

HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

Application for Planning Permission

Enlargement of existing manège arena to 70m x 25m, with associated works.

Land at Guildenhurst Stud

Lordings Road

Billingshurst

RH14 9JB

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Guilkenhurst Stud, Lordings Road, Billingshurst, RH14 9JB



Project: Land at Guilkenhurst Stud, Lordings Road, Billingshurst, RH14 9JB

Client: Anna Svedberg

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope

- 1.1.1 This statement has been prepared by South East Planning Consultancy (UK) Ltd on behalf of Ms Svedberg (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') and concerns proposals located at Guilkenhurst Stud. This statement serves to support a full planning application for the enlargement of the existing manège arena to 70m x 25m, with associated works.
- 1.1.2 This statement provides a description of the proposal site. In turn, it discusses the proposal and the design approach to the proposed scheme before providing an overview of relevant planning policy. Finally, the statement sets out the planning case in support of the proposal.
- 1.1.3 This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted plans, drawings and reports, including:
- Location Plan
 - Existing Block Plan
 - Proposed Block Plan

2.0 Site Context

2.1 Site Location

- 2.1.1 The Site is set within the grounds of Guilkenhurst Stud, extending to approximately 3.29 hectares (8.13 acres) (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'), located at Central Grid Reference: TQ067253 E:506702, N:125344 (Postcode: RH14 9JB).
- 2.1.2 The Site is accessed via a private drive which itself, takes access off Lordings Road (B2133). This context can be seen below in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1: Aerial photograph showing the Site and its immediate context (Site outlined in red).

2.2 Site Description

- 2.2.1 The site comprises a 60m x 20m manège (arena) located within the grounds of Guildenhurst Stud.
- 2.2.2 Historically, the arena has been used for dressage training. The current owner, who has recently acquired the site, now seeks to extend the existing arena to accommodate the exercising and training of showjumping horses for private use.
- 2.2.3 There are no listed buildings within the immediate vicinity, and the site is not identified as an area of ecological significance. The proposed development will therefore have no adverse impact on heritage or ecological assets.
- 2.2.4 The site is enclosed by turnout paddocks and a canter track along the southern and western boundaries, with a horse walker to the east, and stabling and residential accommodation situated to the north. Mature hedgerows and trees define all boundaries, resulting in very limited external views into the site.

- 2.2.5 The site does not lie within a Conservation Area, the Green Belt, or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and falls within Flood Zone 1, indicating the lowest probability of flooding.



Figure 2: Photograph showing the existing 60 x 20 arena.



Figure 3: Photograph showing the existing 60 x 20 arena.

3.0 Planning History

3.1 The Application Site

- 3.1.1 An examination of Horsham District Council's online planning register has identified the following relevant planning history pertaining to the wider Guildenhurst Stud site.

Application Reference	Description	Decision
BL/28/91	Erection of barn for use as private stables	Approved 13.06.1991
BL/71/91	Conversion of integral garage into bedroom & provision of dormer window	Approved 03.09.1991
DC/08/1023	Single-storey rear extension to form an Orangery	Approved 22.07.2008
DC/16/0089	Erection of horse walker	Approved 16.02.2016
DC/18/2666	Erection of a two storey side extension with single storey infill to the main dwelling, installation of a dormer on first floor and conversion of stables into habitable living space.	Approved 04.03.2019
DC/19/1050	Erection of a two storey entry porch, erection of a first floor extension with change of material on all dormers, internal alterations and associated works to fenestration	Approved 08.08.2019

4.0 The Proposed Development

4.1 Development Description

- 4.1.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the expansion of the existing equestrian arena from 60m x 20m to 70m x 25m to facilitate the private training and exercise of showjumping horses. The submitted drawings and supporting documents provide full details of the proposed works, including layout, materials, and levels.
- 4.1.2 The proposal represents a modest and proportionate extension to the existing manège and will have no adverse impact on the surrounding landscape or local character. Views into the site are very limited, owing to existing mature boundary vegetation and the well-contained nature of the wider stud complex.
- 4.1.3 The development will incorporate appropriate surface treatment and a sustainable drainage system designed to ensure the effective management of surface water runoff. The arena will be constructed using permeable materials and engineered to avoid any increase in flood risk either on or off the site.
- 4.1.4 Overall, the proposal constitutes a low-impact enhancement of existing equestrian facilities, supporting the continued rural use of the land in accordance with Policy 33 (Equestrian Development) of the emerging Horsham District Local Plan 2030–2040.

5.0 Planning Policy Context

5.1 Legislation and Planning Policy

- 5.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that all planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material planning considerations include national planning policy and can include former decisions by the LPA/Secretary of State, alternative uses, and fall-back positions.

5.2 Development Plan

- 5.2.1 In this case, the Development Plan consists of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (adopted November 2015). Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and can include local decisions, economic considerations, and fall-back positions. Horsham District Council also has an emerging Local Plan – Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 – yet to be adopted under Regulation 19.
- 5.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (adopted December 2024) outlines the Government's requirements for the planning system and establishes how these will be addressed to include the presumption of sustainable development.

5.3 Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (adopted November 2015)

Relevant Policies: 26, 29, 31

Policy 26: Countryside Protection

- 5.3.1 Policy 26 aims to protect the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside outside built-up area boundaries. Development is only permitted if it is essential to its countryside location and meets specific criteria, such as supporting agriculture/forestry, mineral extraction/waste disposal, quiet informal recreation, or sustainable rural development. Proposals must be of an appropriate scale, not significantly increase countryside activity, and must protect, conserve, or enhance key landscape features, including development patterns, ecological qualities, and landform.

"Outside 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 in addition meet one of the following criteria:

- 1. Support the needs of agriculture or forestry;*
- 2. Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;*
- 3. Provide for quiet informal recreational use; or*
- 4. Enable the sustainable development of rural areas.*

In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered 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..."

Policy 29: Equestrian Development

- 5.3.2 Policy 29 supports equestrian-related development in the district, provided it is high-quality, appropriate to its rural location (especially in protected areas such as the High Weald AONB), and meets specific criteria. Proposals should prioritise re-using existing buildings, be appropriate in scale and activity for their surroundings, and, where possible, be well related to existing buildings and the bridleway network.

"Development for equestrian related development will be supported provided that:

- 1. It can be demonstrated that the re-use of existing buildings on site for related equestrian use is not appropriate; before new or replacement buildings are considered.*
- 2. The proposal would be appropriate in scale and level of activity, and be in keeping with its location and surroundings, and where possible is well related to existing buildings;*
- 3. The proposal should where possible be well related to a bridleway network."*

Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

- 5.3.3 Policy 31 supports development that maintains and enhances the existing network of green infrastructure and resists proposals that would result in its loss unless suitable mitigation or

compensation is provided to retain local ecosystem services. Development is expected to enhance biodiversity through the creation and management of new habitats, the retention and enhancement of features of nature conservation value, and the establishment of green spaces and linkages that strengthen local and regional ecological networks. Where the felling of protected trees is necessary, replacement planting with appropriate species will be required. The policy applies a hierarchy of protection for designated sites, prioritising SPAs, SACs, SSSIs, NNRs, SNCIs, LNRs, Ancient Woodland, and other irreplaceable habitats, and states that development causing direct or indirect harm will be refused unless the proposal's justification clearly outweighs the need to protect the site and suitable mitigation or compensation is secured. Any development with potential effects on the Arun Valley SPA or The Mens SAC must undergo a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and comply with the necessary mitigation measures identified in the Plan.

5.4 Emerging Local Plan - Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 (Regulation 19)

Relevant Policies: 14, 17, 33

Policy 14: Countryside Protection

- 5.4.1 Strategic Policy 14 seeks to protect the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside outside built-up area boundaries and secondary settlements. Development in these areas will only be supported where it is essential to a countryside location and meets specific criteria, such as supporting agriculture or forestry, mineral extraction or waste disposal, quiet informal recreation, or the sustainable development of rural areas.
- 5.4.2 All proposals must respect and enhance the local landscape, be appropriately scaled and integrated, and avoid creating a significant increase in overall countryside activity. Protection is placed on landscape character, tranquillity, ecological and historical qualities, natural features, landform, and dark skies.

“Outside built-up area boundaries and secondary settlements, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development.

Any proposal must be essential to, and justify, its countryside location, and must meet one of the following criteria:

- (a) support the needs of agriculture or forestry;*
- (b) enable the extraction of minerals or disposal of waste;*
- (c) provide for quiet informal recreational use; or*
- (d) enable the sustainable development of rural areas.*

All proposals must be appropriately integrated within the landscape, of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location, and protect, conserve, and seek to enhance the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which they are located."

Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

- 5.4.3 Strategic Policy 17 similarly promotes development that maintains and enhances the existing network of green infrastructure and contributes to biodiversity, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and ecosystem services. Green infrastructure should form an integral part of the design and layout of development, providing new linkages and access to nature. Proposals that would result in the loss or degradation of green infrastructure or nature recovery areas will be resisted unless appropriately mitigated or compensated, ensuring ecosystem services are retained and enhanced. Development must retain and enhance priority habitats and trees, deliver at least 12% biodiversity net gain, and demonstrate measurable improvements through the approved Biodiversity Metric, supported by a 30-year management plan. The policy affords strong protection to designated sites, including SPAs, SACs, SSSIs, Ancient Woodland, and other irreplaceable habitats, requiring suitable buffer zones (e.g. at least 15m around Ancient Woodland) and replacement planting where trees are felled. Any development with potential effects on the Arun Valley SPA/SAC/Ramsar, The Mens SAC, or Ebernoe Common SAC must be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and comply with all identified mitigation measures.

Policy 33: Equestrian Development

- 5.4.4 Policy 33 recognises the importance of equestrian-related activity to Horsham District's rural economy but emphasises that such development must be of high quality, appropriate in scale and character, and sustainably located. The policy seeks to ensure that equestrian uses respect their landscape setting, particularly within sensitive areas such as the High Weald

AONB, and that new proposals avoid unnecessary new residential accommodation. Proposals should prioritise the re-use of existing buildings, integrate well with existing infrastructure, and provide safe access to the local bridleway network wherever possible.

“Equestrian-related development will be supported provided that:

- 1. Re-use of existing buildings for related equestrian use has been fully considered before new or replacement buildings are proposed;*
- 2. The scale, activity, and design are appropriate to the location and landscape;*
- 3. The proposal is well related to existing buildings, utilities, and access infrastructure;*
- 4. Stables can be suitably managed without the need for new on-site residential accommodation; and*
- 5. Safe access and connections to the local bridleway network are provided where possible.”*

5.5 National Planning Policy Framework

Relevant Paragraphs: 1, 8, 11, 39, 56, 88, 89, 115, 124, 187

- 5.5.1 The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 5.5.2 The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Paragraph 1

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan,

and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.

Paragraph 8

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- *a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- *b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- *c) **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*

Paragraph 11

Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For **plan-making**, this means that:

- *a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;*

- *b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:*
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or*
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

For decision-making, this means:

- *c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- *d) 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 this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong 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 policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.*
- *The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.*

Paragraph 39

Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Paragraph 56

Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.

Planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Agreeing conditions early is beneficial to all parties involved in the process and can speed up decision-making. Conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided, unless there is a clear justification.

Paragraph 88

Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- *a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings;*
- *b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- *c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- *d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*

Paragraph 89

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). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

Paragraph 115

- 5.5.3 Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

Paragraph 124

Planning policies and decisions should:

- *a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;*
- *b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;*
- *c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, proposals for which should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;*

- *d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure); and*
- *e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions – including mansard roofs – where the development would be consistent with the prevailing form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well-designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers. A condition of simultaneous development should not be imposed on an application for multiple upward extensions unless there is an exceptional justification.*

Paragraph 187

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- *b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- *c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- *d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;*

- *e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- *f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*

6.0 Planning Case

6.1 Principle of Development

- 6.1.1 In assessing principal planning policy support for the proposed development, Policies 26, 29, and Draft Strategic Policies 14 and 33 of the emerging Horsham District Local Plan 2030-2040, are considered the most relevant. Collectively, these policies support appropriately scaled and sensitively designed countryside development where it maintains rural character, safeguards the natural environment, and is justified in its location.
- 6.1.2 The NPPF (December 2024) further supports appropriate development in rural areas. Paragraph 88 states that planning policies and decisions should enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside, alongside the sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses; paragraph 89 recognises that rural needs may be met beyond settlements where development is sensitive to surroundings and transport impacts are acceptable. While the proposal is for private equestrian use rather than a commercial enterprise, it is consistent with these principles as a proportionate rural leisure development that respects countryside character.
- 6.1.3 The proposed development makes efficient use of the Site to enhance an existing rural use in a manner that is not harmful to the natural environment and accords with the relevant policies of the HDPF.
- 6.1.4 HDPF Policy 33 is directly engaged: the scheme extends an existing horse arena for private showjumping within an established equestrian site, thereby making efficient use of land and infrastructure while remaining compatible with the surrounding rural character and landscape

setting.

- 6.1.5 The arena extension is a modest, proportionate enhancement of an established rural use. It supports equestrian activity traditionally associated with the countryside and is integral to the continued functioning of the Site as a private equestrian facility. Scale, siting, and design are appropriate to the existing built envelope and wider landscape, with no undue visual, environmental, or amenity impacts. The proposal is therefore consistent with HDPF Policies 26, 29, and Draft Strategic Policies 14 and 33.
- 6.1.6 The proposal is correctly located within a rural context, utilising existing built form and making efficient use of previously developed land. The Site comprises agricultural land of Grades 3 and 4, and the development would not compromise agricultural potential or rural character.
- 6.1.7 Taken together, the proposal represents a sustainable and proportionate countryside development that accords with the District's spatial strategy, supports the ongoing use and management of rural land, and is compliant with both adopted and emerging local policy and the NPPF (paras 88–89).

6.2 Landscape

- 6.2.1 An important consideration under Policy 26 is that new development must respect and reflect the key qualities and characteristics of the surrounding landscape. The policy requires proposals to be of an appropriate scale, massing, and design that recognise and respond positively to local landscape character. The proposed development fully satisfies these criteria, representing a proportionate and sensitively designed extension that integrates harmoniously with its rural setting.
- 6.2.2 **Accordingly, and subject to the Council's further requirements, the provisions, and conditions of Policies 26, 29 and Draft Policies 14 and 33 are satisfied.**

6.3 Ecology

- 6.3.1 The proposal has been designed to ensure there are no adverse effects on local biodiversity or protected species. The Site comprises existing managed equestrian land of limited ecological value, and the proposed development will not result in the loss of any notable habitats or features of ecological importance. The works are contained within the established developed area and will not encroach upon surrounding vegetation or natural features. As

such, the proposal is not anticipated to give rise to any significant ecological impacts and accords with the objectives of Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), Policy 17 of the emerging Local Plan, and relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) relating to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

6.3.2 Accordingly, and subject to the Council's further requirements, the provisions, and conditions of Policies 31 and Draft Policy 17 are satisfied.

6.4 Access and Highway Considerations

6.4.1 The access onto the highway exists and is retained.

6.4.2 Accordingly, and subject to the Council's further requirements, the provisions, and conditions of Policies 26, 29 and Draft Policies 14 and 33 are satisfied.

6.5 Scale, Design and Materials

6.5.1 The proposal is consistent with the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF). The submitted drawings illustrate a well-considered design that is proportionate, contextually appropriate, and sympathetic to the surrounding rural setting.

6.5.2 Accordingly, and subject to the Council's further requirements, the provisions, and conditions of Policies 26, 29 and Draft Policies 14 and 33 are satisfied.

6.6 Amenity and Privacy Considerations

6.6.1 Drawings submitted in the application papers serve to demonstrate that the amenity of occupiers and neighbouring development will not be impacted or compromised by the proposed development.

6.6.2 Accordingly, and subject to the Council's further requirements, the provisions, and conditions of Policies 26, 29 and Draft Policies 14 and 33 are satisfied.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 Summary

- 7.1.1 This Planning Statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is consistent with the relevant provisions of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), including Policies 26, 29 and 33, and with Draft Strategic Policy 14 (Countryside Protection) of the emerging Horsham District Local Plan 2030–2040. Together, these policies support well-designed and proportionate countryside development that maintains rural character and safeguards environmental quality.
- 7.1.2 The proposal seeks a modest extension to an established equestrian arena for private show-jumping use. It represents a logical and proportionate enhancement to an existing rural land use, entirely in keeping with the equestrian character and function of the site. The development is appropriately scaled, sensitively sited within the existing built envelope, and designed to integrate harmoniously with its surroundings.
- 7.1.3 The scheme utilises existing infrastructure and previously developed land, thereby minimising landscape and ecological impacts. The submitted plans and supporting assessments confirm that there will be no adverse effects on residential amenity, highway safety, or biodiversity.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Alignment

- 7.1.4 The NPPF (December 2024), at paragraphs 88–89, encourages planning decisions that enable the sustainable growth and expansion of rural enterprises and support rural leisure and tourism developments which respect countryside character. While the proposed arena is for private equestrian use, it is wholly consistent with these principles as a sustainable rural leisure development that maintains and enhances the use of rural land without causing environmental harm.
- 7.1.5 The development therefore meets the overarching objectives of the NPPF by:
- Supporting a prosperous rural economy;
 - Promoting efficient use of land and existing facilities;
 - Respecting the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and

- Ensuring proposals respond positively to their local context and landscape setting.

Planning Balance

7.1.6 In applying the planning balance, it is clear that the proposal gives rise to a range of benefits:

- The enhancement of an established equestrian facility, supporting the ongoing rural function of the site;
- The efficient use of existing land and infrastructure, reducing pressure for new countryside development elsewhere;
- A design approach that respects the visual quality, scale and character of the surrounding landscape; and
- The absence of any material harm to residential amenity, highway safety, or the natural environment.

7.1.7 No adverse impacts have been identified that would significantly or demonstrably outweigh these benefits when assessed against the policies of the Development Plan and the NPPF taken as a whole.

7.1.8 Accordingly, the proposal represents a sustainable, proportionate and policy-compliant form of countryside development. It achieves an appropriate balance between safeguarding rural character and allowing for reasonable enhancement of an existing rural use.

7.1.9 It is therefore respectfully submitted that the proposal accords with the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework, the emerging Horsham District Local Plan 2030–2040, and the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). On this basis, the Council is invited to grant planning permission for the proposed development.



SOUTH EAST

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