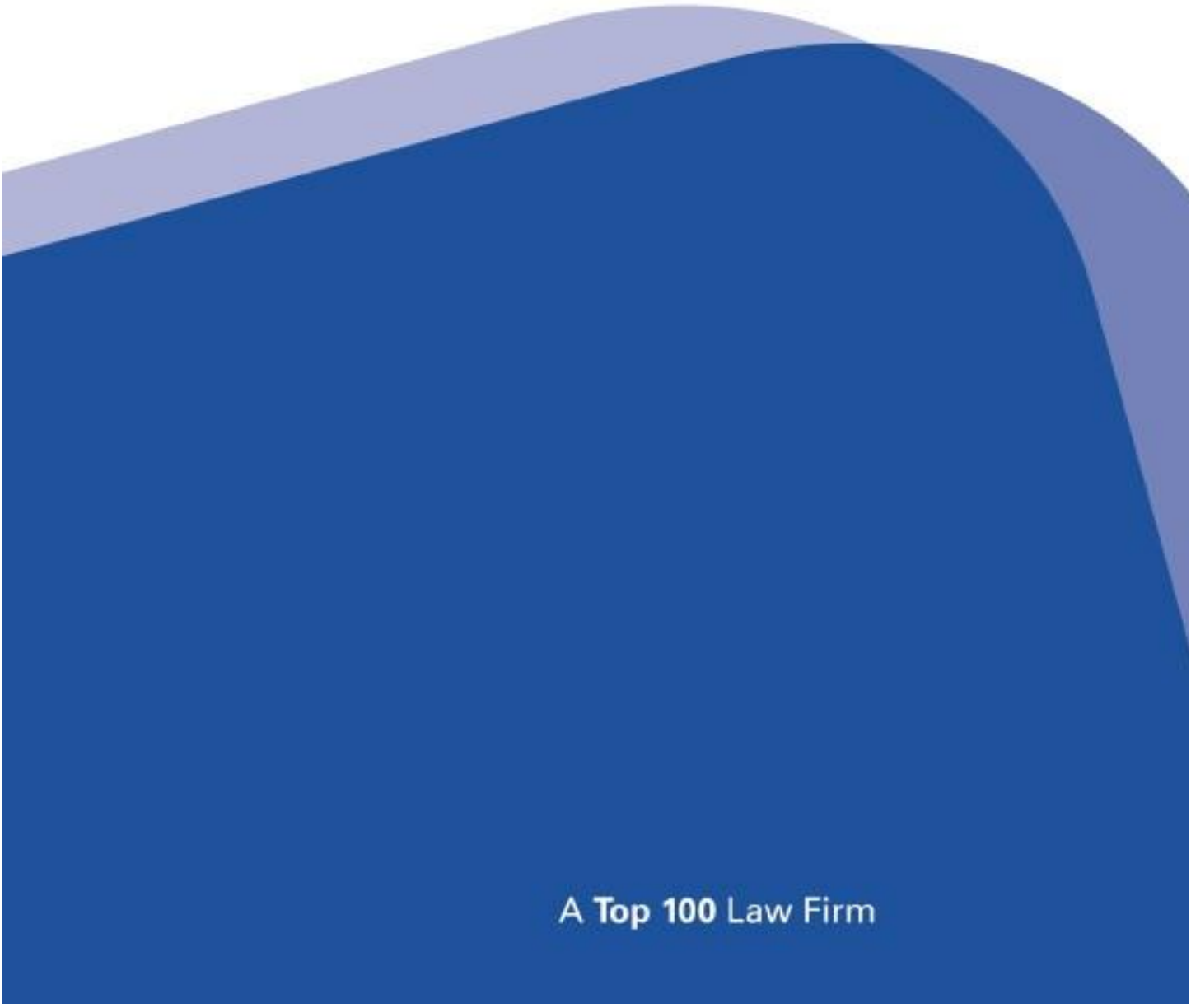
DMH Stallard

Planning Statement

Little Wantley, RH20 4BJ



DMH Stallard

The Cruiser

at

Little Wantley, RH20 4BJ

Planning Supporting Statement

on Behalf of

Mr S Oliphant-Hope & Mrs V Oliphant-Hope

May 2024

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Contents

1. Introduction 4

2. Planning Policy Context 5

3. Scheme Appraisal 10

4. Conclusions.....13

1. Introduction

1.1 Planning permission is sought for the continued use of a 'The Cruiser' at Little Wantley for the use of the building as a holiday let.

1.2 This Statement sets out the detail of the proposal, which is described and appraised having regard to:

- Planning Policy;
- Landscape impact;
- Access and parking provision;
- Tourism / Economic benefits.

1.3 The Council is asked to consider this Statement alongside the submitted plans, design and access statement, and Water Neutrality Report (submitted alongside this statement) which demonstrate that the proposed development accords with the relevant planning policies and is acceptable in all respects.

1.4 The Design and Access statement deals with the site location, setting, planning history and accessibility. We will not repeat those details here, but rather focus on the Planning Policy context and precedents.

2. Planning Policy Context

2.1 OVERVIEW

2.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2.1.2 The statutory development plan for Horsham (of relevance to this site) currently comprises the following documents:

- Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF)(2015); and
- Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan (SSWNP 2019)

2.1.3 Other material considerations in this case include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)(2023), the Horsham District Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study (2016), the Horsham Visitor Economy Strategy, and National England's Position Statement on Water Neutrality (September 2021).

2.1.4 The District Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan which will eventually replace the above adopted local plan documents. The plan was published Reg 19 in early 2024, with submission currently scheduled for summer/autumn 2024. A period of early consultation (Regulation 18) was held in early 2020 and the relevant policies are discussed herein.

2.1.5 There Neighbourhood Plan as set out above contains relevant policies in respect to Tourism accommodation (10) and Countryside Protection (8)

2.2 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF)

2.2.1 The site lies outside of any defined built-up area and therefore falls within the open countryside in planning terms. Policy 26 of the HDPF states that outside of built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and (inter alia) provide for quiet informal recreational use or enable the sustainable development of rural areas.

2.2.2 In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to the surrounding countryside character and location. Development will be acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located.

2.2.3 Policy 11 of the HDPF states that measures that promote tourism and enhance local cultural facilities will be encouraged. It states that any development should be of a scale and type appropriate to the location and should increase the range, or improve the quality of accommodation, attraction or experiences for tourists, day visitors, business visitors, and residents in the district. Support will particularly be given to proposals which (inter alia) reinforce the local distinctiveness and improve existing facilities; and develop the opportunities associated with rural diversification and rural development initiatives, particularly where they benefit the local economy or enable the retention of buildings contributing to the character of the countryside.

2.2.4 Other policies of relevance to the proposal, which are discussed within section 5, comprise:

- Policy 1 – Sustainable Development
- Policy 2 – Strategic Development
- Policy 25 – District Character and the Natural Environment
- Policy 27 – Settlement Coalescence
- Policy 31 – Green Infrastructure
- Policy 32 – The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33 – Development Principles
- Policy 34 – Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
- Policy 35 – Climate Change
- Policy 36 – Appropriate Energy Use
- Policy 37 – Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy 40 – Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41 – Parking
- Policy 42 – Inclusive Communities

SSW Neighbourhood Plan

2.2.5 The proposed has no landscape impact, the site being contained by established vegetation (C8). Policy C10 supports appropriate tourist accommodation. The site/use has no harmful impact on neighbouring amenity and adequate parties.

2.3 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

2.3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It is a material consideration in planning decisions.

2.3.2 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 goes on to acknowledge the three overarching goals of the planning system, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The three goals are:

- Economic - helping to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy.
- Social - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities.
- Environmental - contributing to the protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

2.3.3 To ensure that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph 11). For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. The application of policies in the framework that protect areas or assets of importance provides reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the framework as a whole.

2.3.4 Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas and sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.

2.3.5 Paragraph 89 continues to note that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings,

does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport).

Horsham District Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study (2016)

2.3.6 The Horsham District Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study (2016) revealed a strong demand for all sizes and standards of self-catering holiday accommodation in all parts of the district. At the time, the study revealed frequent shortages of self-catering accommodation between June and September, and to a lesser extent at weekends in the shoulder months of April, May and October. Key markets are people staying for short breaks and longer holidays. Secondary markets are people attending weddings and family parties and overseas tourists. These trends are likely to have continued as a result of the pandemic, with the increase in 'staycations'.

Visitor Economy Strategy for Horsham District (2018-2023)

2.3.7 The Visitor Economy Strategy highlights the importance of the visitor economy in creating and supporting employment in the district, which reflects the observations set out in the district's Economic Strategy as well as those of West Sussex County Council and the Coast to Capital Local Economic Partnership. There is a widely recognised need to support the sector and "particularly the small rural businesses that are central to making Horsham district an appealing place to live, work and visit and that ensure visitor expenditure adds value to the district and its residents."

2.3.8 The Strategy also recognises the appeal of the district as a rural area and the extensive public rights of way that provide opportunities for varied and easily accessible walking and cycling.

2.4 EMERGING LOCAL PLAN

2.4.1 While the new Local Plan offers limited weight in the determination of applications at the current time, it provides a helpful indication on the 'direction of travel' on various planning topics, including the provision of visitor accommodation.

2.4.2 The Regulation 19 version of the new Local Plan proposed a new iteration of Policy 11 (Tourism Facilities and Visitor Accommodation) which is set out below. It is clear that greater emphasis has been placed on the provision of tourist accommodation within the district, through the conversion of existing rural buildings wherever possible.

"Proposals which enhance the visitor economy through the redevelopment of an existing site, or the provision of new facilities for visitor accommodation and/or tourism facilities will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposals demonstrate all of the following:

a) Reinforce the local distinctiveness and demonstrate how the District's tourist offer will be improved or enhanced. This may include the retention of heritage assets within the district, including the return of a historic property to active use;

b) Contribute to the retention and enhancement of existing facilities;

c) Where appropriate, increase accessibility to the District's tourist facilities and/or visitor accommodation through sustainable modes of travel;

d) Relate well to their surroundings and are sensitively designed to avoid harm to the townscape or landscape character and the wider environment and to the amenities of adjacent uses.

Outside defined settlement boundaries, proposals should also:

a) Seek to re-use existing buildings in the first instance.

b) Demonstrate rural diversification and support rural development initiatives, particularly where they assist farm diversification projects, benefit the local economy, or enable the retention of buildings contributing to the character of the countryside."

2.5 **SITE SPECIFIC PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

2.6 The site is unaffected by any landscape or spatial designations but falls within an area of open countryside as identified in the Local Development Plan, discussed later in this report.

2.6.1 There are no designated heritage assets within or immediately adjacent to the site.

2.6.2 The site is not located within an Archaeological Notification Area.

2.6.3 The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding from nearby rivers.

2.6.4 The application falls within the curtilage of the host dwelling (see DC/23/1998) and hence the structure itself would benefit from permitted development rights, and therefore, can be retained – it is only the use which requires consent.

Scheme Appraisal

2.7 INTRODUCTION

2.7.1 In determining whether the proposal accords with the development plan, the following key issues are considered:

- Principle of Development
- Water Neutrality

2.7.2 These considerations are discussed in turn below.

2.8 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

2.8.1 The development of visitor accommodation is supported by Policy 11 of the HDPF which states that measures that promote tourism and enhance local cultural facilities will be encouraged, provided that the development is of an appropriate scale and increases the range and the quality of accommodation for visitors in the district.

2.8.2 This policy support is reflective of the Horsham District Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study (2016) which revealed a strong demand for all sizes and standards of self-catering property in all parts of the district, where there were frequent shortages of self-catering accommodation throughout the year. The report concludes that there is insufficient provision of all types of visitor accommodation and supports the provision of high-quality holiday cottages and small holiday lodges/eco lodges to meet this ongoing demand.

2.8.3 Given the largely rural nature of the district, the Visitor Economy Strategy identifies the varied natural landscape and extensive public right of way network as key draws for visitors, together with various historic towns and villages scattered across the district. As such, the provision of visitor accommodation within the countryside is essential, in line with Policy 26, to help support the quiet informal recreational use of the local landscape and the sustainable development of rural areas through support for local businesses and attractions, in accordance with Policy 1 and the NPPF.

2.8.4 The application site is well located in relation to a wide range of natural assets and other cultural and entertainment options available for visitors.

2.8.5 Aside from the district's natural assets, rural businesses and attractions will largely rely on spending by local people and visitors to ensure their ongoing success and to maintain the continued vitality of the local rural economy, as recognised by the Visitor Economy Strategy. It follows that the provision of high-quality visitor accommodation will continue to play an important role in the sustainable development of Horsham's rural areas in accordance with the NPPF.

2.8.6 The principle of the proposal is therefore acceptable in planning terms and aligns with relevant local planning policies. This position has been accepted on a number of similar change of use applications relating to rural buildings throughout the district in recent years, including but not limited to:

- DC/22/0181 – Bayley Paddock Mill Lane Partridge Green West Sussex RH13 8JU

  Proposal: Change of use and alterations to existing stable building to form 1no holiday-let unit (part-retrospective) – Permitted 29/03/2022

- DC/21/1670 – Oak House Worthing Road Dial Post Horsham West Sussex RH13 8NQ

  Proposal: Change of use from ancillary accommodation to a holiday let – Permitted 07/03/2022

- DC/20/0980 – Forest Grange Stables Forest Grange Horsham West Sussex RH12 4TG

  Proposal: Change of use of existing stable buildings to holiday let accommodation and equestrian activities (C3 use) – Permitted 18/09/2020

  DC/23/0589 - Palaceland Farm Hooklands Lane Shipley West Sussex RH13 8PX

  Proposal: Conversion and change of use of agricultural barn to holiday let accommodation (Class C1).

- DC/23/0668 - Pot Hill House Honeybridge Lane Dial Post RH13 8NX

  Proposal: Change of use from Holiday Let (Class C1) to Mixed Use as a Holiday Let (Class C1) and commercial business space (Class E) – Permitted 29/09/2023

- DC/23/0984 - Walden Hall Cowfold Road West Grinstead West Sussex RH13 8LY

  Proposal: Conversion of stable building to form 4no. self-contained holiday lets – Permitted 29/02/2024

- DC/23/1069 - Bentons Cottage Bentons Lane Dial Post West Sussex RH13 8NP

  Proposal: Change of Use from Existing Office and Barn to 2no. 1-Bed Holiday Let Units. – permitted 15/08/2023

- DC/23/1611 - Land Parcel At Park Lane Ashington West Sussex RH20 3AN

  Proposal: Variation of Condition 6 of previously approved application DC/21/1592 (Change of use of agricultural land for the siting of 3 No. glamping pod holiday lets) Variation sought for the retention of fairy lights installed beneath the main roof structure of the existing pod. – Permitted 4/12/2023

- DC/23/1979 - Stables at Glebe Meadow Church Lane Ashurst Steyning West Sussex BN44 3AR

  Proposal: Change of use of existing stable building into a holiday let, alongside building operations including the introduction of infill glazing and windows, together with the provision of parking and other associated works. – Permitted 8/05/2024

- DC/20/1282 - West Wantley Fryern Road Storrington

  Proposal: Demolition of existing dairy and stables and rebuilding as a single storey building to provide 1No. 3 bed holiday let unit of accommodation. Permitted 07/09/2020

The last of those listed above is notable as the site is a neighbour to the current application site.

2.8.7 Horsham District Council has also supported the development of new buildings and structures for holiday accommodation in the local area, further emphasising the policy support for this type of use in the countryside.

2.8.8 The proposal relates to the conversion of an existing building which has an attractive appearance and is sympathetic in design and scale to its surroundings.

2.8.9 The proposal will not result in the removal of any existing trees or hedgerows surrounding the site. There is no visibility into the site from public vantage points.

2.8.10 In accordance with Policy 27 (Settlement Coalescence), the proposal will not result in the spread of development into the open areas surrounding the site. The proposed is compatible with the rural location.

2.8.11 The proposal is therefore acceptable in design terms.

2.8.12 The proposed also complies with SSWNP policies C8 and C10, there being no detrimental impact to neighbouring residents and adequate off-street parking.

2.9 WATER NEUTRALITY

2.9.1 As introduced previously in this statement, Natural England published a Position Statement in September 2021 raising concerns about the potential impact of existing water extraction on the health and integrity of a number of legally protected environmental sites located in the Arun Valley, comprising the Arun Valley RAMSAR, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

2.9.2 Accordingly, it was concluded that all new development located within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone must be 'water neutral' to prevent any conflict with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and to allow the development to be supported by Natural England and Horsham District Council. Water neutrality means that demand for mains water generated by a proposed development must be the same or lower than the existing use.

2.9.3 A Water Neutrality (WN) Statement is submitted alongside this document which shows how the development meets WN requirements.

3. Conclusions

3.1 The Horsham District Planning Framework and supporting evidence base including the Horsham District Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study (2016) and the Horsham Visitor Economy Strategy show a clear support for the provision of rural visitor accommodation, which is recognised as an important part of the rural economy as a result of its associated benefits to local attractions and services through visitor spending. There are numerous examples of similar applications being granted in the local area.

3.2 The proposal seeks to reuse an attractive rural structure which requires no alterations to make it suitable for the proposed use. An external amenity area and parking provision is readily available subject to the grant of planning consent, and it will not result in the spread of new development into currently open land.

3.3 The site is accessed via an existing gated entrance, which has been used without issues. The site provides adequate parking. The site is very well shielded from the wider countryside and neighbours.

3.4 The development envisages supports the local rural economy in numerous ways including:

- On-site employment, cleaning, grounds maintenance etc;
- Spend in the local rural area via visits to shops, pubs. Restaurants and tourist facilities;
- Services to occupants/guests including flowers, picnic hampers, champagne, afternoon tea etc.

3.5 We therefore respectfully request that the Council give this planning application favourable consideration, and grant planning permission for the proposed development at the earliest opportunity.