Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/25/0924
Apple Barn, Rock Lane, Washington, West Sussex, RH20 3BL

DESCRIPTION:

Retention of two temporary structures, 1x yurt tent and 1x movable shepherds hut/caravan, for use as holiday accommodation and the erection of shower and toilet facilities (Retrospective).

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/20/1249	Removal of Condition 4 of previously approved application DC/19/1117 (Erection of a single storey side extension with internal alterations to southern elevation) Creation of door to replace glazed link accessing kitchen.	Application Permitted on 03.09.2020
DC/20/1607	Removal of Condition 4 of previously approved application DC/19/1118 (Erection of a single storey side extension with internal alterations to southern elevation (Listed Building Consent)) Relating to the front and side elevation.	Application Permitted on 22.10.2020

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

Apple Barn is located on Rock Lane, Washington, within a peaceful, lightly populated rural setting characterised by open countryside, established vegetation, and proximity to the South Downs National Park. The property includes a Grade II listed dwelling set within approximately four acres of land. The two subject structures are sited to the rear of the main house within a small orchard, around 40 metres from the dwelling, surrounded by mature trees providing effective visual screening from neighbouring properties and public viewpoints. The site is largely self-contained, with minimal overlooking and no statutory ecological designations. Access is via the existing driveway, with on-site parking available.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

This retrospective application seeks permission for the retention and use of two temporary, movable structures for short-term holiday accommodation, together with associated outdoor facilities. The development comprises:

- One Shepherd's Hut (approx. 6 m²), mounted on wheels and easily re-locatable.
- One Yurt (approx. 14 m²), originally used for yoga classes since 2015 and now occasionally used for visitor stays.
- Associated facilities including a communal outdoor shower and a composting toilet.

The accommodation is off-grid, low-impact, and marketed for seasonal short-term tourist stays via platforms such as Airbnb. No catering facilities are provided on site, encouraging guests to use local services. The proposal aims to regularise the current use, which promotes sustainable rural tourism while maintaining the area's natural character.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
Policy 9 - Employment Development
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 11 - Tourism and Cultural Facilities
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 28 - Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 39 - Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities
Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Neighbourhood Plan:
Storrington Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan has been Made.
Policy 14-Design

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):
Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 10: Flooding
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
Policy 22: Shop Fronts and Advertisements
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Strategic Policy 27: Inclusive Communities, Health and Wellbeing
Policy 28: Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation
Policy 31: Rural Economic Development
Strategic Policy 34: Tourism Facilities and Visitor Accommodation

Supplementary Planning Guidance:
Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Planning Advice Notes:
Facilitating Appropriate Development
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

HDC Arboricultural officer: No Objection - No Arboricultural raised with the application; please determine as you see fit.

HDC Conservation: No Objection - The structures do not harm the setting of the listed building.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Natural England: No Objection - We concur with the conclusion of your authority's HRA appropriate assessment insofar that adverse effects on the integrity of the Arun Valley Designated sites can be ruled out, as such:

- We have no objections subject to the: delivery, management and maintenance of measures identified in the water neutrality statement to achieve water neutrality.

Southern Water: Comment - Southern Water places restrictions on tree planting near its infrastructure, including sewers, rising mains, and water mains. Developers should refer to Southern Water's guidance documents on tree planting and sewerage sector standards when preparing landscaping proposals.

Additionally, details of the proposed foul and surface water drainage systems must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Southern Water before construction begins.

WSCC Highways: No Objection - The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

2 letters of Objection have been received from 2 addresses, objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- Retrospective nature of the application is unacceptable, as development occurred without prior permission.
- Unsuitable location: isolated, car-dependent, contrary to local and national planning policies.
- Conflict with rural development policies: no lawful pre-existing buildings, no substantial environmental improvement, insufficient parking provision.
- Residential amenity concerns: noise from unrestricted outdoor use, BBQs, and pool; lack of boundaries.
- Flood risk: access subject to surface water flooding; no sequential test provided.
- Water neutrality concerns: unclear and inadequate water consumption calculations.

10 letters for Support have been received from 10 addresses, supporting the application on the following grounds:

- Aesthetic and environmental fit: structures are in keeping with the land, well designed, and enhance the natural setting.

- Wildlife and habitat: garden is a haven for birds, bees, and flora; struc-tures introduced sympathetically.
- Wellbeing and recreation: yoga classes and peaceful environment benefit health and mental wellbeing.
- Tourism benefits: attracts visitors, supports local economy, promotes countryside appreciation.
- No adverse impacts: no extra noise, no loss of privacy or light, ample on-site parking.
- Sustainability: low-impact accommodation aligned with nature and dark skies preservation.

Parish Comments:
Washington Parish Council: No Objection - On condition that it is limited to the existing one yurt and one shepherds hut/caravan, and that there is no further expansion.

Member Comments:
None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:
The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

Policy 1 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraphs 8–11 of the NPPF 2024 require that proposals which accord with the development plan are approved without delay, and that sustainable development should be pursued in a positive way.

Policy 2 of the HDPF directs development to the most sustainable locations, with limited development in the countryside supported where it is essential to its location or supports the rural economy. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF 2024 states that planning decisions should enable sustainable rural tourism that respects the character of the countryside.

Policy 10 of the HDPF supports rural economic development, including tourism, where proposals are appropriate in scale and character and do not harm the rural landscape or neighbouring amenities.

Policy 11 of the HDPF seeks to protect and enhance tourism facilities that contribute to the District's economy, provided they are sensitively designed and located. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF 2024 reinforces the importance of rural tourism that benefits communities while respecting the countryside.

Policies 25 and 26 of the HDPF require the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and the intrinsic character of the countryside. Paragraph 179 of the NPPF 2024 requires planning decisions to protect valued landscapes and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Paragraph 86 of the NPPF 2024 supports the retention and development of accessible local tourist accommodation that meets identified needs and supports local economies.

The proposal seeks retrospective permission for the siting and use of two small, movable structures a Shepherd's Hut and a Yurt – within the grounds of The Apple Barn, Washington, for short-term tourist accommodation. These units are modest in scale (combined internal floor area under 20 m²), seasonally occupied, and of a temporary nature, being fully movable without permanent foundations.

The site is located in the countryside but benefits from good accessibility to Storrington village and the South Downs National Park. The development represents a form of rural diversification that provides low-impact, sustainable visitor accommodation. Guests are encouraged to make use of local facilities, as the units do not provide catering or cooking facilities, thereby contributing to the local economy in line with the aims of the HDPF and NPPF to support rural businesses and tourism.

From an environmental perspective, the proposal has no adverse ecological effects. The seasonal and small-scale nature of the use ensures it remains proportionate to the site and its rural setting.

In summary, the development aligns with the spatial strategy for sustainable rural tourism by supporting the rural economy through locally focused visitor expenditure, providing an alternative low-impact accommodation offer that complements the surrounding landscape, avoiding harm to the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Accordingly, the principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable when assessed against the relevant provisions of the HDPF and the NPPF.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF seek to ensure that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

Policy 34 of the HDPF states that development should be reinforce the special character of the historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form and design; and should make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area. Proposals should preserve and ensure clear legibility of locally distinctive vernacular building forms and their settings, features, fabric and materials.

The proposal comprises two small-scale, movable accommodation units - a Shepherd's Hut (approximately 6 m²) and a Yurt (approximately 14 m²) as well as a modestly sized toilet and shower block located within an enclosed orchard to the rear of The Apple Barn. Both structures are temporary in nature, set on non-permanent bases, and of modest height and footprint, ensuring they remain subservient to the host property and do not intrude upon the surrounding landscape.

The use of natural and subdued materials, including timber cladding for the Shepherd's Hut and a neutral-toned fabric over a timber frame for the Yurt, allows the structures to blend harmoniously with their verdant surroundings. The orchard is bordered by mature trees and established planting, providing year-round screening and ensuring that the development does not break the skyline or interrupt important views.

The siting of the units maintains a generous separation from The Apple Barn, a Grade II listed building, thereby avoiding any physical or visual harm to its setting. Their low-profile design, combined with the lightweight and reversible construction, ensures the proposal preserves the rural character and historic environment while making a positive, low-impact contribution to the local tourism offer.

Overall, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies 32, 33, and 34 of the HDPF, as it demonstrates a high standard of design that respects the site's rural and historic context, reinforces local character, and ensures a sensitive and visually unobtrusive form of development.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

Two letters of objection raise concerns regarding potential noise from unrestricted outdoor use (including BBQs and a pool), a lack of boundaries, and the retrospective nature of the proposal. It is acknowledged that the site is used for short-term holiday accommodation which could generate some level of activity; however, the scale of the use is small, with only two units available, and occupation limited to seasonal operation for a maximum of 180 days per year. The units are positioned approximately 40 metres from the main dwelling and well separated from neighbouring properties, with mature trees and planting providing effective screening that limits both views and sound transmission.

It is not anticipated that the proposal would generate a level of noise to cause a material loss of amenity. The Planning Statement confirms that guest numbers are low, facilities are modest, and the absence of large-scale communal areas reduces the potential for prolonged outdoor gatherings. The composting toilet and outdoor shower are located discreetly within the orchard and do not create odour or activity levels that would adversely affect neighbours.

The site layout, combined with the seasonal, small-scale nature of the use, means that any additional noise or disturbance arising from the proposal would be intermittent and limited in duration. The existing landscaping ensures there is no loss of privacy, and no external lighting is proposed, pre-venting light spill that could impact neighbouring properties or dark skies.

Given these factors, and noting the lack of substantive evidence of harm, it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable adverse impacts on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers. The development there-fore accords with Policy 33 of the HDPF in this regard.

Highways Impacts:

Policies 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) require that development provides safe and suitable access for all users and does not have a severe impact on the operation of the transport network. The site is accessed via Rock Lane, a privately maintained road, with the nearest publicly maintained highway being Rock Road, a C-classified road subject to a 50mph speed limit.

According to the Local Highway Authority, the yurt has been on site since 2015, initially used as a yoga studio and more recently as holiday accommodation. The shepherd's hut has been in use for approximately two years. While specific booking frequency and guest numbers have not been provided, it is understood that each unit accommodates two adults and would typically require one parking space per unit. The site appears to have sufficient space to accommodate this level of parking provision.

Assuming a 'worst-case' scenario in which both units are fully booked year-round, the LHA considers that the level of vehicular movements generated would be comparable to that of a residential use. Visibility at the access points onto Rock Road is deemed sufficient, and the proposal is not expected to result in a material intensification of use or raise highway safety concerns.

In conclusion, it is not considered that the proposal would result in harm to the function and safety of the public highway network, in accordance with the above policies.

Water Neutrality:

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an

existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

As the proposed development would increase water demand, it has been screened into Appropriate Assessment. The scheme consists of two small-scale, off-grid holiday accommodation units (a Yurt and a Shepherd's Hut) with shared outdoor facilities: one external shower, one wash basin, and one composting toilet. These facilities operate seasonally for a maximum of 180 days per year.

The submitted Water Neutrality Statement calculates that the seasonal use of the guest accommodation would add approximately 105.58 litres/day to the site's water consumption. To fully offset this, the applicant proposes to replace the existing washing machine in the main dwelling with a high-efficiency model achieving a minimum water usage of 4.9 litres/kg wash load. This measure is expected to save approximately 113.54 litres/day, resulting in a net reduction of 7.96 litres/day in overall water use.

In their consultation response, Natural England stated that they have no objection to this application, concurring with the conclusions of the Council's Habitats Regulations Appropriate Assessment that adverse effects on the integrity of the Arun Valley designated sites can be ruled out. Their position is subject to the delivery, management, and maintenance of the measures identified in the submitted Water Neutrality Statement, which are designed to achieve water neutrality for the development.

The proposal therefore complies with Policy 31 of the HDPF and Paragraphs 179–180 of the NPPF, as well as the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed. Off-site gains and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

- The development is retrospective

Conclusions:

The proposal represents a modest, low-impact form of rural tourism that is well screened, seasonally operated, and appropriately mitigated to achieve water neutrality. It would preserve the rural character of the site, protect neighbouring amenity, and safeguard the setting of heritage assets. The development is therefore considered to accord with the relevant policies of the HDPF and the NPPF, and planning permission is recommended.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2 **Regulatory Condition**: Within three months of the date of this permission, the existing washing machine at The Apple Barn shall be replaced with a model that achieves a minimum water efficiency of 4.9 litres per kilogram of wash load (e.g., Bosch WGB256A1GB), as specified in the submitted Water Neutrality Statement. The replacement appliance shall thereafter be retained and maintained in working condition for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure the development is water neutral and to avoid an adverse impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA, and Ramsar sites, in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Paragraphs 179 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

3 **Regulatory Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall only be occupied / operated as holiday accommodation, and shall be managed in accordance with the following:

i) The accommodation shall be occupied for holiday and short-term let purposes only;
ii) The accommodation shall not be occupied as a person's sole, or main place of residence;
iii) The accommodation shall operate for no more than 180 days per calendar year;
iv) The accommodation shall not be occupied by any one person for a period exceeding 28 days in any calendar year;
v) The accommodation shall at all times be managed and supervised by the owners of 'Apple Barn'
vi) The owners shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names of all occupiers of the accommodation on the site, and of their main home addresses, and shall make this information available to the Local Planning Authority upon request.

Reason: To maintain the availability of the site as short-term holiday tourist accommodation in accordance with Policies 10, 11 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/25/0924
(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location & Site plan	Location & Site Plan	25003 AA V1 G DR A 0001 -	03.06.2025
Elevation & Floor plan	Retrospective Plans and Elevations	25003 AA V1 G DR A 0005 -	03.06.2025
Supporting Statement	Water Neutrality and Strategy Statement by Architekton Architects dated May 25	25003	03.06.2025
Block plan	Block Plan	25003 AA V1 G DR A 0003 -	03.06.2025

Site plan	Retrospective Plans and Elevations	25003 AA V1 G DR 0004 -	03.06.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Shazia Penne Date: 08.08.2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial Tamara Dale Date: 11.08.2025