Planning Statement
Discharge of Conditions relating to DC/24/0272

At
Rudgwick Brickworks
Lynwick Street
Horsham, RH12 3DH



The objective for rural business is to sustain a balanced outcome, a delicate relationship between productive activity which includes farming and rural enterprise and the conservation of the environment both historic and landscape needs to be maintained. The rural economy is a constantly changing paradigm and should be nurtured, supported and promoted because it forms the core of the nation.

Prepared for:
Harrison Rural Partners Ltd,
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Introduction

We Act for Harrison Rural Partners Limited of Rudgwick Brickworks Lynwick Street the owners of the development in preparing and submitting this application to discharge the conditions associated with DC/24/0272 Erection of a storage building for the use of various tenants at Rudgwick Brickworks.

The Rudgwick Brickworks redevelopment or restoration under the Harrison family has demonstrated that former industrial sites in rural areas can be brought back into modern uses which contribute to the local area and the local economy providing new jobs and a visitor attraction the local area. The reuse of the buildings has meant that all working now is within the buildings which provides a better quality of life for both employees and local people.

Location

The application site is known as Rudgwick Brickworks, situated within Rudgwick Parish in Horsham District. It is on the very northern extent of West Sussex, with Surrey County. The village centre of Rudgwick is situated approximately 800m to the southeast of the site. The site is situated immediately north of Lynwick Street, from which vehicular access is achieved.

Lynwick Street, from which the site is accessed, links to the A281 some 1.2km south-west of the site, and to the B2128 some 700m to the north-east. Rudgwick village is situated either side of the B2128, which runs parallel to Lynwick Street.

The Conditions

3 Pre-Installation (Lighting) Condition: Prior to the installation of any lighting associated with the development herby permitted, a design scheme for biodiversity based on GN: 08/23 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall identify those features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance along important routes used for foraging; and show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent bats using their territory.

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the scheme and maintained thereafter in accordance with the scheme. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Reason: To conserve and enhance protected and Priority species and allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and Policy 31 of the Horsham Development Framework.

No external lighting is proposed on the structures.

4 Pre-Occupation Condition: Prior to the first use or operation of the development hereby permitted, a Biodiversity Enhancement Layout, providing the finalised details and locations of the enhancement measures contained within the Ecological Briefing Note (CSA Environmental, March 2024), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The enhancement measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

The Ecological Briefing Note by CSA Environmental March 2024 is not on the application website nor does it seem to be on the web due to CSA being reorganised with new stakeholders. However, based on the information in the application please refer to the block plan 1:500 scale and the accompanying Ariel photograph. The vegetation around the levelling pond will be managed and maintained. The treeline or boundary of the site to the east and south of the site will be managed to promote birds and natural habitat.

The components of the site Environmental Management include:

- **Objectives and Scope:** The proposal will maintain the surrounding boundary of the property maintaining and managing the wooded or planted area for habitats. The main objective is not to disrupt the area.
- **Legal and Regulatory Requirements**: All works will be in line with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and Policy 31 of the Horsham Development Framework.
- **Baseline Environmental Conditions**: The existing environmental conditions in the project area, including flora, fauna, air quality, water quality, and soil conditions are set out in the Ash Partnership documents.
- **Potential Environmental Impacts**: Identifying and assessing the potential environmental impacts that may result from the project or activity. It includes direct and indirect effects. The new building will not have any environmental impacts as its location and construction is on a existing concrete area. The consultees of the application have indicated no adverse impacts to the location of the building.
- **Mitigation Measures**: Outlining specific measures and strategies to minimise, control, or offset identified environmental impacts. As set out in the ecological reports set out by the Ash Partnership.
- **Monitoring and Reporting**: The Ash Partnership will undertake a monitoring program to track mitigation measures' effectiveness and ensure ongoing compliance with environmental regulations.

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Evaluation & Recommendations

This balancing pond is a potentially valuable habitat within the quarry area as it can provide a water source for a wide range of mammals, birds and invertebrates etc. Its retention would be regarded as beneficial within the local landscape. However, the water quality within the balancing pond is regarded as compromised due to the high turbidity and associated absence of aquatic plants. In addition, there are no shallow margins or benches where emergent plant communities can develop.

In addition, the extensive areas of Grey Sallow shade out the bankside edge. While the balancing pond likely only supports a few protected species such as breeding birds and perhaps foraging Grass Snake or bats, it could be significantly enhanced with the following measures:

• Periodic clearance of sections of Grey Sallow (up to 25% of the bankside edge) to promote the development of bankside herbs and marginal/emergent plant species.
• Creating log piles and chipping piles using the cut material from the vegetation clearance, so to provide reptile refuge and Grass Snake breeding feature(s).
• Planting up the pond edge with wetland plants such as Yellow Flag Iris pseudomas, Water Mint Mentha aquatica, Gypsywort Lycopus europaeus and Marsh Marigold Caltha palustris.
• Installing a wooden telegraph pole and mounting a cluster of bat boxes on different aspects.

"All mitigation and enhancement measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Further Ecological Statement (The Ash Partnership, February 2024) and Ecological Statement (The Ash Partnership, May 2023), as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination."

The Ash Partnership will monitor and work with the applicant throughout the construction period to maintain the integrity of the reports and monitor the ecological activity if any.

5 Pre-Occupation Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken in full accordance with the water neutrality strategy (CGS Civils received 12.06.2024). The building hereby permitted shall not be first bought into use until evidence has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority that the approved water neutrality strategy for the use has been implemented in full. The evidence shall include the specification of fittings and appliances used, evidence of their installation, and completion of the as built Part G water calculator or equivalent. The installed measures shall be retained as such thereafter.

Water saving measures have been put in place in the required properties and evidence is currently being collated with specifications and amended flow metres etc.

Reason: To ensure the development is water neutral to avoid an adverse impact on the Arun Valley SACSPA and Ramsar sites in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Paragraphs 185 and 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), and to allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species)

Conclusion

The Rudgwick Brickworks and surrounding clay pit restoration has been an excellent example of a farm diversification and brownfield site restoration project providing a much-needed employment site and visitor attraction.

All preoccupation and regulatory condition will be meet in accordance to the application reports and measure set out in the various legislation document principally the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and Policy 31 of the Horsham Development Framework.

The objective for rural business is to sustain a balanced outcome, a delicate relationship between productive activity which includes farming and rural enterprise and the conservation of the environment both historic and landscape needs to be maintained. The rural economy is a constantly changing paradigm and should be nurtured, supported and promoted because it forms the core of the nation.

The proposed new building which has been sympathetically designed to fit onto the site reducing ridge heights and blending in with the other buildings on the site. The new building will contribute to the overall viability of the Brickworks allowing existing business the ability to expand and remain at the location.

Appendices
Appendix 1 – The Dairy Industry, Agriculture and the Harrison Farming Partnership
Appendix 2 – The Need for Farm Diversification

The Dairy Industry, Agriculture and the Harrison Faming Partnership

As with many farming businesses the current economic pressures have dramatically impacted many manufacturing business. Farming is facing its own problems. With climate change, labour conditions and environmental challenges becoming of increasing concern, the spotlight is on farmers and the UK agricultural industry now more than ever before.

The Harrison family have been farming Woodsomes Farm since 1948 and have had farming connections in the area since 1928. The farm business started with a small herd of pigs and in 1952 started milking cows. In 2007, with the volatile price of milk, the Harrison family was looking to add value to their milk forming a company called Bookham Harrison Farms Ltd with Rob Bookham, a well known Sussex Cheese maker to produce a new cheese made ~~with~~ using the farms milk, a truly Sussex based venture.

The farm partnership today consists of eight Harrison families with eight farming partners in the agriculture business, owning some 750 Hectares of land. However as with all agricultural businesses at the moment diversification in land use and buildings provides and contributes a stable income stream to help balance the volatile nature of input prices like raw materials, fertilisers', feed, energy, diesel and a myriad of other costs.

Today in West Sussex there are around forty dairy herds left compared to three hundred and fifty in 1980. The decline in the dairy sector mirrors the national average that one dairy farm a week is ceasing to trade.

In terms of positive contributions to the UK economy, the sale of billions of pounds worth of crops and animal products is key to sustaining the industry. Alongside this success is the creation of millions of jobs, often in areas where opportunities for steady careers are harder to come by.

Secondary to this overwhelming success is the peace of mind we, as customers, have for consuming high quality, safe and affordable food. British farming has some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world, resulting in tasty, healthy food with quality assurance and welfare schemes reassuringly in place.

In terms of the countryside habitats themselves; wildlife preservation, the reduction of pesticides, the reintroduction of native species and climate-friendly farming have all encouraged stronger and better-preserved habitats for our food to grow.

The Need for Farm Diversification

Ash Amirahmadi, the managing director of Arla Foods UK, said producing fresh milk had for some time been delivering “little to no profitability for farmers” but the situation was now acute as the Ukraine crisis stoked farm cost inflation.

“It is unsustainable,” he said. “The cost of producing milk is increasing like never before and our farmers are continuing to experience significant inflation. The risk of that is about the milk supply because farmers are now producing 4% less milk than they were a year ago, having had seven to eight years of growth.”

The most recent official figures show that over the past year the cost of a pint of milk has risen by 7p to 49p – a 17% increase. However, the price of milk in shops last year was lower than in 2012, even though production costs have increased.

The price that consumers pay is different to the amount farmers receive, and they are earning more than before. In the past year, Arla has increased its farm-gate prices by 31% to nearly 38p a litre, but costs are still marching upwards. Some supermarkets have direct contracts with farmers based on their own cost-of-production models; however, analysts suggest these contracts are not keeping up.

This surge in farm costs meant Arla customers, who include supermarkets and restaurant chains, would need to dig deeper to help farmers ride out the storm, Amirahmadi said.

“In the very short term, we need to put our arms around farmers and support them by paying them enough so that their costs are covered, to make sure the milk is flowing,” he said.

A dairy farmer’s main costs are feed, fuel and fertiliser and all have been subject to big price hikes. “Last year I was paying 62p or 63p for the diesel I use in the tractors; the last load I bought was £1.29,” says Christensen. “It’s come back a bit but, notwithstanding that, it is a huge increase.”

The Harrison family are one of the larger Dairy farmers in West Sussex and provide direct employment for the eight partners and family members, in addition they employ and house fifteen staff and their families on the farms. Five people are employed in the cheese business and about eight staff in the “Milk Churn”.