Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/24/1689
Hook Farm, West Chiltington Lane, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9DP

DESCRIPTION:
Conversion of barn and associated modern building into domestic accommodation. Removal of C20 workshop and conversion of outbuilding into ancillary use (Householder).

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/24/1690	Conversion of barn and associated modern building into domestic accommodation. Removal of C20 workshop and conversion of outbuilding into ancillary use. (Listed Building Consent)	Under Consideration
DC/24/1783	Prior notification for the demolition of Agricultural outbuildings	Prior Approval Not Required on 08.01.2025
DC/24/1784	Prior Notification for Change of Use of an Agricultural Building to 1no dwellinghouse (C3 Use Class).	Prior Approval Required and REFUSED on 10.01.2025
DC/25/0163	Prior notification for the demolition of agricultural buildings.	Under Consideration
DC/25/0164	Prior Notification for change of use from an agricultural building to 1No. dwelling (Class C3).	Under Consideration

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
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 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets

Billingshurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031
Policy Bill 2 – Housing design and character

Billingshurst Parish Design Statement

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):
Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 19: Development Quality
Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
Policy 45: Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
Policy 46: Ancillary Accommodation

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:

HDC Conservation Officer: No Objection **-** The heritage statement describes the history of the site and the more recent physical alterations and changing use of the buildings. The twentieth century workshop is placed to disrupt an appreciation of the historic farmstead complex. I welcome the removal of this building as it will better reveal the special interest of the farm. The historic barn is in need of repair and the proximity of the workshop does hinder this. In any case, finding a more intensive use is key to ensuring motivation for continued maintenance in the future. The proposed conversion of the barn is not controversial. The specific alterations will maintain an ability to understand and appreciate its former use and its relationship with the listed farmhouse. Likewise, the conversion of the pigsty building is also acceptable. I am satisfied the fenestration details are acceptable subject to conditions.

Archaeological Consultant: Comments - The site is within an Archaeological Notification Area DWS8920 Hook Farm Medieval Historic Farmstead, Billingshurst but the proposals do not involve any new significant ground disturbance that would disturb archaeological remains and so we have no archaeological concerns.

Place Services: No Objection - The ecology consultation comments confirm that the development has been reviewed in relation to its potential impact on designated sites, protected species, and habitats. The Bat Emergence Survey Report (October 2024) found no bat emergences from the barn, and the Bat Roost Potential Memo (February 2025) confirmed that the two workshops have negligible bat roost potential, so no further bat surveys are required.

The site lies within 12km of the The Mens Special Area of Conservation (SAC), but there are no records of the qualifying Barbastelle bats within 2km. Bats recorded within 2km include Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, and others. There are no trees or hedgerows on site, so the development will not sever flight lines for bats, and habitat connectivity will be maintained. The consultation confirms that no adverse effects on the integrity of the bat SAC are anticipated, and a project-level HRA Screening Report is recommended.

The consultation concludes that there is sufficient ecological information for determination, with no objections raised on ecological matters, except for Great Crested Newts, which will be reviewed by the NatureSpace Partnership. The identified mitigation and enhancement measures for bats should be secured by a condition and implemented in full to conserve and enhance protected species.

Nature Space: No Objection - The Newt Officer's comments indicate that the proposed development is unlikely to impact great crested newts or their habitats. However, since the site is within the red Impact Risk Zone, as identified by district licence mapping, the officer recommends that an informative be attached to the planning consent.

Southern Water: No Objection

Natural England: Standing Advice:-

It cannot be concluded that existing abstraction within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone is not having an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites. Developments within Sussex North must therefore must not add to this impact and one way of achieving this is to demonstrate water neutrality. The definition of water neutrality is the use of water in the supply area before the development is the same or lower after the development is in place.

To achieve this Natural England is working in partnership with all the relevant authorities to secure water neutrality collectively through a water neutrality strategy. Whilst the strategy is evolving, Natural England advises that decisions on planning applications should await its completion. However, if there

are applications which a planning authority deems critical to proceed in the absence of the strategy, then Natural England advises that any application needs to demonstrate water neutrality.

Parish Comments:
Billingshurst Parish Council: Customer made comments neither objecting to or supporting the Planning Application

Representations:
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 application has been assessed on the basis of the submitted details, together with the planning history of the site and adjoining properties, available images and photographs taken during case officer site visit. These details were considered sufficient to allow the application to be properly considered and determined.

The proposed development at Hook Farm, Billingshurst seeks to convert the historic barn and its associated modern structure into residential accommodation, repurpose the pigsty into a gym/study, and remove a 20th-century workshop that currently disrupts the historic integrity of the farmstead. This scheme aligns with national and local planning policies, ensuring that the scale, design, and function of the development respect the heritage significance of the site while enhancing the rural character of the area.

Character and Appearance

Policy 28 of the HDPF relates to house extensions and outbuildings in the countryside, stating that extensions should not be disproportionate to the size of the existing dwelling, and should be in keeping with the scale and character of the existing dwelling. The policy also states that the cumulative impact of existing extensions will be taken into account.

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF seek to ensure that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

The historic barn and pigsty contribute to the heritage value of the Grade II-listed Hook Farmhouse, forming part of a traditional Sussex farmstead. Over time, non-traditional structures, such as the 20th-century workshop, have eroded the site’s authenticity. This scheme reverses that impact by:

- Reinstating the historic farmstead layout through the removal of the workshop.
- Preserving key architectural features such as timber framing and original barn proportions.
- Ensuring high-quality materials, such as clay tiles, dark-stained timber weatherboarding, and black steel-framed glazing, remain in keeping with vernacular Sussex architecture.

The barn's conversion into a kitchen, dining, and living space will be achieved without subdividing its open-plan character, and the new glazing within historic openings ensures that the barn's original function remains legible. Similarly, the pigsty conversion will retain its original form, using traditional materials and sensitive adaptations to provide a functional gym and study space. The internal layout has been carefully designed to respect the historic fabric of the buildings while ensuring practical domestic use.

Barn Conversion (Primary Living Space)

The main space will remain open plan, providing a kitchen, dining, and living area. The existing mezzanine (a later addition) will be removed, reinstating the barn's original full-height volume and exposing the historic timber frame. The western extension (a 20th-century addition) will accommodate two en-suite bedrooms, ensuring the main barn space remains uninterrupted. Access between the farmhouse and the barn will be via a new glazed oak-faced link, preserving visual separation while maintaining functional connectivity.

Pigsty Conversion (Gym/Study Space)

The pigsty will serve as a gym/study, retaining its brickwork and timber elements while replacing the metal roof with traditional clay tiles. A partition will separate the study area from a small bathroom, ensuring that changes are fully reversible.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) highlights the importance of sustaining heritage assets through viable use (Paragraphs 201-223). The adaptive reuse of the barn and pigsty ensures their long-term preservation while preventing structural neglect. From a landscape perspective, the proposal remains low impact, as it does not introduce new structures but sensitively adapts existing ones. The removal of the 20th-century workshop restores historical farmyard relationships, reinforcing the original character of the site. Additionally, the dark-stained weatherboarding, clay tiles, and steel-framed glazing ensure architectural cohesion across the farmstead, reinforcing the site's rural identity .

The proposal would be a clearly subservient addition and is considered to be of a design, form and scale which is appropriate to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, and which would not harm the character or appearance of the wider area. It is therefore considered that the visual impact of the proposal is acceptable and would accord with the above policies.

Heritage Impact

In the 2024 revision, the NPPF continues to emphasize the importance of conserving the historic environment. Paragraph 199 maintains that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

This aligns with the requirements of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development affecting a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. In applying section 66, the identification of harm to a listed building or its setting carries significant importance and weight in the planning balance.

The site at Hook Farm comprises a Grade II listed farmhouse and curtilage-listed agricultural buildings, including a historic 17th-century barn and an 18th-century pigsty. Over time, the farmstead has evolved, incorporating 20th-century structures that detract from its historic character. In line with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), this proposal seeks to enhance and sustain the site's heritage value through appropriate redevelopment.

Policy 34 recognizes that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be sustained and enhanced through positive management. The proposed development at Hook Farm meets the policy requirements by:

1. Retaining and reinforcing the special character of the farmstead through appropriate design, siting, and use of traditional materials (dark-stained weatherboarding, clay tiles, and black steel windows).
2. Ensuring that alterations respect the significance of the historic buildings, particularly by preserving the open-plan nature of the barn, reinstating historic threshing doors, and using sympathetic glazing treatments.
3. Enhancing the historic setting by removing the 20th-century workshop, which currently disrupts an appreciation of the original farmstead layout.
4. Securing the viable future use of heritage assets, preventing the barn from falling into disrepair by giving it a new, sustainable function in line with Paragraphs 201-223 of the NPPF (2024).

The Heritage Officer's comments further support this approach. They note that "The twentieth-century workshop is placed to disrupt an appreciation of the historic farmstead complex. I welcome the removal of this building as it will better reveal the special interest of the farm." Regarding the historic barn, the officer observes, "The barn is in need of repair, and the proximity of the workshop does hinder this. In any case, finding a more intensive use is key to ensuring motivation for continued maintenance in the future." On the proposed conversion of the barn, the officer comments, "The proposed conversion is not controversial. The specific alterations will maintain an ability to understand and appreciate its former use and its relationship with the listed farmhouse." Similarly, the officer finds the conversion of the pigsty building to be acceptable, stating, "I am satisfied the fenestration details are acceptable."

The Heritage Officer's support for the proposed scheme further confirms that the removal of intrusive modern elements, restoration of historic character, and careful adaptation for residential use will enhance the site's overall significance.

Ecology Considerations

Policy 31 of the HDPF states that proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and/or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites.

The ecology consultation comments confirm that the development has been reviewed in relation to its potential impact on designated sites, protected species, and habitats. The Bat Emergence Survey Report (October 2024) found no bat emergences from the barn, and the Bat Roost Potential Memo (February 2025) confirmed that the two workshops have negligible bat roost potential, so no further bat surveys are required.

The site lies within 12km of the The Mens Special Area of Conservation (SAC), but there are no records of the qualifying Barbastelle bats within 2km. Bats recorded within 2km include Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, and others. There are no trees or hedgerows on site, so the development will not sever flight lines for bats, and habitat connectivity will be maintained. The consultation confirms that no adverse effects on the integrity of the bat SAC are anticipated, and a project-level HRA Screening Report is recommended.

The consultation concludes that there is sufficient ecological information for determination, with no objections raised on ecological matters, except for Great Crested Newts, which will be reviewed by the NatureSpace Partnership. The identified mitigation and enhancement measures for bats should be secured by a condition and implemented in full to conserve and enhance protected species.

It is noted that Nature Space was consulted who have advised that the proposed development is unlikely to impact great crested newts or their habitats. However, since the site is within the red Impact Risk Zone, as identified by district licence mapping, the officer recommends that an informative be attached to the planning consent.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

It is considered that the siting and layout of the proposed extension and the resulting relationship with adjoining properties would be sufficient to prevent any unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity. It is noted that no letter of representation were received for this application.

Water Neutrality

There is no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development would result in a more intensive occupation of the dwelling necessitating an increased consumption of water that would result in a significant impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The grant of planning permission would not therefore adversely affect the integrity of these sites or otherwise conflict with policy 31 of the HDPF, NPPF paragraph 193 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Biodiversity Net Gain

In accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, all householder applications are current exempt from the statutory requirement to demonstrate a 10% net gain in biodiversity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this proposal is fully compliant with Policy 28, 32, and 33 of the HDPF, ensuring appropriate scale, massing, and materiality. It also aligns with Policy 34, which protects and enhances cultural heritage through sympathetic adaptation, as well as the Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan, promoting design that complements the local historic environment. Furthermore, the proposal adheres to NPPF 2024, which supports viable uses for heritage buildings while preserving their historic significance.

The internal layout is designed to preserve the barn’s open-plan character, reinstate original architectural details, and ensure long-term usability. The removal of intrusive 20th-century elements will restore historic integrity, ensuring the farmstead remains a well-preserved example of traditional Sussex rural architecture.

The Heritage Officer’s endorsement further confirms that this scheme enhances the site’s special interest, ensures sensitive restoration, and aligns with heritage conservation objectives. This well-balanced proposal provides a sustainable future for the site, securing its architectural legacy while ensuring it remains functional for modern use.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2 **Standard Time Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3 **Pre-Commencement Condition**: Before any work begins on site, the person(s) responsible for supervising the works must meet the conservation officer of the Local Planning Authority, on site or as otherwise agreed, to confirm that all the conditions attached to the listed building consent are understood and can be fully complied with.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the significance of the designated heritage asset, and the character, appearance and integrity of the building, is not prejudiced, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and to comply with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Pre-Commencement Condition**: No relevant works shall commence until the following details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works must not be executed other than in complete accordance with these approved details:

Specification, including location drawings and sketches where appropriate, of works to timber framing including extent of work, methods to be used, and the type of any replacement timber.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the significance of the designated heritage asset, and the character, appearance and integrity of the building, is not prejudiced, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and to comply with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

5 **Pre-Commencement Condition**: A Biodiversity Enhancement Layout for the biodiversity enhancements listed in the Bat Emergence Survey Report (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd., October 2024) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Layout shall include the following:
a)detailed designs or product descriptions for biodiversity enhancements; and
b)locations, orientations and heights for biodiversity enhancements on appropriate drawings.

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.

Reason: To enhance protected and Priority species & habitats and allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under paragraph 187d of the NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

6 **Regulatory Condition**: Following fitment of thermal insulation the new roof junctions at ridge, hips, valleys, eaves and verges shall be built to reflect traditional detailing including exposed rafter feet, cut verges, bonnet hip and valley tiles and hogs back or half round ridge tiles.

Reason: To ensure that the significance of the designated heritage asset, and the character, appearance and integrity of the building, is not prejudiced, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and to comply with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

7 **Regulatory Condition**: All new and replacement rainwater goods shall be cast iron or cast aluminium.

Reason: To ensure that the significance of the designated heritage asset, and the character, appearance and integrity of the building, is not prejudiced, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and to comply with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

8 **Regulatory Condition**: The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the approved elevations and materials plan Ref: 2405HK_R0_200.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

9 **Regulatory Condition**: No additional external lighting shall be installed other than with the permission of the Local Planning Authority by way of formal application.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

10 **Regulatory Condition**: All mitigation and enhancement measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Bat Emergence Survey Report (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd., October 2024) as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

This may include the appointment of an appropriately competent person e.g. an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) to provide on-site ecological expertise during construction. The appointed person shall undertake all activities, and works shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved details.

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).

NOTE TO APPLICANT
Great Crested Newts

The applicant is reminded that, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to (amongst other things): deliberately capture, disturb, injure, or kill great crested newts; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Planning permission for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation. Should great crested newts be found at any stage of the development works, then all works should cease, and a professional and/or suitably qualified and experienced ecologist (or Natural England) should be contacted for advice on any special precautions before continuing, including the need for a licence.

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/24/1689
Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan		2405HK_R0_000	30.10.2024
Block plan	Proposed	2405HK_R0_001	30.10.2024
Floor plan	Existing and Proposed Ground	2405HK_R0_100	30.10.2024
Elevation plan	Existing and Proposed South	2405HK_R0_101	30.10.2024
Elevation plan	Existing and Proposed West	2405HK_R0_102	30.10.2024
Elevation plan	Existing and Proposed North	2405HK_R0_103	30.10.2024
Elevation plan	Existing and Proposed East	2405HK_R0_104	30.10.2024
Materials	Proposed	2405HK_R0_200	30.10.2024
Supporting Statement	Bat Emergence Survey Report	none	30.10.2024

Design & Access Statement	and Heritage	none	30.10.2024
Supporting Statement	Bat Roost Report Workshop Buildings	none	10.02.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Shazia Penne Date: 28.02.2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 28.02.2025