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PLANNING STATEMENT

Land at Cedar Cottage

ADDRESS

Cedar Cottage
Sandygate Lane
Lower Beeding
West Sussex
RH13 6LR

APPLICANT

Black Onyx Becketts Limited

OUR REFERENCE

W3342

DATE

April 2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Whaleback is instructed by BlackOnyx Becketts to prepare and submit a full planning application to Horsham District Council for 24 new dwellings at land rear of Cedar Cottage in Lower Beeding.
- 1.2 This Planning Statement describes the application site and the surrounding area, the development proposal, the planning history of the site and the relevant planning policy framework. A planning appraisal is provided to consider the merits of the proposed development followed by a conclusion.

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is located on the southern side of Sandygate Lane in the village of Lower Beeding. It currently comprises Cedar Cottage- a detached dwelling and its curtilage, mown grassland and a paddock.



Site location

- 2.2 The site is adjoined by other detached residential dwellings set within spacious plots along Sandygate Lane to the west, and Trinity Close, a recently constructed cul-de-sac to the east which contains a higher density of housing including terraced and semi-detached homes. Immediately to the south are three further dwellings within large plots: Leechpool Cottage, Lake View and The Old Paddock. To the north, across Sandygate Lane, construction is underway for 22 new homes known as 'The Gallops'. The site is therefore adjoined by residential land uses on all sides.

- 2.3 The site features a mature tree and hedgerow belt to its southern boundary. There are two trees within the garden of the adjoining property to the east- Gardeners Cottage- which are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO/1422).
- 2.4 The site directly adjoins the settlement boundary of Lower Beeding to the east, which is identified as a 'smaller village' with good accessibility to larger settlements in the development plan. The village core contains a church, pub (the Plough Inn), a primary school and children's nursery. The village is served by regular bus services to Horsham, Haywards Heath and beyond.
- 2.5 The site is located approximately 90m from the boundary of the High Weald National Landscape to the east. There are no Public Rights of Way within or immediately adjacent to the site.
- 2.6 It is not located within a Conservation Area nor are there any Listed Buildings in close proximity. It lies within Flood Zone 1- an area at least risk of fluvial and pluvial flooding.

3. Development Proposal

- 3.1 The proposed development is for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of 24no. dwellings (7no. two-bedroom units, 15no. three-bedroom units and 2no. four-bedroom unit). The dwellings would be two-storeys in height, each with a private garden and allocated parking spaces. Indicative landscaping is shown on the proposed plans, as well as areas of open/communal space around an existing mature tree in the centre of the site.
- 3.2 Access would be gained through a new access point from Sandygate Lane, with improvements to visibility and provision of two-way access/egress. The new road within the site would largely mirror the layout at the adjoining Trinity Field cul-de-sac.

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Proposed site layout

3.3 All properties would meet the nationally described space standards, with an excellent standard of accommodation and ample private gardens. The proposed housing mix is as follows:

Dwelling size	Amount	Percentage of overall mix
2 bedrooms	7	29%
3 bedrooms	15	63%
4 bedrooms	2	8%

- 3.4 The indicative landscaping scheme preserves the tree belt and hedgerows on site, to minimise visibility and impacts on landscape character. The proposed landscaping scheme seeks to maximise green infrastructure throughout the site, to enhance its biodiversity value and create a sense of place within the new neighbourhood.

4. Planning Context

Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Section 38(6) requires local planning authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

- 4.2 The Development Plan currently in force across the area relevant to the application site currently consists of the following adopted plans:

- Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)
- Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan (2025)

- 4.3 The HDPF was adopted by the Council in November 2015. This document provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District over the plan period 2011- 2031. The HDPF is considered out of date due to the lack of five year supply of deliverable housing sites, as expanded upon in section 5 below. The policies relevant to this application are:

- **Policy 1:** Sustainable Development
- **Policy 15:** Housing Provision
- **Policy 16:** Meeting Local Housing Needs
- **Policy 25:** District Character and the Natural Environment
- **Policy 30:** Protected Landscapes
- **Policy 31:** Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- **Policy 32:** The Quality of New Development
- **Policy 33:** Development Principles
- **Policy 37:** Sustainable Design and Construction
- **Policy 40:** Sustainable Transport
- **Policy 41:** Parking

- 4.4 Horsham District Council is progressing a new local plan (the Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040) which was originally examined in December 2024. The appointed Examining Inspector wrote to the council in April 2025 raising concerns in relation to the Plan's housing requirements, spatial strategy and the failure to comply with the Duty to Cooperate. He recommended that the plan be withdrawn. However, in light of national changes to the Duty to Cooperate the Planning Inspectorate has agreed to

reopen the examination subject to modifications- notably the provision of more housing sites across the District. The Horsham District Local Plan examination is expected to re-commence on 21st April 2026. In this context, the emerging Local Plan has limited weight in the determination of planning applications at present.

4.5 Lower Beeding Parish Neighbourhood Plan (NP) was formally made on 8th October 2025. The NP was originally subject to examination in 2021, however progress was stalled for several years due to issues with water neutrality. However, following Natural England's withdrawal of its position statement (and therefore the need for new development to demonstrate water neutrality) the NP proceeded to referendum and now forms part of the development plan.

4.6 The policies relevant to this application are:

- **Policy 1:** Biodiversity
- **Policy 3:** Green Infrastructure
- **Policy 11:** Housing Mix
- **Policy 12:** Design
- **Policy 13:** Density

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.7 A presumption in favour of sustainable development is found at the heart of the NPPF, for both plan-making and decision-taking, defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

4.8 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): economic, social and environment.

4.9 For decision-taking this means approving applications that accord with up-to-date policies without delay; or where policies are absent, silent or out-of-date, granting permission unless the Framework provides clear reasons for refusing a proposal in a particular location or any adverse impacts of permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

4.10 In December 2025 the government launched a consultation on the new NPPF which ran until March 2026. At the heart of the new NPPF is a commitment to tackling the country's housing crisis, by raising mandatory housing targets and encouraging growth to meet the objective of building 1.5million new homes within the parliament period. The new NPPF is expected to be in force later this year.

5. Planning History

5.1 In 2025 pre-application advice was sought from Horsham District Council in relation to the proposed development (reference PE/25/0189). Advice was received in November 2025, which is summarised as follows:

'The site is located immediately adjacent to the defined Built-up Area Boundary of Lower Beeding and is considered to represent an appropriate level of expansion to the status of Lower Beeding as a smaller village. The delivery of housing, especially affordable housing, would contribute to the fulfilment of local housing need and may assist with the longer-term retention of community facilities and services present within Lower Beeding and nearby settlements. It is, therefore, considered that the provisions of the SD PAN would weigh positively in favour of the indicative proposals.'

'There are parts of the layout that do not maximise efficient use of land or GI and require refinement.'

'Prominent secondary elevations (particularly plots 1, 3, 6, 9 and 24), are appropriately detailed and are designed to provide visual interest in the street scene. Individual dwellings incorporate traditional roof pitches, detailing (such as chimneystacks), and that gable features are meaningful and prominent design features.'

'The applicant should to explore revisions to the site layout and orientation of Plots 22-24 to increase the degree of separation to neighbouring dwellings. A separation of circa ~20m would be deemed satisfactory to the Council.'

5.2 These matters have been addressed through changes to the proposed development.

5.3 There is no other relevant planning history relating to the site.

6. Planning Appraisal

Principle of Development

Current Development Plan

- 6.1 The current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) directs decision-makers to apply a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and states that planning applications should be approved without delay, where they accord with the relevant development plan. Paragraph 11(d) sets out that where the most important policies for determining the application are found to be out of date because the Local Planning Authority (LPA) cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous three years, permission involving the provision of housing should be granted unless (i) there are **strong** reasons for refusing development due to protected areas or assets of particular importance, or (ii) the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole. This is known as the 'tilted balance'.
- 6.2 The current Development Plan for Lower Beeding comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), adopted in 2015. The HDPF sets a minimum housing provision target of 16,000 new homes in the district up to 2031.

- 6.3 However, the HDPF is 10 years old and in these circumstances the NPPF directs the local housing requirement to be calculated using the Government's Standard Method in place of the local plan housing requirement. The local housing need figure for Horsham District using the standard method¹ is 1,357 per year (6,785 over five years).
- 6.4 The latest Housing Delivery Test for Horsham District showed that Horsham had only delivered 62% of its overall housing targets over the previous three years, therefore paragraph 78(b) of the NPPF is engaged which requires LPA's to add a 20% buffer to their housing supply where there has been significant under-delivery of housing over the previous three years. This results in a local housing need of **1,805 new homes per year** (9,028 over five years).
- 6.5 The LPA's most recent housing land supply position was published in the Authority Monitoring Report in April 2025. This shows a supply of 1,760 new dwellings (April 2024 to March 2029) against the five year requirement (plus 20% buffer) of 9,028 – resulting in a shortfall of 7,268 homes, equivalent to **1 year of housing supply**.
- 6.6 Horsham District Council was progressing a new local plan (the Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040) which was subject to examination in December 2024. However, the appointed Examining Inspector wrote to the LPA in April 2025 raising concerns in relation to the Plan's housing requirements, spatial strategy and the failure to comply with the duty to cooperate, and recommended the Plan be withdrawn.
- 6.7 However, the Planning Inspectorate has since agreed to reopen examination subject to modifications – most notably the need for a significant increase in planned housing delivery over the plan period. The examination is due to reopen in April 2026 and the Plan has limited weight in decision-making at this stage.
- 6.8 The *Hallam Land*² judgement is relevant in relation to the extent to which the decision-maker needs to determine the degree of any shortfall in housing land supply, and the weight to be given to proposals for new housing to remedy the shortfall. Of particular relevance is paragraph 51 of the judgment that states:
- 'But the weight given to the benefits of new housing development in an area where a shortfall in housing land supply has arisen is likely to depend on factors such as the broad magnitude of the shortfall, how long it is likely to persist, what the local planning authority is doing to reduce it, and how much of it the development will meet.'*
- 6.9 The magnitude of the shortfall is very significant, and because the Local Plan examination has been delayed and the shortfall is likely to persist for a long time.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

² Hallam Land Management Ltd. v SOSCLG [2018] EWCA Civ 1808

- 6.10 As the development plan is currently out of date, and the housing land support shortfall is both significant in magnitude and likely duration, the proposals for new housing should be given increased weight in the planning balance in line with the tilted balance in favour of sustainable development.

Whether the proposal complies with policies in the NPPF and Development Plan as a whole

- 6.11 The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development includes three overarching objectives; economic, social and environmental. These objectives are interdependent and seek to ensure a sufficient number and range of homes are provided, that allows economic growth and makes the most effective use of land to reduce pressure on more sensitive environments.
- 6.12 The HDPF seeks to direct housing growth to its larger settlements. Outside settlement boundaries, policy 26 states that the countryside will be protected from 'inappropriate development', albeit policy 4 supports 'settlement expansion' in certain circumstances, specifically if the site is allocated, the level of expansion is appropriate to the settlement type, it would need local housing needs, and is located within an existing defensible boundary.
- 6.13 In acknowledging that the HDPF is 'out of date' and the tilted balance is applicable for all proposals including the provision of housing, Horsham District Council prepared a 'Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note (SDHD PAN) which states that the LPA will support sustainable development on unallocated sites outside of settlement boundaries (such as the site subject to this application) where they meet the following criteria:
1. The site adjoins the existing settlement edge as defined by the Built Up Area Boundary;
 2. The level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement the proposal relates to;
 3. The proposal demonstrates that it meets local housing needs or will assist the retention and enhancement of community facilities and services;
 4. The impact of the development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive long-term development; and
 5. The development is contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape character features are maintained and enhanced.
- 6.14 Criteria 1 is met, as the site directly adjoins the settlement boundary of Lower Beeding. At the time of the last census, the Parish contained 421 dwellings, and the provision of 24 new units would amount to an increase of approximately 6% which is considered to be a proportionate and organic level of housing growth comprising mainly 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings to meet identified housing needs, in accordance with criterion 2 and 3.
- 6.15 The boundaries of this site are well defined by mature trees and hedgerows, with residential properties to all boundaries, and therefore is considered to be very self-contained in the locality. These spatial and landscape features create a defensible boundary. It would not prejudice development on land beyond its boundaries in accordance with criterion 4 and 5.

- 6.16 The site is considered sustainable, offering future residents direct access to facilities and services to meet their day to day needs. Lower Beeding is identified as a sustainable location to facilitate proportionate growth, evidenced through the allocation of several sites through the neighbourhood plan.
- 6.17 In light of the current LPA guidance and the tilted balance of the NPPF, it is clear that sites outside settlement boundaries will need to come forward if the Standard Method housing needs are to be met. This site is considered suitable, available and deliverable to provide much-needed new homes within a sustainable location. Significant weight should be afforded to the benefits of the application in the planning balance as follows:
- The delivery of 24 new homes in an area that has a significant shortfall of housing supply, and an emerging plan that has been identified as facing a number of significant obstacles
 - The provision of policy-compliant affordable house
 - Provision of a range of housing types to meet identified local needs
 - Efficient and effective use of land contiguous to an existing settlement boundary

Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan

- 6.18 Lower Beeding Parish has produced a neighbourhood plan (NP) which was formally made in October 2025. The NP was originally subject to examination in 2021, however progress was stalled for several years due to issues with water neutrality. However, following Natural England's withdrawal of its position statement (and therefore the need for new development to demonstrate water neutrality) the NP proceeded to referendum and now forms part of the development plan.
- 6.19 Because of the situation the LPA finds itself in (with an out of date local plan), it acknowledges that development will come forward in locations that are not supported by adopted development plans as set out above.
- 6.20 At paragraph 3.3, the SDHD PAN states that Neighbourhood Plans are '*not immune from the 'tilted balance' as described in NPPF Paragraph 11(d)... and as such, their policies may be considered out-of-date due to HDC being unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply*'.
- 6.21 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that in certain circumstances, a Neighbourhood Plan *can* 'override' the tilted balance, but only where:
- The neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and
 - The neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing need.
- 6.22 The draft LBNP contains four site allocations which seek to deliver around 47 new dwellings plus a windfall allowance of 4 dwellings, amounting to a total of 51 new dwellings in the Parish over the plan period.
- 6.23 The target of 51 new dwellings is based on an indicative number requirement provided by Horsham District Council to Lower Beeding Parish in 2018. The number has remained at 51 throughout the past seven years of neighbourhood plan-making, despite significant changes and increased housing targets set

out in the multiple updates to the NPPF and Standard Method in that time. It is therefore considered that Lower Beeding Parish does not meet clause 2 of NPPF paragraph 14 (as the housing targets and evidence base used to determine them within the LBNP are demonstrably out of date) and this proposal is subject to the tilted balance.

Housing Density and Mix

6.24 The proposed density of housing would be approximately 24 dwellings per hectare, which would relate appropriately to the existing built form in Lower Beeding in accordance with policy 13 of the Neighbourhood Plan, whilst making the most efficient use of land as required by paragraph 129 of the NPPF.

6.25 The proposed housing mix is as follows:

Dwelling size	Amount	Percentage of overall mix
2 bedrooms	7	29%
3 bedrooms	15	63%
4 bedrooms	2	8%

6.26 This would accord with policy 11 of the Neighbourhood Plan which states that the largest need for housing is for 2 and 3 bedroom homes.

Affordable Housing Statement

6.27 Policy 16 of the HDPF states that for sites providing 15 or more new dwellings, the Council will require 35% of dwellings to be affordable. The proposed affordable housing provision under this application is 8 units, as set out below:

Unit number	Dwelling size	Tenure
24	2 bedrooms	Affordable home ownership
3	3 bedrooms	Rented affordable housing
18	2 bedrooms	Rented affordable housing
19	2 bedrooms	Rented affordable housing
20	3 bedrooms	Rented affordable housing
21	3 bedrooms	Rented affordable housing
22	2 bedrooms	Rented affordable housing
23	2 bedrooms	Rented affordable housing

6.28 35% of a total 24 new dwellings is an equivalent of 8.4 affordable units. In these circumstances, the Horsham District Council Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document states:

'Where a calculation produces a figure below 0.5, e.g. 0.1, 0.2, 0.3 or 0.4, the Council will seek that figure as a financial contribution.'

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- 6.29 As such, the proposed approach is 8 affordable units to be delivered on site, with the remaining 0.4 unit secured as a financial contribution at a rate of £280 per square metre (plus indexation). The affordable housing contribution (both on-site and a financial contribution) will be secured via a Section 106 Agreement.

Design & Landscape Impacts

- 6.30 Policy 33 of the HDPF sets out design principles in order to conserve and enhance the built and natural environment. It states that new development should:
- Make efficient use of land
 - Ensure that the scale, massing and appearance is of a high standard, that relates sympathetically with the built surroundings
 - Be locally distinctive in character, and
 - Uses high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping
- 6.31 Following pre-application feedback from Horsham District Council, the proposed site layout has been fully developed to ensure an appropriate scale of development (24 dwellings per hectare- classified as low/density suitable for village and rural contexts), to make the most efficient use of land whilst creating a new neighbourhood that is in keeping with the built surrounds of Lower Beeding.
- 6.32 The proposed cul-de-sac arrangement largely mirrors the adjacent site (Trinity Fields), whilst providing ample space for green infrastructure. This includes a large area of open space within the centre point of the site, and the provision of soft landscaping around and within residential plots. Hard surfacing (i.e. roads and car parking) is kept to a minimum.
- 6.33 In terms of building design, the variation in house types seeks to provide diversity and visual interest throughout the site, avoiding homogeneity and including a range of material types to reference the varied vernacular and character of Lower Beeding. The scale of the houses is limited to two storeys in height, in keeping with the area. Vegetation is proposed to all boundaries to reinforce green infrastructure and the defensible boundaries of the site, in response to advice received at pre-application stage.
- 6.34 The site is located approximately 90m from the boundary of the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) to the east, and input from Landscape Architects Lloydbore at pre-application and design development stage, has ensured the proposed site layout is landscape-led and responds to potential viewpoints from the HWNL (as set out in the accompanying Design & Access Statement), ensuring that the development will be sympathetic. The site has strong defensible boundaries, in the form of thick vegetation and built form to its eastern boundary (i.e. Trinity Fields), that prevents any direct impacts on the setting of the HWNL.

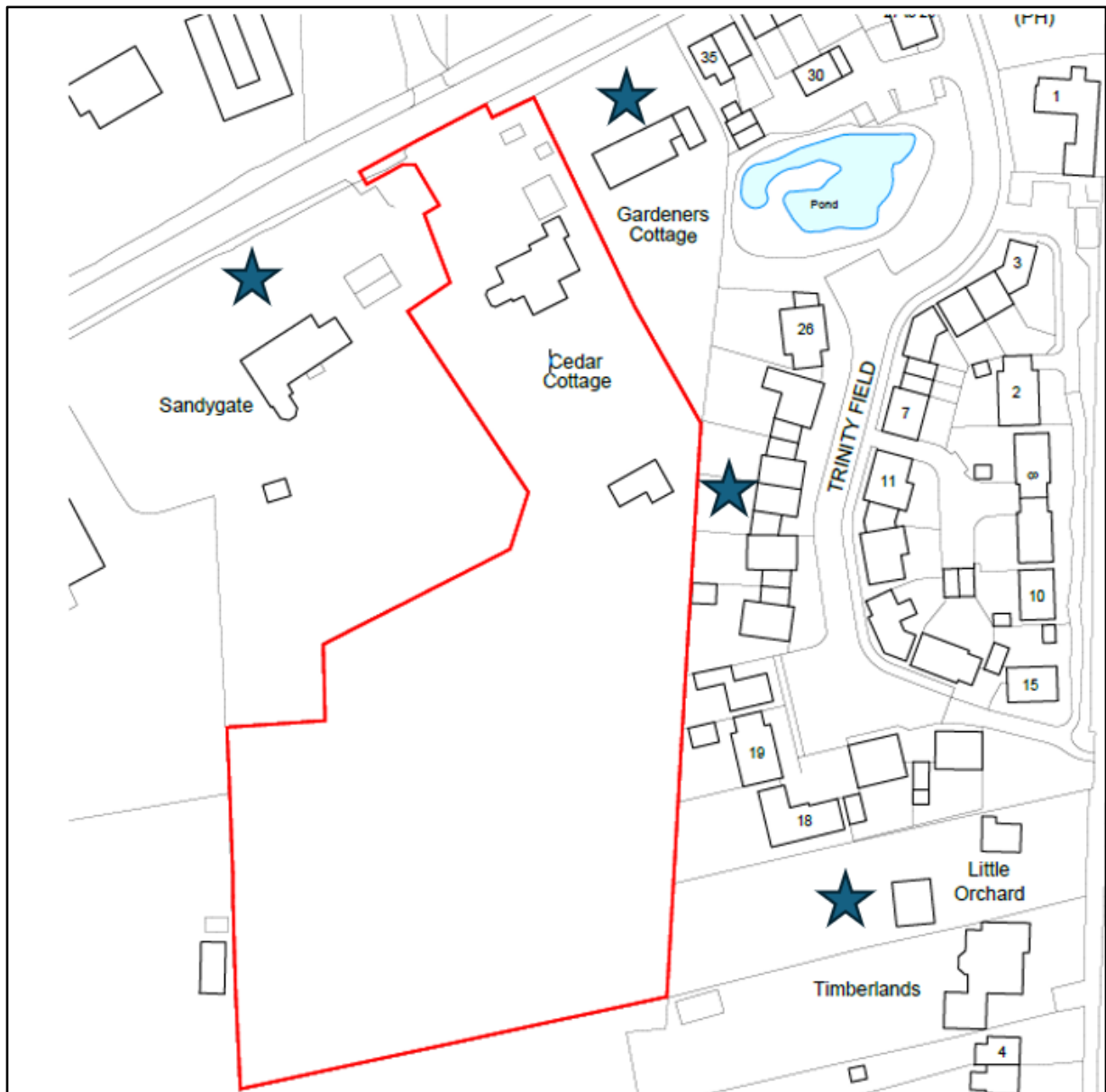
Standard of Accommodation

- 6.35 All of the proposed dwellings would meet or exceed the Nationally Described Space Standards, with good-sized rooms with plenty of natural daylight and outlook. Each new home would have an ample private garden proportionate to its occupancy, and access to the public open space for play and recreation.

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Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.36 Policy 33 of the HDPF states that new developments should avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbours, for example through overlooking, overshadowing or noise.
- 6.37 The existing properties adjoining the site that have the potential to be impacted by the development are:
- Sandygate, to the north-west
 - Gardener's Cottage, to the north-east
 - 18-26 Trinity Fields, to the east
 - Little Orchard, to the south-east



Site plan highlighting adjoining neighbours

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- 6.38 **Sandygate:** The proposed access to the site would be via a new access point from Sandygate Lane. The existing shared access between Sandygate and Cedar Cottage will continue to allow vehicular access to the existing drive and garage for this neighbour. This dwelling is set within a large plot, and the distance from the new dwellings on the northern section of the site would be approximately 33m at its closest point. Given this separation distance, there would be no harmful impacts on the living conditions of this dwelling in terms of daylight/sunlight, privacy or outlook. The rear gardens of the proposed plots 7-13 would have a robust rear boundary treatment to avoid any mutual overlooking.
- 6.39 **Gardener's Cottage:** the proposed dwellings at plots 1 and 2 would be situated beside this property, with a separation distance of approximately 8m. The building lines of plots 1-2 would broadly match that of Gardener's Cottage, ensuring no potential overshadowing. Plots 3-6 would face onto the shared boundary with this property, with a distance of approximately 10m from the rear elevations of these properties to the boundary. This separation distance, in addition to a robust rear boundary treatment, is considered sufficient to avoid any harmful overlooking.
- 6.40 **18-26 Trinity Fields:** The proposed new dwellings at plots 18-24 would largely be on a back-to-back arrangement with the properties on Trinity Fields, with a separation distance of at least 20m between all properties. 20m is widely accepted as an acceptable arrangement that avoids any direct overlooking/overshadowing, and this was noted in pre-application discussions with Horsham District Council. The separation distance would be even greater to 21-26 Trinity Fields, where the majority of the shared boundary would be bordered by visitor parking and not dwellings.
- 6.41 **Little Orchard:** The size of the garden at Little Orchard creates a significant separation distance between that property and the nearest proposed dwelling at plot 17. In light of this, no harmful impacts are predicted in terms of sunlight/daylight, privacy or outlook.
- 6.42 As the site is currently an undeveloped area, inevitably there will be an increase in activity/noise. However as a solely residential site, the predicted impacts would be minimal and proportionate to the existing settlement, especially as the site is bordered by residential uses on all sides. For these reasons, the living conditions of local residents would be safeguarded.

Highways & Parking

- 6.43 The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement by Glanville Consultants which concludes the following, and should be read in full alongside this planning statement:
- Through pre-application discussions with West Sussex County Council Highways, the scope of work and relevant assessment parameters included in this Transport Statement were agreed, including the preliminary design of the site access arrangements.
 - The site lies in a sustainable location to support the scale of development proposed, with access to local facilities and amenities by active travel modes, and access to public transport services. The site is therefore able to accommodate the development without future residents being reliant upon the private car for all journeys.
 - A review of recorded road collisions resulting in personal injury has been undertaken and has not identified a collision frequency or pattern that would suggest a pre-existing road safety problem on the local highway network.

- Access to the development is proposed off Sandygate Lane in the form of a priority T-junction, which has been designed with a 5.5m wide carriageway and a 2.0m wide footways on either side. Visibility splays of 2.4m x 120.7m eastbound and 2.4m x 50.7m westbound will be provided in accordance with the recorded 85th percentile recorded speeds. These visibility splays can be achieved in both directions within land that is highway maintainable at public expense. The access is therefore expected to operate safely.
- Refuse collection will be undertaken from the kerb side within the estate road network, with vehicles arriving and departing from the site access on Sandygate Lane. It has been demonstrated through swept path analysis that a refuse collection vehicle (the largest vehicle anticipated to visit the site regularly) and a fire tender can safely enter and exit the site via the proposed site access.
- A policy compliant level of car and cycle parking can be achieved within the site (56 car parking spaces at 41 cycle parking spaces).

6.44 The development would therefore be in accordance with paragraph 115 of the NPPF and policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF.

Biodiversity, Trees and Landscaping

- 6.45 Policy 31 of the HDPF seeks to enhance green infrastructure and biodiversity as part of development proposals. The existing site comprises Cedar Cottage and its garden, alongside the paddock which is categorised as poor modified grassland, with scattered trees.
- 6.46 The application is subject to the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain requirement, and is accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment demonstrating a net loss of habitat units, equating to a deficit of 3.09 units. The Assessment concludes that, based on the proposed plans, a net gain cannot be achieved on-site by way of habitat creation enhancement. As such, a financial contribution to off-site ecological enhancements (i.e. the purchasing of biodiversity units) has been secured by the applicant to make up the +10% net gain for habitat units. This will be secured via a Section 106 legal agreement on approval of the scheme.
- 6.47 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) has been undertaken, which concludes the following:
- 6.48 **Bats:** The PEA and PRA identifies the presence of 5 roosts within the main building at Cedar Cottage, and as such a Bat Licence from Natural England will be required to legally permit demolition of the building. The common hazel and English walnut tree do not provide any features for roosting bats. Due to the general managed nature of habitats on site and presence of more extensive habitats locally, the site is not assessed to represent a significant resource for foraging and commuting bats.
- 6.49 **Birds:** The only feature identified was an inactive swallow nest within the main building, and bird could potentially use the trees on-site for nesting. As such, a mitigation measure can be secured via condition which prohibits building or tree removal during the bird nesting season (1 March – 31 August).
- 6.50 **Amphibians:** Environmental DNA (eDNA) were undertaken for four ponds within a 500m radius of the site. The eDNA results confirm no great crested newts are present within those ponds.

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- 6.51 The PEA sets out a number of ecological recommendations including the installation of bird and bat boxes, and a precautionary working method for reptiles during construction. These recommendations can be secured by condition.
- 6.52 The trees to be removed are classed as category C (Trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years, or young trees with a stem diameter below 150mm). As set out in the accompanying Arboricultural Impact Assessment, none of the trees on site that make an important contribution to the character of the local landscape are to be removed.
- 6.53 Protective measures will be installed accordance with the arboricultural method statement accompanying the application, and will remain in situ for the entire duration of the construction. The application includes an indicative landscaping scheme to enhance green infrastructure on the site, and a full planting scheme can be secured by condition.

Open Space

- 6.54 The proposed site layout contains an area of public open space in the centre, measuring approximately 800sqm. This will provide an area for play and recreation, as well as biodiversity enhancements. Residents will have direct access to nearby public rights of way leading to the High Weald National Landscape and other local greenspaces.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.55 The application includes a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) that confirms the site is in Flood Zone 1, with no unacceptable risk from fluvial flooding or other sources. The proposed surface water drainage strategy (see Appendix E of the FRA) follows a hierarchical approach based on the principles of sustainable drainage, and employs a suitable water drainage strategy.

Archaeology

- 6.56 An archaeological desk-based assessment has been undertaken on the site, which demonstrates that based on available information, including results from nearby archaeological investigations, the site is anticipated to have a low potential for all periods of human activity. The proposed development is unlikely to have a negative impact on any underlying archaeological assets. If encountered, these would likely be localised and considered of low (local) significance. As such, no further investigations are recommended unless archaeology is discovered during construction phase.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The draft Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note states that it will support sustainable development on unallocated sites outside of settlement boundaries where they meet certain criteria, including proximity to the settlement boundary, proportion of growth and landscaping. The site subject to this application meets those criterion and is considered to represent sustainable development, and the benefits of the application are as follows:
- 7.2 — The provision of 24 much-needed new homes in an area with a low housing supply

- 8 new affordable homes, to meet local housing need
- Provision of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain
- Making the most efficient use of land adjacent to a settlement boundary in line with HDC's objectives set out in the SDHD PAN

7.3 The benefits significantly outweigh any harm when considered in the planning balance, as per paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF.

7.4 It has been demonstrated that the proposed scheme would have an acceptable relationship with neighbouring properties in terms of residential amenity, the design is locally characteristic, the standard of accommodation would be appropriate and the provision of policy-compliant affordable homes would be a substantial benefit to the application. Other technical matters relating to transport, ecology, drainage, contamination, energy and sustainability have been satisfactorily assessed and addressed as part of the application. The LPA is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission so that the benefits associated with the scheme can be delivered.

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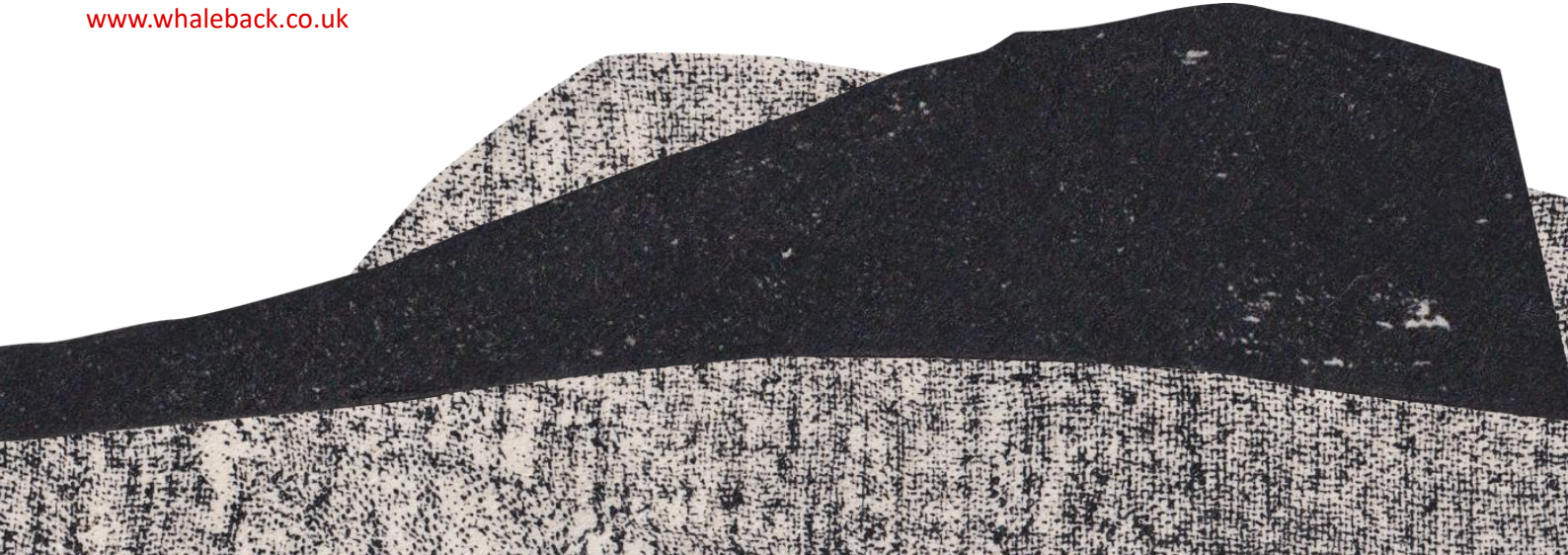
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An abstract graphic at the bottom of the page depicting the back and tail of a whale. The whale's back is a solid black silhouette, while the tail and the water below are filled with a dense, black and white stippled or textured pattern.