WARNHAM PARISH COUNCIL CONSULTATION COMMENTS

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
SITE ADDRESS:	**Westons Farm, Dorking Road, Warnham**
PROPOSAL:	**Prior notification for the demolition of seven buildings.**
REFERENCE:	DC/24/1771
RECOMMENDATION:	Strongly Object

Warnham Parish Council formally objects to Planning Application DC/24/1771, which proposes the demolition of several agricultural outbuildings at Westons Farm. The Council's objection is based on the following key concerns, with specific regard to the broader implications of this proposal in the context of related applications for residential development on the site.

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1. Conflict with the Warnham Neighbourhood Plan
The proposed demolition is located outside the development boundary defined by the Warnham Neighbourhood Plan, a community-led document that safeguards the rural character of Warnham and prioritizes sustainable, community-aligned development. Approving this application could pave the way for inappropriate future development, directly conflicting with the agreed framework and setting an unwelcome precedent.

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2. Insufficient Justification for Demolition
The application provides inadequate evidence to justify the demolition of these agricultural buildings:

- **The buildings' redundancy as agricultural structures does not preclude their potential for restoration or alternative use in ways that preserve the area's character.**
- **Demolition appears to be driven by speculative intentions to redevelop the land for residential purposes, as evidenced by related Planning Application DC/24/1819. This suggests that the proposal is not merely about removing unusable structures but is part of a larger, yet incomplete, vision for the site's redevelopment.**
- **The parish council fears the loss of hedgerows and trees are of a concern under demolition**
- **Concern must be raised to the impact of vibration on the neighbouring two listed properties as well as dust particles in relation to health conditions.**

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3. Environmental and Ecological Concerns
The Parish Council is deeply concerned about the lack of attention to environmental impacts:

- **Protected Species: The potential presence of bats and other protected species is acknowledged in the application but not adequately addressed through surveys or mitigation strategies. These omissions are unacceptable given the ecological sensitivity of rural sites like this.**
- **Sustainability: Demolishing buildings without robust plans for their future use creates unnecessary environmental harm, including waste and carbon emissions. The Council considers this contrary to principles of sustainable development.**

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4. Impact on Local Character and Heritage
Warnham's rural character and heritage assets must be safeguarded. The application raises the following concerns:

- **Visual Impact: A cleared site, with no defined plans for future use, risks leaving a visually intrusive scar on the rural landscape.**

- **Heritage Assets: The proximity to Grade II listed properties underscores the importance of ensuring any works respect the area's historical and architectural significance.**
- **Broader Development Impacts: As this application is part of a broader strategy to convert the site to residential use, it is essential to assess cumulative impacts on Warnham's character and infrastructure before allowing any preliminary works.**

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5. Lack of Transparency and Inconsistencies Regarding Future Use
When considered alongside DC/24/1819, it is evident that this application is part of a broader strategy to redevelop the site for residential purposes under Class Q regulations. However, there are significant inconsistencies and omissions within the DC/24/1819 application that raise concerns:

- **Class Q Compliance: The Class Q application relies on the structural integrity of specific buildings to justify their conversion to dwellings. However, the structural survey and plans provided lack sufficient detail and clarity to conclusively demonstrate that the buildings are suitable for conversion without substantial rebuilding, which would fall outside Class Q regulations.**
- **Future Use Ambiguity: While DC/24/1819 proposes converting certain buildings to residential use, this demolition application creates uncertainty about how the wider site will be utilized, particularly in relation to communal spaces and the integration of the retained hardstanding.**
- **Contradictions in Plans: The demolition of some structures under DC/24/1771 conflicts with the overarching narrative of preserving the rural character, as suggested in DC/24/1819. This inconsistency raises questions about whether the proposed works genuinely align with the intentions of Class Q or are a step toward larger, speculative development plans.**
- **Proposed development- the additional vehicle movements due to no walking or cycling connection to the village and school with the site accessing an A road that is due to have significantly increase in traffic volume and increase complexity with the HDC local plan changes to Great Daux roundabout and installation additional lanes.**

Without clearer alignment and resolution of these inconsistencies, the Parish Council is concerned that approving this application could inadvertently support inappropriate and speculative development that may not comply with planning regulations or local policies.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Warnham Parish Council strongly recommends that Horsham District Council refuse this application unless the following conditions are met:

1. **A full and detailed justification for the proposed demolition is provided, including an exploration of alternative uses for the existing buildings.**
2. **Comprehensive ecological surveys and mitigation plans are submitted to address potential impacts on biodiversity.**
3. **A clear, cohesive plan for the site's future use is presented and assessed for compliance with the Warnham Neighbourhood Plan and local policies.**
4. **A full evaluation of the cumulative impacts of this application and associated applications, such as DC/24/1819, is conducted to ensure the site's development aligns with community and environmental priorities.**

Warnham Parish Council remains committed to protecting the character and integrity of the parish. As this application appears to be a precursor to wider redevelopment for residential use, it is vital that decisions are made transparently and in line with community and policy objectives.	
ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:	
NAME:	OPTIONAL
DATE:	3th Dec 2024