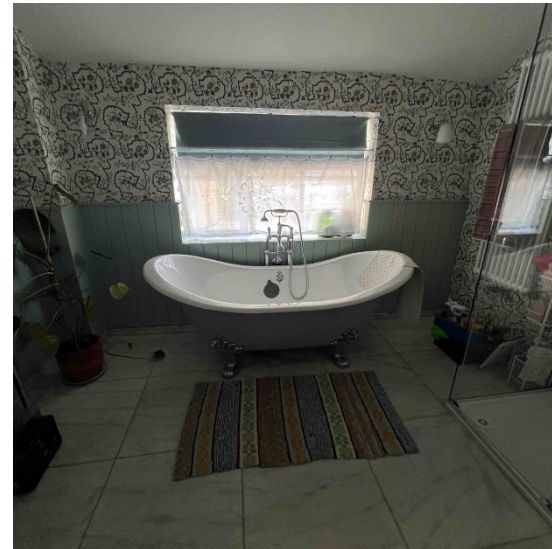


Original conversion





Internal views



3.0 PROPOSAL

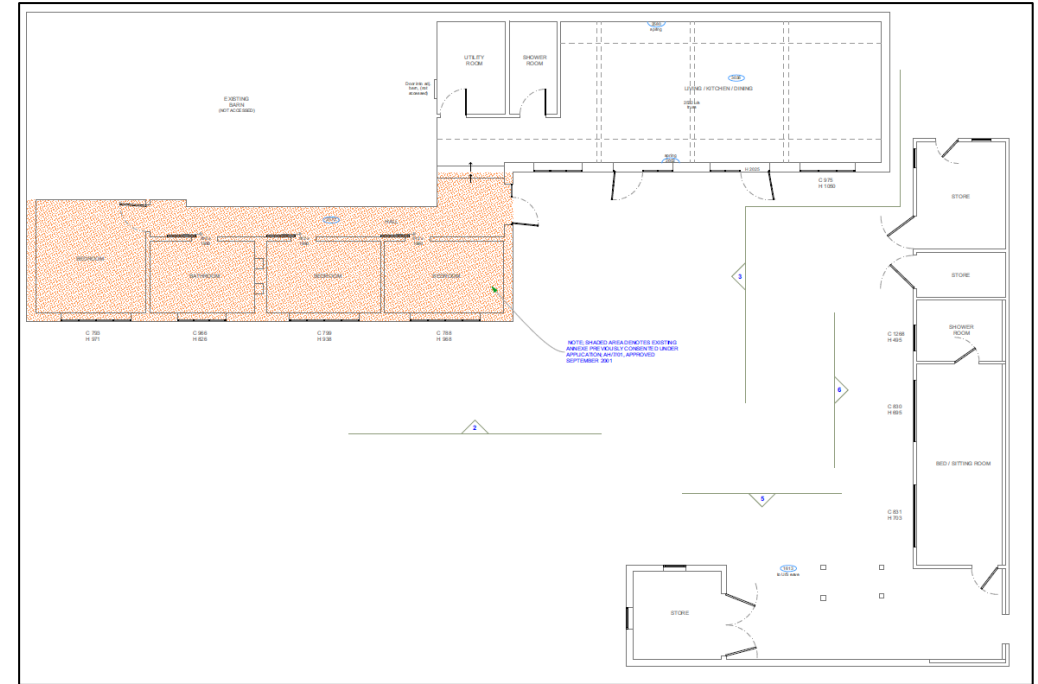
3.1 The application seeks retrospective planning permission and Listed Building Consent for the retention of additional converted space in the existing outbuildings to facilitate a larger annexe.

3.2 The proposal remains a single ancillary residential annexe serving Hills Farm. It shares the established access, parking, courtyard and wider curtilage with the farmhouse. No separate access, address, garden subdivision or independent planning unit is proposed.

3.3 The current accommodation provides 2 bedrooms and a bathroom accessed from a corridor within the previously approved area. The corridor then leads to the main entrance and turns into the adjoining building to provide a utility room and shower room, and the main living/dining/kitchen area. This area contains doors onto the courtyard. The building at the northern end of the courtyard contains several storage areas as well as an additional shower room and a bed-sitting room.

3.4 The works make effective use of the existing outbuilding and retain its low rural form, roof profile and material character, as can be seen from the plans:





4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework - August 2026

- 4.1 The new National Planning Policy Framework was published in August 2026. The new Framework has a different structure with National plan-making and decision-making policies using policy codes rather than the former paragraph-based approach. The NPPF sets out the government's policies for plan making and for making decisions on development proposals in England. It is a material consideration of critical importance in both contexts.
- 4.2 The NPPF confirms that the planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Preparing and maintaining up-to-date development plans should be seen as a priority for providing housing and other development in a sustainable manner. The plan-making policies in the Framework must be taken into account in preparing any part of the development plan.

4.3 With regard to the new National planning policies, the NPPF confirms that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The national decision-making policies in the Framework are a material consideration in making these decisions and should be read alongside the policies in the development plan.

4.4 Annex A of the new NPPF confirms that the new national decision-making policies are material considerations from the date of publication. Development-plan policies materially inconsistent with those policies should be given very limited weight, except where examined and adopted or made against the August 2026 Framework.

4.5 Chapter 1 (Introduction) refers to the purpose of the planning system, with paragraph 15 stating:

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, by

managing the use and development of land in the long-term public interest.

4.6 Paragraph 17 confirms that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives in providing for the homes, commercial development, facilities and infrastructure which society needs. These objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. They comprise an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective. Paragraph 18 confirms that these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of development plans and the application of the policies in the Framework. However, it states that they are not criteria against which every development proposal can or should be judged.

4.7 Chapter 3 specifically refers to Decision-Making Policies and gives guidance on preparing planning applications and on how to determine applications. Further relevant chapters and policies are listed below.

Sustainable Development

4.8 Chapter 4 relates to achieving sustainable development. In terms of decision-making policies, Policy **S3** is particularly relevant. **S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development** states that:

1. Decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means:

a) Policy S4 in this Framework should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements;

b) Outside settlements, policy S5 should be applied; and

c) In all locations, development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in this Framework should be approved without delay.

2. Where a development proposal falls partly within and partly outside a settlement, policies S4 and S5

should be applied to the relevant parts which are inside or outside of the settlement boundary (as appropriate), before coming to an overall view on the proposal.

4.9 **S5: Principle of development outside settlements**
states *inter alia* that:

1. Only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework

4.10 The list of acceptable forms of development includes:

c. The reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial

construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the existing building²⁵. In the case of proposals for a replacement building, it should be for the same use and not disproportionately larger than the one it replaces.

Footnote 25 clarifies that the 'existing building' is to be assessed as the property as existing on the date of the publication of the Framework ie 17.8.26.

4.11 Paragraph 2 of the policy states:

In applying this policy, the circumstances in which the benefits of approving development proposals are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects include, but are not restricted to, situations where the development proposal would fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances.

Climate change

CC2: Mitigation of climate change - development should contribute to climate change mitigation and the transition to net zero.

CC3: Adaptation to climate change - Development proposals should take into account the current and potential impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the scheme, attempt to minimise vulnerability to these impacts.

Achieving Well-Designed Places

4.12 The objective of the policies in Chapter 14 is to promote high quality, healthy, inclusive and sustainable places, through setting clear expectations about design outcomes and the use of relevant tools and processes.

DP3: Key principles for well-designed places - Development proposals should respond to their context

(the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings. To create well-designed places, development proposals should also reflect relevant aspects of the specified principles, as appropriate to the nature of the development and its location.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

TR3: Locating development in sustainable locations - requires development to be located in sustainable locations, taking account of the scale and type of development, proximity and accessibility to services, facilities and employment, and the practical scope to use sustainable transport. It recognises that the assessment is context-specific.

TR4: Street design, access and parking - requires safe and suitable access for all users, suitable parking and servicing arrangements, and street design appropriate to place.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

HE4: Securing the conservation of heritage assets - requires heritage assets to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Proposals should understand significance, avoid or minimise harm and take opportunities to enhance or better reveal significance. Any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

HE5: Assessing effects on heritage assets - requires an appropriate assessment of the significance of assets affected, and the effect of the proposal on those heritage assets, including effects through setting.

HE6: Proposals affecting designated heritage assets - provides that substantial weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset. Positive effects attract great weight and any harm is a matter of considerable importance. Where harm would be less than substantial it must be weighed against the public benefits, including securing an appropriate long-term

use of a listed building and enabling energy efficiency where consistent with conservation. Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should usually be refused.

Horsham District Planning Framework 2015

4.13

Local planning policy is contained within the Horsham District Planning Framework, November 2015 (HDPF). The following policies are considered relevant to the proposal:

- Policy 1: Sustainable Development
- Policy 25: Character and Natural Environment
- Policy 26: Countryside Protection
- Policy 28: Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
- Policy 32: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33: Development Principles
- Policy 34: Cultural and Heritage Assets

- Policy 41: Parking

- 4.14 Policy 1: Sustainable Development – states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF. As such, planning applications that accord with the policies in the new Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date, the Council will grant planning permission, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.15 Policy 25: Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character – the natural environment and landscape character of the District will be protected against inappropriate development.
- 4.16 Policy 26: Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection – outside the built-up area boundaries the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be

protected against inappropriate development. Any development must be essential to the countryside location and meet certain criteria, including enabling sustainable development of rural areas. In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location and should not lead to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside.

- 4.17 Policy 28: Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside - seeks to ensure that any replacement dwellings, house extensions, outbuildings and ancillary accommodation are of an appropriate scale, siting and design, and have due regard to the countryside setting and the existing dwelling. In particular, part 3 the policy states:

3. Ancillary accommodation and garaging will be required to meet with all other appropriate policies, particularly design principles, and demonstrate that the need for additional space cannot be met from an existing dwelling or buildings suitable of conversion on the site. The size of any new outbuilding should

have regard to the dwelling they serve and should be grouped with the house. The use of ancillary accommodation as a separate dwelling will not be supported,

4.18 Policy 32: The Quality of New Development – requires a high quality and inclusive design for all developments within the District. Development should (*inter alia*) be attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable. Development should also contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and surrounding spaces.

4.19 Policy 33: Development Principles – sets out criteria for new development to comply with. This includes (*inter alia*) making efficient use of land, prioritising previously developed land, ensuring no harm will result to the amenities of occupiers/users of nearby properties and by ensuring that the scale, massing and appearance of development is a high standard of design. High standard of building materials, finishes and landscaping should also be included.

4.20 Policy 34: Cultural and Heritage Assets – aims to sustain and where appropriate, enhance the significance of the District's heritage assets, including where those qualities which make the asset special and historic. In particular, new development should retain and improve the setting of heritage assets.

4.21 Policy 41: Parking – adequate parking and facilities must be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users.

Horsham District Local Plan 2023 to 2040

4.22 The Horsham District Local Plan 2023 to 2040 was submitted for examination in July 2024, and following hearings in December 2024 and April 2026, the Planning Inspector has, at the request of the Council, recommended a number of Main Modifications to make the Plan sound. A Public Consultation on these modifications has just been carried out. All duly made comments received will be sent to the Inspector for consideration. Further Hearings will then be carried out.

Formal adoption is expected to be January 2027. At this stage the policies of the Local Plan do not carry full weight. Nevertheless, the following emerging policies are considered relevant to the proposal:

- Policy 1: Sustainable Development
- Policy 11: Environmental Protection
- Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 14: Countryside Protection
- Policy 19: Development Quality
- Policy 20: Development Principles
- Policy 25: Parking
- Policy 46: Ancillary Accommodation

4.23 Policy 46 supports ancillary accommodation where a genuine need is demonstrated, no boundary subdivision occurs, there is a clear visual and functional link with the main dwelling including a shared access, the design relates sympathetically to the host dwelling and surroundings, and the annexe is not used as a separate

dwelling. The re-use of an existing building for such purposes is welcomed.

5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle and Ancillary Relationship

- 5.1 The new NPPF expresses a presumption in favour of sustainable development. As the site is located outside a settlement, Policy S5 is relevant. Policy S3 also states that development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in this Framework should be approved without delay.
- 5.2 Under Policy S5, only certain forms of development should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the NPPF. Part c) allows for *the reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to*

*the existing building*²⁵. In the case of proposals for a replacement building, it should be for the same use and not disproportionately larger than the one it replaces.

- 5.3 The HDPF does not contain a specific policy relating to the provision of ancillary accommodation. However, Policy 28 does relate to replacement dwellings and house extensions in the countryside. Whilst the current proposal does not involve any enlargement of the existing buildings, part 3 of the policy does state that *“Ancillary accommodation and garaging will be required to meet with all other appropriate policies, particularly design principles, and demonstrate that the need for additional space cannot be met from an existing dwelling or buildings suitable of conversion on the site. The size of any new outbuilding should have regard to the dwelling they serve and should be grouped with the house. The use of ancillary accommodation as a separate dwelling will not be supported”*.

- 5.4 The principle of annexe accommodation in this outbuilding was established by the permission under AH/7/01. The current proposal retains the same land-

use relationship ie occupation remains incidental to Hills Farm and the accommodation is not a separate dwelling.

5.5 The buildings that have been reused date back to the nineteenth century. They are lawful and or permanent and substantial construction. No extensions have been required or undertaken in order for the conversion to take place. Minimal alterations have occurred, beyond basic repairs and the insertion of windows etc.

5.6 The shared access, parking area and courtyard style, as well as the physical proximity to the main Farmhouse provide a clear functional and visual link between the annexe accommodation and the main dwelling. There is no physical subdivision of the curtilage or independent access. Whilst there is no intention to introduce a separate dwelling to the site, nor would that be possible without the benefit of planning permission, a condition reflecting the substance of planning permission AH/7/01, condition 2, would ensure continued ancillary occupation.

5.7 The enlarged annexe accommodation is achieved through the conversion of the existing outbuilding. This makes efficient use of an existing structure and is the second, preferred, step of the sequential approach in emerging Policy 46.

5.8 It is considered that the conversion of the existing outbuilding to enlarge the existing annexe meets the requirements of the NPPF, and local planning policy and is acceptable in principle.

Countryside, Design and Amenity

5.9 The proposal has no impact on the established low-profile outbuilding form and courtyard enclosure. It does not extend development into open countryside, alter the established access or create a new residential curtilage. Its scale and appearance remain subordinate to Hills Farmhouse.

- 5.10 The extensive site provides ample separation from neighbouring occupiers. The annexe accommodation does not generate unacceptable overlooking, noise or disturbance, and no material change to existing access or parking demand arises.

Heritage

- 5.11 Hills Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building. In accordance with the NPPF and local policy, this application is accompanied by a Heritage Report prepared by Chilcroft Heritage Planning (September 2026), which describes the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by the setting.
- 5.12 The Report notes that the proposals do not affect the historic 18th Century tithe barn. The proposals relate solely to later extensions that have been added around the tithe barn in the 19th Century and which form part of the courtyard.

- 5.13 Importantly the Report states that:

the significance of the dwelling of Hill's Farmhouse and its historic interest linked to its age, its presence in the settlement, architectural form and historic fabric, and its place within the context of the former farmstead – will not be at all affected. These components of the significance of the listed building, and the areas from where they can be best appreciated, will be preserved.

Furthermore:

the most historic part of the outbuilding remains unchanged, this being the tithe barn. Not only does the proposal relate only to the rear and side of the tithe barn, it leaves its principal elevation as experienced from the highway unchanged, thus preserving its significance, as it is from here that the historic tithe barn is best appreciated

- 5.14 The Report is clear that the works have not caused any harm to the historic tithe barn:

Although the rear extension comes into contact with the tithe barn and could be said to have impacted historic fabric, it had already been historically extended here as witnessed from the tithe map and insofar as it is understood, it has only come into direct contact with 20th Century weatherboarding and not resulted in any harm to the main timber frame of the tithe barn itself, thus avoiding loss of historic fabric. The materials used are also of a broadly high quality and consistent with the vernacular of Hill's Farmhouse.

5.15 The Report concludes:

The significance of the historic tithe barn is best appreciated from the highway and the proposals leave the experience of this heritage asset unchanged.

It is from within the curtilage that the listed building of Hill's Farmhouse is best appreciated, including from its principal elevation to the eastern side. The proposals preserve the association between the listed building and outbuilding.

The proposals preserve the significance of the historic 18th Century tithe barn and relate solely to later Victorian extensions that have been added around it. The proposals have repaired and converted these using like-for-like materials that are broadly reflective of the vernacular found at Hill's Farmhouse.

On balance, the proposals are of a design and material quality that preserves the significance of the curtilage listed building and the Grade II listed building.

5.16 It is considered that the proposal preserves the setting and significance of the listed building and accords with NPPF policies HE4-HE6, HDPF Policy 34 and emerging Policy 21.

6.0 LAYOUT, DESIGN AND APPEARANCE

- 6.1 The layout follows the existing outbuilding footprint. No extensions have been required. Accommodation is consolidated within the established range, maintaining a compact arrangement around the courtyard the historic courtyard.
- 6.2 The proposal retains the existing mature landscape and the spatial hierarchy between farmhouse, courtyard and outbuildings. It therefore preserves the rural character of the area and the legibility of the historic farmstead group.
- 6.3 The retained scale, massing, roof form and external materials allow the building to continue to be read as a traditional subordinate outbuilding. The scheme responds to context as required by NPPF DP3 and adopted Policies 32 and 33.

7.0 ACCESS AND PARKING

- 7.1 No change is proposed to the established gated access serving Hills Farm. The annexe shares the access and driveway of the host dwelling.
- 7.2 Existing on-site parking is ample and remains available. As ancillary accommodation, the proposal does not create the level of independent trip generation associated with a separate dwelling.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The application seeks retrospective planning permission and Listed Building Consent for the retention of enlarged annexe accommodation through the conversion of further outbuilding space at Hills Farm.
- 8.2 The principle of an annexe in this building is longstanding and was expressly permitted under AH/7/01, subject to the accommodation remaining ancillary to the main dwelling. The current scheme preserves that relationship through shared access, parking, courtyard and curtilage, without subdivision or creation of an independent dwelling.
- 8.3 The proposal reuses an existing traditional outbuilding, remains subordinate to Hills Farmhouse, preserves the rural farmstead character and does not harm residential amenity, highway safety or the significance and setting of the Grade II listed building.

- 8.4 The development accords with the August 2026 NPPF, particularly S5, DM3, DP3 and HE4-HE6; the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework 2015, particularly Policies 28, 32, 33 and 34; and with the relevant direction of emerging Regulation 19 Policies 21, 45 and 46. It is therefore hoped that the application may be viewed favourably and granted planning permission and Listed Building Consent..