

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: DC/26/0914

I write to object to the above planning application.

Having reviewed the submitted Planning Statement and proposed drawings, it is my view that the application fails to address the fundamental concerns identified by Horsham District Council in its pre-application advice (Ref. PE/26/0029). Whilst the applicant seeks to rebut those concerns, the submission provides little evidence to demonstrate that they have been overcome. Instead, the Planning Statement relies heavily upon unsupported assertions that the proposal represents an acceptable form of infill development.

Failure to Justify the Loss of Employment Use

The proposal would result in the permanent loss of a lawful commercial use.

Policy 9 of the Horsham District Planning Framework seeks to safeguard existing employment uses unless it can be clearly demonstrated that their loss is justified. The applicant simply asserts that the site is constrained and no longer commercially viable, yet no evidence has been submitted to support this conclusion.

In particular, there is:

- no viability assessment;
- no marketing evidence;
- no explanation of the existing commercial operation;
- no assessment of alternative employment uses; and
- no evidence that the site no longer contributes to the local economy.

The proposal therefore fails to demonstrate compliance with Policy 9, and the Council should not accept unsupported statements in place of objective evidence.

Overdevelopment Contrary to Policies 32 and 33

The proposal represents an over-intensive form of development on a constrained site.

The applicant repeatedly relies upon the requirement within Policy 33 to make efficient use of land. However, this is a selective reading of the policy.

Policy 33 requires development to make efficient use of land whilst respecting any constraints that exist.

The Council's own pre-application advice concluded that the site is constrained. Rather than responding positively to those constraints, the application seeks to maximise development by accommodating a two-storey dwelling, two parking spaces, cycle storage, refuse storage, an air source heat pump and private amenity space within a very limited site area.

This results in a cramped layout that appears dictated by the desire to maximise development rather than by good planning and urban design.

Policy 32 also requires development to provide an attractive, functional, safe and adaptable environment. In my opinion the proposal fails this test. The constrained layout, limited outdoor space and vehicle-dominated frontage do not create the high-quality living environment envisaged by the policy.

Poor Quality Residential Environment

The Council's pre-application advice questioned whether the proposal would provide an acceptable level of residential amenity. The submitted plans do not overcome those concerns.

The proposed dwelling would be served by a rear courtyard of approximately **16.4m²**, representing the only private outdoor amenity space available to future occupiers.

The applicant argues that there are no prescribed minimum garden standards. However, this is not the relevant planning test.

The issue is whether future occupiers would enjoy a reasonable standard of residential amenity.

The proposed courtyard is heavily constrained by surrounding built form and provides limited opportunity for meaningful outdoor recreation. The internal accommodation is similarly

compact, with the second bedroom measuring only **7.68m²**, further illustrating the extent to which the development has been compressed to fit the available site.

Taken together, these factors reinforce the conclusion that the proposal represents an overdevelopment of the site.

Highway Safety

Whilst two parking spaces are proposed, the layout raises significant concerns regarding highway safety.

The parking spaces are positioned immediately adjacent to the highway with no opportunity for vehicles to manoeuvre within the site. As a consequence, vehicles would be required to reverse directly onto Wickhurst Lane.

This creates an unnecessary conflict with passing vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists and is particularly concerning given that the proposal seeks to intensify the use of the site.

Furthermore, the parking arrangement dominates almost the entire frontage of the development, leaving little opportunity for landscaping and resulting in a harsh, vehicle-dominated appearance that fails to enhance the street scene.

Failure to Address Existing Infrastructure Constraints

It is understood that a public sewer crosses the application site.

Despite this representing a significant physical constraint, the submitted Planning Statement makes no reference to it and no supporting information has been provided demonstrating that the proposed dwelling can be constructed without adversely affecting existing sewer infrastructure.

There is no information regarding:

- the location of the sewer;
- required easements;
- any build-over agreement;

- or how the proposed foundations would interact with the existing apparatus.
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Given the limited size of the site, there appears to be little flexibility to amend the building footprint should these constraints require it. The Council cannot therefore be satisfied that the development is deliverable in the form proposed.

Ecology

Whilst the site is predominantly hardstanding, the proposal involves the demolition of an existing commercial building.

No ecological assessment has been submitted to demonstrate whether the existing building has any potential to support protected species, particularly bats. Before determining the application, the Council should satisfy itself that appropriate ecological due diligence has been undertaken.

Failure to Address the Council's Pre-Application Advice

Perhaps most importantly, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the concerns raised through the Council's pre-application process have been overcome.

The Planning Statement repeatedly states that the proposal has been "carefully designed", "responds positively to the site" and "integrates appropriately within the streetscene". However, these assertions are unsupported by any meaningful assessment.

The Council previously identified concerns relating to:

- the loss of employment land;
- the constrained nature of the site;
- the intensity of development;
- the quality of amenity space; and
- the overall design response.

The current submission does not materially address these matters. Instead, it largely disagrees with the Council's conclusions without providing any additional evidence to justify a different outcome.

Conclusion

The proposal undoubtedly makes use of a sustainable site within the built-up area of Broadbridge Heath. However, this fact alone does not make the development acceptable.

Development within settlement boundaries must still comply with the requirements of the Horsham District Planning Framework. In this instance, the proposal fails to justify the loss of an existing commercial use, represents an overdevelopment of a constrained site, provides a poor standard of amenity for future occupiers, raises legitimate highway safety concerns, fails to address known infrastructure constraints and does not demonstrate compliance with Policies 9, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that Horsham District Council refuses planning permission.

Kind regards

