



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/0870

The Little House, Shoreham Road, Small Dole, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9YQ

DESCRIPTION:

Permission in Principle for the erection of 1no. replacement detached two-storey dwelling following demolition of existing residential annexe.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/09/1757	Demolition of existing side extension to form a single storey side extension, provide a solid roof to an existing conservatory and demolish an existing double garage and form a new double garage with storage and hobby room. Plus reform an existing cross over into the site and include security gates.	Application Permitted on 21.12.2009
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DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site is located on Shoreham Road which runs between the existing settlements of Henfield and Small Dole. It comprises part of the existing residential unit of The Little House, a detached dwelling with a generous curtilage containing a series of outbuildings, including a large annexe/garage. The site is bordered by ancient woodland, South Downs National Park and Hoe Wood Local Wildlife Site to the east, south and west with part of this woodland also protected under TPO/1466. A water treatment plant is located opposite the site and a number of residential properties are present as you follow Shoreham Road south into Small Dole.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The application seeks permission in principle for 1 dwelling with the majority of matters to be considered at later Technical Details stage. The applicant has submitted an indicative Location and Proposed Site Plan (ref. HA/2358/P/3 REV 1) as well as Proposed Elevations (ref. HA/2358/P/1) which shows the dwelling located in a similar area of the site to the existing garage/annexe with access gained from Shoreham Road.

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 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion

Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision

Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs

Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection

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 30 - Protected Landscapes
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking

Upper Beeding Neighbourhood Plan (2018-31):

Policy 1 Spatial Plan for the Parish

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council is currently in the process of reviewing its development plan however at this stage the emerging policies carry only limited weight in decision making. As the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for the determination of this application must be considered as to whether they are 'out of date' (NPPF paragraph 11d). This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, whether the Council can demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites (NPPF footnote 8).

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the supply currently calculated as being 1 year. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing development within the District (unless footnote 7 or Paragraph 14 applies to relevant applications), with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying only moderate weight in decision making.

All other policies within the HDPF as itemised above have been assessed against the NPPF and are considered to be consistent such that they continue to attract significant weight in decision making.

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion
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 11: Environmental Protection
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 16: Protected Landscapes
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Strategic Policy 37: Housing Provision
Strategic Policy 38: Meeting Local Housing Needs
Policy 40: Improving Housing Standards in the District
Policy 45: Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
Policy 46: Ancillary Accommodation

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning Advice Notes:

Shaping Development in Horsham District
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: Objection

Insufficient information has been provided to establish that the principle of development would meet with the requirements of the NPPF and the Natural England/Forestry Commission Standing Advice relating to development proposals that fall within influencing distance of Ancient Woodland.

There is inadequate evidence to demonstrate that the development would not result in the deterioration or loss of irreplaceable habitat, or that any such harm would be wholly exceptional and clearly outweighed by the public benefits of the development.

HDC Environmental Health: Comment

Garages and outbuildings can be subject to significant contamination risks arising from their use, construction and storage of machinery, equipment, fuels or other chemicals. Potentially hazardous materials may also be incorporated in made ground, yards and hard standings. Information is required on these matters and a preliminary risk assessment (inc. site walkover) should be provided to ensure the site can be made safe and suitable for development.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Southern Water: Insufficient Information Provided

A condition should be applied to any permission given requiring the submission of proposed means of foul/surface water drainage to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of development.

WSCC Highways: Advice

The LHA is limited in its ability to comment on an application for permission in principle. In principle, the LHA would not raise any objections to an application at this site, subject to the submission of sufficient information at Technical Details Stage.

South Downs National Park: Comment

The red line is on the border of the National Park. The proposed development for a dwelling would be located in an area where there is pre-existing residential development, and as such the development would likely result in minor impacts on the setting of the National Park. It is important to consider direct and indirect effects on the National Park and its setting as well as its special qualities. To the west and south of the red line is a protected area of trees (TPO/1466) and a nature reserve to the south and east. Consideration of these should be had by planning officers, as well as impact upon dark night skies.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

None received

Parish Comments:

None received

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

The Permission in Principle consent route is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for residential development, which separates the consideration of matters of 'principle' for the proposed development, from the 'technical details' of the development. As such, the Permission in Principle route has two stages: the first being the 'Permission in Principle' stage (subject of this current application), which establishes whether the site is suitable in-principle; and the second being the 'Technical Details consent' stage which is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.

The scope of the Permission in Principle application is limited to location, land use, and amount of development.

Principle of Development:

Location

Policy 2 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) 2015 sets out the overarching growth strategy, specifying that development should be focused in and around the key settlement of Horsham and in line with the identified settlement hierarchy. The adopted settlement hierarchy (Policy 3) represents the most sustainable approach to accommodating growth and directs development to settlements with a good range of employment, services and facilities.

The nearest defined built-up area to the proposal is Small Dole which is classified as a smaller village and located in relatively close proximity (<50m to the boundary edge). Nevertheless, the site outside of a built-up area boundary and does not benefit from pavement linkages to the limited services within Small Dole. Whilst walking on the grass verge alongside the A2037 Shoreham Road would be possible, it would also require crossing the busy road in an unsafe manner making it unrealistic and unsafe as an option to rely on. Given the busyness of the road cycling would be only for the most confident. Future residents would therefore be highly reliant on use of a car for day-to-day means. In this regard the location of the proposal is not sustainable in conflict with paragraphs 115 and 117 of the NPPF, recognising that opportunities to maximise non-car modes varies between rural and urban areas.

Policy 4 of the HDPF supports limited settlement expansion outside built-up area boundaries where:

1. The site is allocated in the Local or Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins an existing settlement edge;
2. The scale of growth is appropriate to the settlement;
3. The proposal meets identified local needs,
4. The development does not prejudice long term development; and
5. The development is contained within defensible boundaries that respect landscape character.

While it is acknowledged that there is a district wide need for housing, owing to the lack of 5-year housing land supply, the proposal is not allocated in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan and does not adjoin an existing settlement edge. The proposal is not therefore considered to meet the requirements of Policy 4(1).

As the proposal is in a countryside location, Policy 26 of the HDPF is engaged. This policy seeks to protect rural areas against inappropriate development unless it is essential to its location and meets one of the following:

- Supports the needs of agriculture or forestry;
- Enables mineral extraction or waste disposal;
- Provides for quiet informal recreation;
- Enables the sustainable development of rural areas.

The proposal would provide for 1 market dwelling with no connection to rural enterprise and is therefore not considered to meet the requirements of Policy 26.

It is noted that the applicant refers to the site as 'previously developed land' which is encouraged to be used for development by both the NPPF (paragraph 125(c)) and HDPF Policy 2(8). It is however important to acknowledge that paragraph 125(c) explicitly states that such land should be located *within settlements* which this site is not. It is therefore determined that the principle of development is not acceptable in this location. Whether this conflict can be overridden by other material considerations is discussed in the planning balance at the end of this report.

Land Use

The application seeks permission in principle for 1 additional dwelling on the existing residential unit of The Little House. The proposal is therefore eligible for the permission in principle process owing to the fact it is a small-scale residential development of <9 dwellings on a site of <1ha. The existing and proposed land use is residential; thus, no change is being proposed other than an additional dwelling being located on the site. The land use has therefore already been established in this location and is considered acceptable.

Amount of Development

Policies 25 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) promote development that protects, conserves and enhances landscape character and ensures that proposals reflect the locally distinctive character of settlements. In addition, Policy 32 requires high quality design which considers landscape characteristics and contributes to a sense of place while also ensuring buildings are of a scale, massing and appearance that relate sympathetically to their surroundings.

Within the context of a Permission in Principle application the consideration of 'amount' is limited to whether the number of dwellings proposed is appropriate in relation to the size of the site, having regard to the site's characteristics and countryside location. While the applicant has provided an indicative site layout and elevations plan to aid with decision making, it is important to note that these are not fixed at this stage.

The submitted Proposed Site Plan (ref. HA/2358/P/3) demonstrates that the additional dwelling can be accommodated on the site in place of the existing annexe/garage and associated outbuildings, with a shared access from Shoreham Road and shared gravel driveway. The site is well screened with

existing boundary trees/vegetation resulting in only glimpsed views of the proposed dwelling from the access point and it has been shown that the proposed dwelling could be angled in such a way that an amenity impact on The Little House could be avoided.

While the proposed dwelling appears acceptable from a design and amenity perspective, it is important to note that the Council's Arboricultural Officer has objected to the proposal due to the scheme not complying with the requirements of paragraph 193(c) of the NPPF as the proposed development is located within the minimum 15-metre Ancient Woodland buffer. While they have acknowledged the presence of existing buildings within this buffer, the proposal would introduce a separate residential dwelling and curtilage within undeveloped parts of this sensitive area leading to potential deterioration of irreplaceable habitat. In addition, activities occurring within the zone associated with the new residential development (i.e. construction, garden use, drainage/access requirements, future tree works) could further exacerbate this impact.

Given the size of the site and the presence of The Little House, there is considered to be limited scope for the proposal to be delivered in such a way that would avoid adverse impacts upon ancient woodland and TPO'd trees (i.e. develop outside of the minimum buffer zone). It is therefore concluded that the amount of development is not appropriate in this location.

Water Neutrality:

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality.

On 31st October 2025 Natural England formally withdrew the 2021 Position Statement, citing a package of measures that they were satisfied would safeguard the Arun Valley sites. Principal amongst these measures is a reduction in the Southern Water abstraction licence 'by March 2026'. However, given the licence change has not yet taken place Horsham District Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, cannot yet be certain that new development will not result in adverse impacts on the Arun Valley sites.

To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000 litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching. Natural England standing advice dated 10 November 2025 raises no objection to using these savings to enable development to come forward. The standing advice clarifies that it functions as Natural England's formal response pursuant to Regulation 63(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to all relevant planning applications which seek to achieve water neutrality using the above Southern Water savings.

Officers have undertaken an Appropriate Assessment which demonstrates that the anticipated increase in mains water consumption from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day.

Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby complying with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

Other Environmental Considerations:

Climate Change

Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) require that development mitigates the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reduced flood risk, lower water consumption, enhanced biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) which requires that local plans and decisions support the transition to a low carbon future and minimise vulnerability to climate impacts.

Given the outline nature of this Permission in Principle application, limited technical detail has been provided at this stage. At the detailed design stage, it is anticipated that the following measures could be incorporated to ensure the development builds resilience to climate change and reduces carbon emissions:

- Integration of decentralised, renewable and/or low carbon energy;
- Measures to limit water use to 110 litres/person/day;
- Electric vehicle charging points and/or cycle storage;
- Integration of SuDS and green infrastructure to manage flood risk;
- Requirement to provide full fibre broadband site connectivity;
- Refuse and recycling storage

Full details of these measures would be expected at the Technical Details Consent stage, where conditions can be imposed to secure their implementation. Subject to these future provisions, the proposed development could suitably reduce its impact on climate change and would accord with Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Given the outline nature of this Permission in Principle application, detailed ecological information has not been submitted at this stage. Should the principle of development be supported, ecological survey work and appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures would be required at the Technical Details Consent stage to ensure compliance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), the NPPF (2024), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

It is currently unclear from the submitted documents whether the proposal would be subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. Should the proposal fall outside of the scope of exemptions, a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity value will be required to be demonstrated at the Technical Details Consent stage, through submission of a habitat baseline assessment and Biodiversity Metric calculation in accordance with the Environment Act 2021 and the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (General) Regulations 2024.

Design and Appearance

The matters of scale, design, layout and access for the proposed development are reserved for consideration under the subsequent 'Technical Details' application. Should the application be permitted, it is recommended that the applicant considers Policy 8 of the Upper Beeding Neighbourhood Plan (2018-31) to ensure that local character is reflected.

Conclusions:

As the site is not allocated for development within the HDPF (2015) or a made neighbourhood plan, the principle of development is contrary to Policies 1, 2, 4 and 26 of the HDPF, and paragraphs 2, 11, 12 and 47 of the NPPF owing to the sites location outside of the built-up area boundary. However, Chapter 3 of the Council's most recent Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) states that the Council currently benefits from a deliverable supply of housing sites for 1.7 years which triggers the application of the

‘tilted balance’ at Paragraph 11d of the NPPF. In accordance with Paragraph 11d, the Council is required to grant permission unless either (or both) of the following limbs apply:

- i) *The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas of assets of importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development; 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.*

NPPF footnote 7 further expands that NPPF Paragraph 11(d)(i) includes the application of policies pertaining to ‘irreplaceable habitats’ (i.e. paragraph 193(c)).

As set out above, the proposal would be contrary to paragraph 193(c) of the NPPF and Natural England/Forestry Commission’s Standing Advice for Ancient Woodland, owing to the developments location within the 15m buffer zone where root damage could occur. No Arboricultural Impact Assessment, ecological assessment or tree constraints plan has been provided to support the application and it has not been demonstrated that the site could accommodate an additional dwelling without crossing the 15m buffer. Conflict with paragraph 193(c) provides a clear reason for refusal, as recognised at footnote 7 to Paragraph 11(d).

In addition, the site is not sustainably located, with future residents being highly reliant on the private car for journeys given the absence of footpaths and other non-car modes in the area, contrary to paragraphs 115 and 117 of the NPPF.

Final Comments

It is noted that the considerations set out above should be balanced against the benefits of the proposal, in this instance the provision of 1 no dwelling which would generate a minor benefit towards local housing supply. It is not considered that this benefit outweighs the harm identified above. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be refused pursuant to Policies 1, 2, 4, 26 and 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Paragraphs 11(d)(i), 115, 117, 125(c) and 193(c) of the NPPF. The precise reasons for the Council’s refusal are provided below.

Recommendation: Application Refused

Reason(s) for Refusal:

1. The proposed development would be located within an unsustainable location in the countryside, beyond a defined built-up area on a site not allocated within the Development Plan and would not be essential to this countryside location. Further, the site does not benefit from sustainable links to services and facilities meaning occupants would be reliant on the private car for all journeys. The development would therefore be unsustainably located, contrary to policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and policies 115, 117 and 125(c) of the NPPF.
2. The proposal would encroach into the 15-metre buffer zone for surrounding Ancient Woodland with no evidence provided to demonstrate that loss and/or deterioration of an irreplaceable habitat would be avoided. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and paragraph 193(c) of the NPPF.

NOTE TO APPLICANT

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/26/0870

(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **not approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Supporting Statement	Planning	HA/2358	27.05.2026
Elevation & Floor plan	Proposed	HA / 2358 / P / 1 REV 1	27.05.2026
Elevation & Floor plan	Existing annexe and outbuilding	HA / 2358 / P / 2 REV 1	27.05.2026
Location & Site plan	Proposed	HA / 2358 / P / 3 REV 1	27.05.2026
Location & Site plan	Existing	HA / 2358 / P / 4 REV 1	27.05.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Sophie Moore Date: 31/07/2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial Adrian Smith Date: 31/07/2026