

29 April 2026



Director of Place
Horsham District Council
Parkside
Chart Way
Horsham
RH12 1RL

DOWNSVIEW NURSERIES, NEW HALL LANE, SMALL DOLE BN5 9YJ APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE

We apply for permission in principle for the erection of a single dwelling and associated development at this site.

Enclosed are:

- Application form
- Location plan
- Application fee £ 1,593.00 (to be paid by the applicant)

Application site

The application site is an approximately rectangular-shaped area of land used for storage, within a larger ownership comprised in a property known collectively as Downsvie Nurseries. The application site includes access to New Hall Lane, which is a public footpath (HEN-2775) and so constitutes a public highway. The application site includes a short length of the access drive in other ownership.

Most of the site is open with areas of grass, surfacing and overgrowth. There are several single-storey buildings towards the north-western part of the site which would be demolished. There are tall evergreen trees on the eastern boundary. On the southern and western application site boundaries there is metal palisade fencing and brambles. The applicant advises that the site has been used for storage by a building contractor and then by a roofing contractor for about the last 15 years. There are vehicles, plant, caravans, vehicle parts and building materials stored on the site.

On the remainder of the applicant's ownership, to the west of the application site, there is a plant nursery, including several buildings, a green house, a polytunnel and plant beds.

To the north of the application site, are a detached dwelling, Downsview, and a site on which a static residential caravan is stationed, Downsview Paddock. Adjoining to the east and south is a smallholding with buildings to the east and open fields to the south used for grazing. To the west of the applicant's ownership is New Hall and its garden walls and bee boles, which are listed buildings, and the grounds of New Hall. There are dwellings on either side of New Hall Lane along most of its length, much of that comprising development in depth.

Proposal

The proposal is the erection of one dwelling and associated development.

The design and layout of a dwelling would be for subsequent determination.

Planning background

The council's website shows a number of planning decisions in respect of the applicant's ownership. Most related to nursery use with the most recent being an application for a lawful development certificate for residential occupation of a building (not on the application site itself).

Planning application DC/24/1225, for the erection of a detached dwelling at Jandola, New Hall Lane, was refused and dismissed. The inspector's decision letter said the proposal would boost; *'the supply of housing and would deliver a new dwelling close to public transport links and to the facilities located within Small Dole'* the benefits of which; *'attract considerable weight in favour of the appeal scheme'* and, given the housing shortfall, ascribed *'limited weight to the conflict with HDPF Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26'*. However, the inspector considered that proposal would have harmed the character and appearance of the area and might have harmed a protected species.

Planning application DC/24/1101, for the erection of two detached dwellings at Brooklands, New Hall Lane, was refused and dismissed. The inspector said; *'The only criteria within the FAD which the Council considers the scheme does not meet, is that the development would not be contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape character features are not maintained or enhanced'*. The inspector said that the southern boundary post and wire fence appeared as; *'a somewhat insubstantial and arbitrary boundary across a field. ... Accordingly, in my opinion, this is not a defensible boundary'*.

At the planning committee meeting of 20 January 2026, it was resolved to approve outline planning application DC/25/1019, subject to completion of a s106 planning obligation, for up to 45 dwellings at Land to the West of Shoreham Road. This site is at eastern end of New Hall Lane. The officer's report noted that the site adjoins the BUAB and would be in a suitable and a sustainable location on the edge of an existing settlement having a choice of transport modes to access local facilities and services in Henfield and local employment opportunities. The report concluded that, for several reasons, including the expiry of the neighbourhood plan in June 2026, the adverse impact of allowing this development would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The Gov.UK website does not show the application site to be subject to flood risk. The Historic England website does not show any listed buildings or scheduled monuments on or adjoining the application site. The West Sussex County Council website does not show the site to be within an archaeological notification area. The district council's on-line local plan interactive map does not show any preserved trees on or near the site.

Planning policy

Local plan 2015

The proposals map shows Built-up Area Boundary including Downsview and properties to the east, with the application site outside but adjoining the boundary.

Policy 3 Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy says that development will be permitted within villages which have defined Built-up Areas. Small Dole is categorised as a Smaller Village which have limited services and facilities and/or with some employment.

Policy 4 Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion supports the expansion of settlements outside built-up area boundaries in certain circumstances.

Policy 26 Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection aims to protect rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside.

Policy 32 Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development requires high quality and inclusive design.

Policy 33 Development Principles provides criteria for development including efficient use of land, amenity of occupiers/neighbours and retention of natural features.

Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 (Regulation 19) January 2024

Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy says that development will be permitted within villages with defined Built-up Area boundaries, including on suitable previously developed land. Infilling is required to be of an appropriate nature and scale to maintain the characteristics and function of the settlement.

Shaping Development in Horsham District: Planning Advice Note (September 2025)

Paragraph 1.7 acknowledges that the council can demonstrate around only a one-year housing land supply, less than the five-year supply required by government.

Paragraph 5.12 says that the council will consider positively applications that meet all the criteria set out:

- The site adjoins the existing settlement edge as defined by the BUAB;
- The level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement the proposal relates to;
- The proposal demonstrates that it meets local housing needs or will assist the retention and enhancement of community facilities and services;
- The impact of the development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive long-term development; and
- The development is contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape character features are maintained and enhanced.

Henfield Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2031 (May 2021)

The policy map shows the same Built-up Area boundary as the current local plan proposals map, in relation to the application site.

Policy 1: A Spatial Plan for the Parish says that development outside Built-up Area Boundaries will be supported where they conform to national and local plan policies in respect of development in the countryside.

NPPF (December 2024)

The following paragraphs of the NPPF are relevant:

- 8 sustainable development
- 11 presumption in favour of sustainable development
- 14 paragraph 11d presumption in relation to neighbourhood plans
- 61 significantly boosting the supply of homes
- 83 rural housing
- 89 use of previously developed land

Draft NPPF (December 2025)

The following paragraphs of the NPPF are relevant:

- S5 1j presumption where no five year housing site supply
- S5 1d re-development of previously developed land
- S6 1 neighbourhood plans and the presumption

Assessment

Planning practice guidance says that the scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development.

Location

Owing to the substantial under-supply of housing sites and the imminent expiry of the neighbourhood plan, the council's policies for the location of housing (including local plan policies 3 and 4) are out of date and NPPF paragraph 14 is not applicable, so the tilted balance in favour of granting permission in NPPF paragraph 11 is engaged. The strengthening of the draft NPPF presumption in favour of approving development where the council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites (draft NPPF S5 1j) supports this proposal, which is well-related to an existing settlement.

Neighbourhood plan policy 2 allows for development outside defined boundaries.

The site is not in an area of particular importance. Small Dole has a Built-up Area Boundary and so is considered to be a sustainable settlement. The council has confirmed in various planning decisions the sustainability of the location, thereby recognising the suitability of the location for development. The village has a shop/post office, pub, village hall, industrial estates and bus services.

The proposal would make effective use of previously developed land, for many years used for storage, by providing additional housing. The erection of a dwelling would

remove utilitarian structures and a non-conforming use. There would be no adverse impacts of granting permission which would outweigh the benefits.

The proposal would meet all the criteria of the council's planning advice note. It would provide much needed housing which would support the facilities of the village and support services in other settlements nearby. The application site is contained within clear, longstanding and well-established boundaries. There is a clear division between the application site and the open grazed grass fields to the south.

The application site is well related to adjoining dwellings and other buildings, which lie to the north, east and west. A dwelling on the site would not extend built development into the countryside in any direction. There are substantial trees to the east of the site and to the west of the ownership which screen and separate the site from the open countryside.

The erection of an appropriately designed dwelling on this secluded site, on which there are already buildings, would protect the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside beyond, meeting the criteria of local plan policy 26.

The application site is separated from the listed buildings of New Hall by the plant nursery, including several buildings, a green house, a polytunnel, and a belt of mature trees. A dwelling would have no impact on the setting of the listed buildings.

The location is not constrained by heritage assets, flood risk or preserved trees.

The proposal would be consistent with the locational aspects of NPPF paragraphs 8, 11, 83 and 89, with draft NPPF paragraphs S5 1j and d, and with the council's planning advice note.

Land use

The application site adjoins dwellings and is on the edge of the settlement, close to other dwellings. It is well related to the village and facilities. The use of the site for residential development would be appropriate and accord with NPPF paragraph 61.

Amount of development

The size and shape of the site would allow the development of one dwelling, with space for parking and turning, in accordance with local plan policies 32 and 33.

Conclusion

The proposed location, land use and amount of development would be in accordance with NPPF paragraph 11, with local plan policy, which is not deemed out of date, and with other NPPF policy. There are no material considerations which would indicate a different decision.

If you have any questions about this application, please contact Roy Speer.

SPEER DADE Planning Consultants

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www.speerdade.co.uk