



Planning, Design & Access Statement

Demolition of agricultural building; partial demolition of a
stable building; and erection of a dwelling
(as an alternative to Prior Approval DC/24/0084)

at

Land forming part of Amiesmill Farm
Kerves Lane
Horsham
RH13 6RL

On Behalf of
Mr & Mrs Mahal

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Appendix A – Pre-Application Advice

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement relates to a proposal by Mr & Mrs Mahal to construct a self-build dwelling on land forming part of Amiesmill Farm in Horsham. The scheme is presented as an alternative to a dwelling granted prior approval recently at the farm.
- 1.2 This report provides details of the site and proposed development together with an appraisal against all relevant planning policies.
- 1.3 The application is accompanied by the following documents:

Plans:

- Drg No. 001 Location Plan
- Drg No. 002 Future Ownership Plan
- Drg No. 003 Existing Site Plan
- Drg No. 004 Proposed Site Plan
- Drg No. 005 Existing Barn Elevations
- Drg No. 006 Existing Barn Floor and Roof
- Drg No. 007 Existing Stables Elevations
- Drg No. 008 Existing Stables Floor
- Drg No. 009 Proposed Stables Elevations and Floor
- Drg No. 010 Proposed Stables Roof
- Drg No. 011 Proposed Dwelling North and East Elevations
- Drg No. 012 Proposed Dwelling South and West Elevations
- Drg No. 013 Proposed Dwelling Ground Floor
- Drg No. 014 Proposed Dwelling First Floor
- Drg No. 015 Proposed Dwelling Roof Plan

Reports:

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

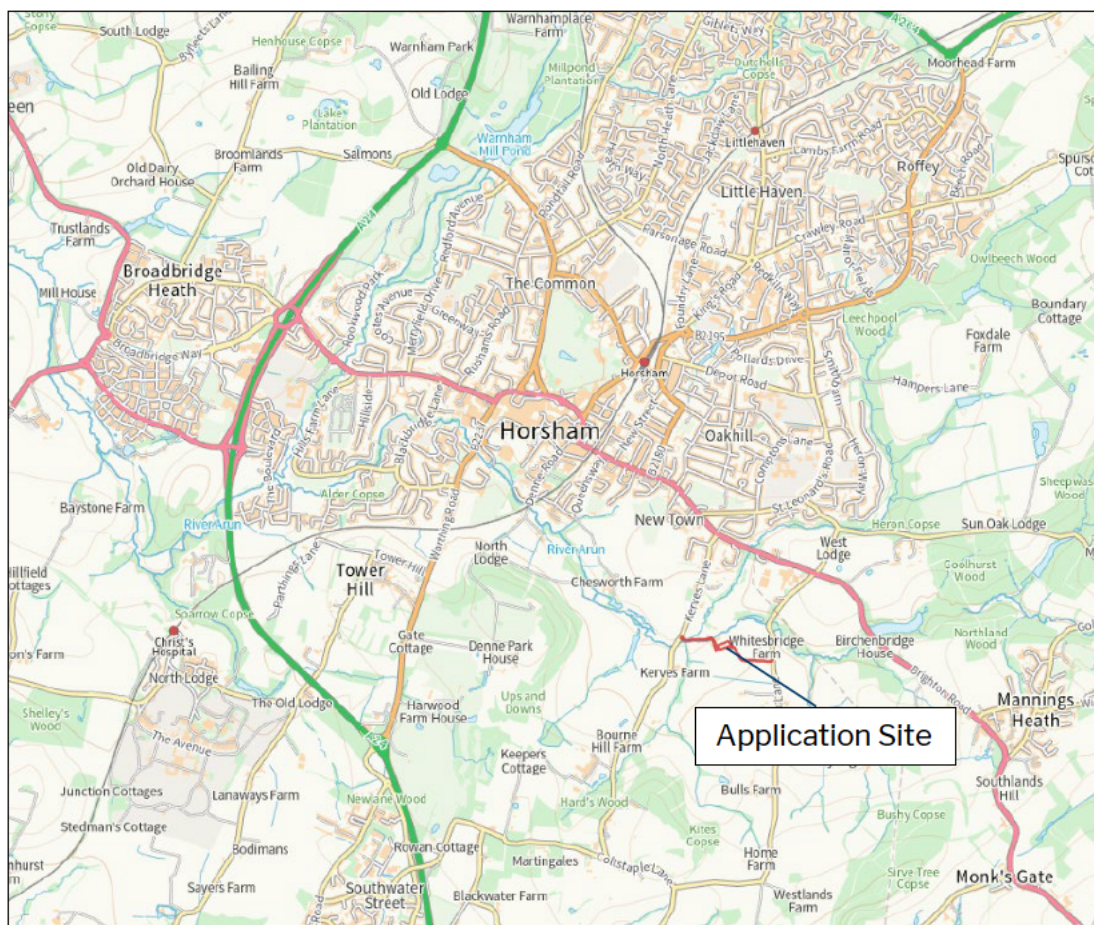
Risk Assessment

2 APPLICATION SITE

2.1 Site Description

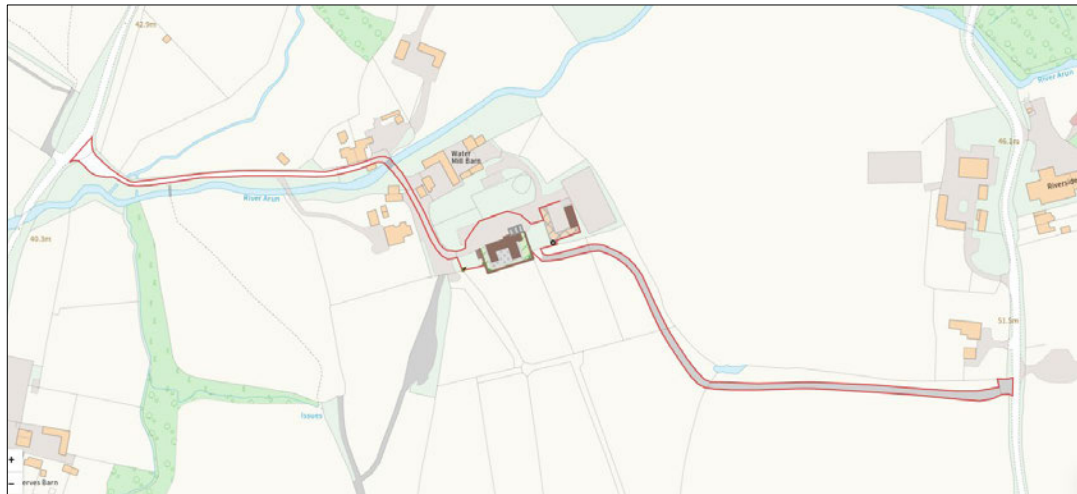
- 2.1.1 The site extends to 0.49 hectares, although only 0.19 hectares of this is affected by the proposals with the remainder forming long access roads.
- 2.1.2 The site is located approximately 400m away from the edge of the built-up area boundary of Horsham.

Figure 2.1 – Site Location



- 2.1.3 The site comprises an open fronted 304sqm agricultural building which has prior approval for conversion to form a 3 bedroom (6 person) dwelling, with its curtilage extending into the field to the rear. A 'u' shaped arrangement of stables is located to the east. An area of hardstanding lies to the north with a small area of grass beyond. Access is via a made track which leads to Kerves Lane to the west.
- 2.1.4 To the north and west of the site are four residential properties, including the original farmhouse for Amiesmill Farm (Water Mill Barn).

Figure 2.2 – Site Plan



2.2 Access and Rights of Way

- 2.2.1 Access is via a made track which leads on to Kerves Lane. The Crashmap website holds no records of any incidents occurring at the Kerves Lane junction. The track is shared by the four other dwellings and functions well as a residential access.
- 2.2.2 The nearest public rights of way (footpath no. NUT-1692) runs partially alongside the access road and crosses Kerves Lane to join bridleway no. HOR1670 which leads to the edge of Horsham.

Figure 2.3 – Public Rights of Way



2.2.3 The nearest train station is in Horsham town centre, approximately 1.8 miles away.

2.3 Environmental Designations

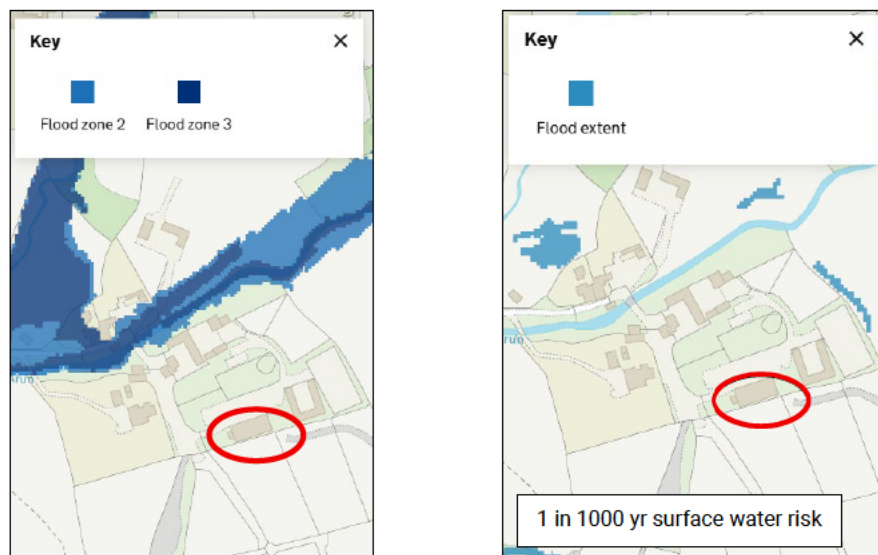
2.3.1 The site is not within or close to any statutory designations.

Figure 2.4 – Designations Map



- 2.3.2 The site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 with a low probability of flooding, although the access road up to Kerves Lane lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3. This is likely due to the River Arun which runs alongside the access road.
- 2.3.3 The site is at less-than-low risk of flooding from surface water up to a 1 in 1000 year event.

Figure 2.5 – Flood Maps for Planning



3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 Planning Policy

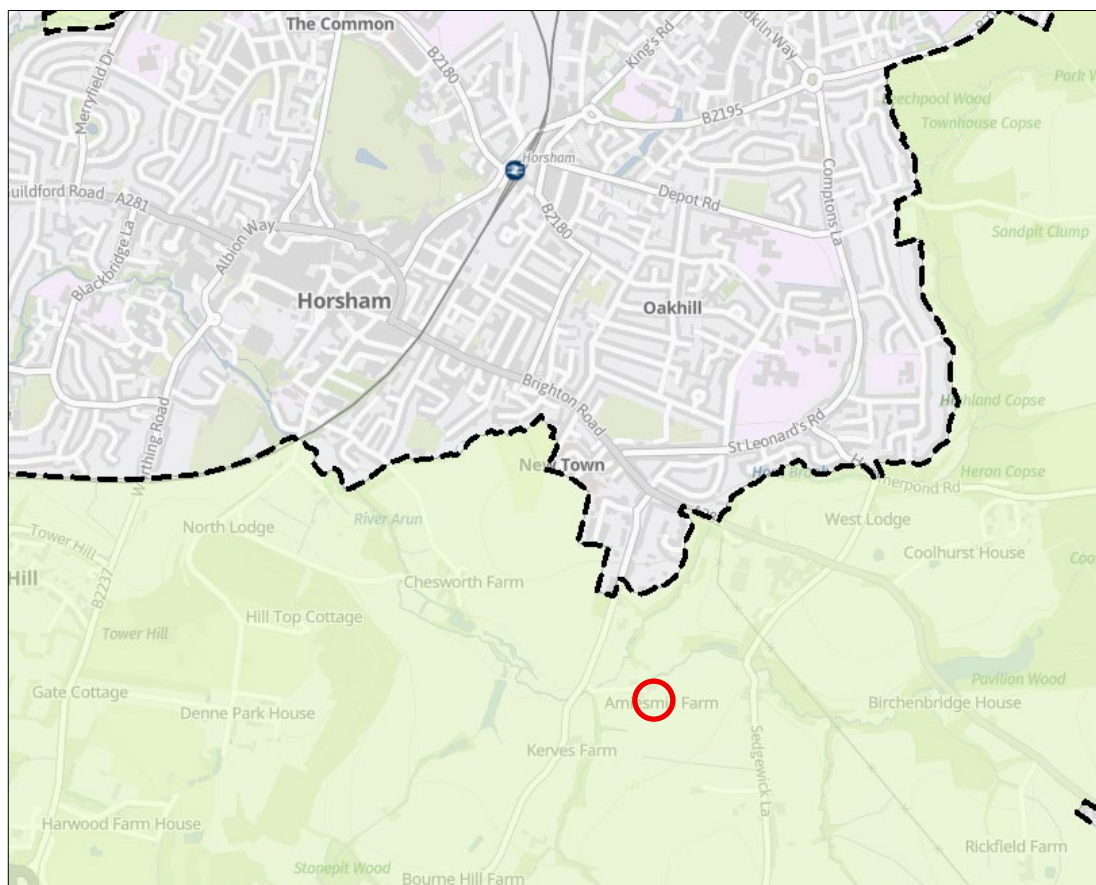
- 3.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.1.2 The statutory Development Plan relevant to the site comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework 2011-2031 adopted (2015) and the Nuthurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031 (made 21st October 2015).
- 3.1.3 Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

3.2 Development Plan

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

- 3.2.1 The accompanying Policies Map identifies the site as lying within the countryside,

Figure 3.1 – Horsham District Planning Framework Policies Map



3.2.2 The following policies are relevant to the proposal:

- 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: Meeting Local Housing Needs
- Policy 24: Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
- Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 26: Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
- Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 35: Climate Change
- Policy 36: Appropriate Energy Use
- Policy 37: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy 40: Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41: Parking

3.2.3 Policy 1 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) requires the Council to take a positive approach when considering development proposals that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date, the Council will grant planning permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.2.4 Policy 2 states that development around the edges of existing settlements will be managed in order to prevent the merging of settlements and to protect the rural character and landscape. The provision of rural housing is supported where it will contribute towards the provision of affordable housing where there is a demonstrable need.

- 3.2.5 Policy 3: Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy – states that development will be permitted within the towns and villages which have defined built-up area areas. The policy sets out a settlement hierarchy which defines Itchingfield as an unclassified settlement.
- 3.2.6 Policy 4: Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion – the growth of settlements across the District will be supported (subject to criteria) in order to meet identified local housing, employment and community needs.
- 3.2.7 Policy 15 supports settlement expansion where it is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type. The development should demonstrate that it meets the identified housing needs or will assist the retention and enhancement of community facilities and services.
- 3.2.8 Policy 16: Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs – development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of the district’s communities as evidenced in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment in order to create sustainable and balanced communities.
- 3.2.9 Policy 24 seeks to protect the high quality of the district’s environment. Developments will be expected to minimise emissions including noise, odour, air and light pollution, and ensure that they are appropriate to their location, taking account of ground conditions and land instability.
- 3.2.10 Policy 25 states that the Council will support development proposals which protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape character.
- 3.2.11 Policy 26 requires developments to be of a scale appropriate to the countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects and/or conserves and/or enhances the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located.
- 3.2.12 Policy 31 states that development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained.
- 3.2.13 Policy 32: The Quality of New Development – requires a high quality and inclusive design for all developments within the District. Development should (inter alia) be attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable. Development should also contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and surrounding spaces.
- 3.2.14 Policy 33 presumes in favour of the retention of existing important landscape and natural

features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. Development must relate sympathetically to the local landscape and justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development. The proposed scale, massing and appearance of the development should be of a high standard of design and layout and where relevant should relate sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

- 3.2.15 Policy 35 supports development it makes a clear contribution to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change and to meeting the district's carbon reduction targets as set out in the Council's Acting Together on Climate Change Strategy, 2009.
- 3.2.16 Policy 36 requires development to contribute to clean, efficient energy.
- 3.2.17 Policy 37 relates to sustainable construction and states that all developments must be designed to encourage the use of natural lighting and ventilation. Measures which enhance the biodiversity value of a development should be incorporated. Satisfactory arrangements for the storage of refuse and recyclable materials should be an integral part of design.
- 3.2.18 Policy 38 relates to flooding and requires development to adapt to future climate change and avoid increasing the risk of flooding.
- 3.2.19 Policy 40: Sustainable Transport – development will be supported subject to criteria including the need for it to be located in areas where there are or will be a choice in the modes of transport available and minimises the distance people need to travel.
- 3.2.20 Policy 41: Parking – adequate parking and facilities must be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users.

Nuthurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.2.21 Policy 1: A Spatial Plan sets out the locations where development proposals will be supported in principle. Outside of these areas, such as in this instance, development proposals will be required to conform to development plan policies in respect of the control of development in the countryside.
- 3.2.22 Policy 10: Housing Design requires development to be well designed and sympathetic to its surroundings, ensuring that scale, density, height, layout, materials and landscaping reflect the character of nearby buildings. For residential schemes, there is a need for high-quality materials and landscaping, adequate private garden space, sufficient off-street parking to reduce reliance on on-street provision, and the retention or appropriate replacement of trees and hedgerows as part of a comprehensive landscape scheme.

- 3.2.23 Policy 14: Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity requires development to protect and enhance green infrastructure and biodiversity by ensuring there is no significant harm to habitats, wildlife species, or ecological corridors, unless appropriate mitigation is agreed with the relevant authorities. It encourages the use of wildlife-friendly boundary treatments such as hedges or Sussex post-and-rail fencing rather than close-boarded fencing to maintain habitat connectivity. The policy also safeguards ponds, lakes, rivers and other water features, requiring measures to avoid adverse impacts and reduce flood risk in consultation with relevant bodies, and it ensures that public rights of way such as footpaths and bridleways are retained.

3.3 Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (NPPF)

- 3.3.1 The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking (paragraph 11).
- 3.3.2 There are three dimensions to sustainable development: social, economic and environmental (paragraph 8). Residential developments play an important role in the provision of sustainable development with the delivery of high-quality homes in the right location contributing towards the social, economic and environmental health of the district.
- 3.3.3 Paragraph 11 states that development proposals which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless:
- The application of policies in the framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
- 3.3.4 Footnote 7 of the NPPF confirms that protected areas or assets include habitats sites and or sites designated as SSSIs, Green Belt, Local Green Space, National Landscapes, a designated heritage asset and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.
- 3.3.5 The above presumption applies in this case as the Horsham District Planning Framework is more than five years old and the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply. In such an instance, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with a neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits but only where the plan was made five years ago and contains policies and allocations to meet its

identified housing requirement. In this instance the neighbourhood plan was made more than five years ago.

- 3.3.6 In terms of decision-making, the Framework states at paragraph 39 that 'Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible'.
- 3.3.7 Paragraph 61 states 'To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay'.
- 3.3.8 Paragraph 62 requires local planning authorities, when planning for housing, to have regard to the needs of different groups in the community, explicitly including people wishing to commission or build their own homes, alongside considerations such as size, type, and tenure of housing. Paragraph 63 reinforces the importance of ensuring that a sufficient variety of housing is provided, which can include opportunities for self-build and custom build on larger sites as part of achieving mixed and balanced communities.
- 3.3.9 In addition, paragraph 69 encourages the identification and support of small and medium-sized sites for housing development, which are particularly relevant to self-build schemes because they can provide greater flexibility and entry points for individual or custom plots. Paragraph 70 further supports the promotion of a variety of development formats, including smaller sites that can come forward more quickly and diversify housing delivery.
- 3.3.10 Paragraph 83 states 'To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby'.
- 3.3.11 Paragraph 84 states that 'Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:
 - a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;

- b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
- c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
- d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or
- e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
 - would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area'.

3.3.12 Paragraph 109 requires transport issues to be considered at the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals. This is to ensure that (inter alia) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed.

3.3.13 Paragraph 110 acknowledges that 'opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making'.

3.3.14 Paragraph 112 states that if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account the accessibility of the development, its type, mix and use, the availability of land and opportunities for public transport, local car ownership levels and the need to ensure that adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles. Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport.

3.3.15 In assessing development proposals, paragraph 115 states that it should be ensured that there are appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes, that there is safe and suitable access to the site (for all road users) and that any significant impacts on the transport network or on highway safety terms can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

3.3.16 Paragraph 116 makes it clear that 'Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe'.

- 3.3.17 Paragraph 124 of the Framework states that 'Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions'.
- 3.3.18 Paragraph 125 encourages multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes.
- 3.3.19 Paragraph 125 confirms that planning policies and decisions should (inter alia) 'promote and support development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.
- 3.3.20 Paragraph 128 states that 'Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help meet identified development needs'.
- 3.3.21 In relation to design, Section 12 seeks to create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places, acknowledging that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 3.3.22 Paragraph 135 further states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. Development should also be sympathetic to local character and history and should be designed with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 3.3.23 Paragraph 139 states that 'Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:
- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes: and/or
 - b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit with the overall form and layout of their surroundings'.
- 3.3.24 Paragraph 187 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural local environment by (inter alia) 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of

the countryside....'.

3.3.25 Paragraph 192 requires the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity.

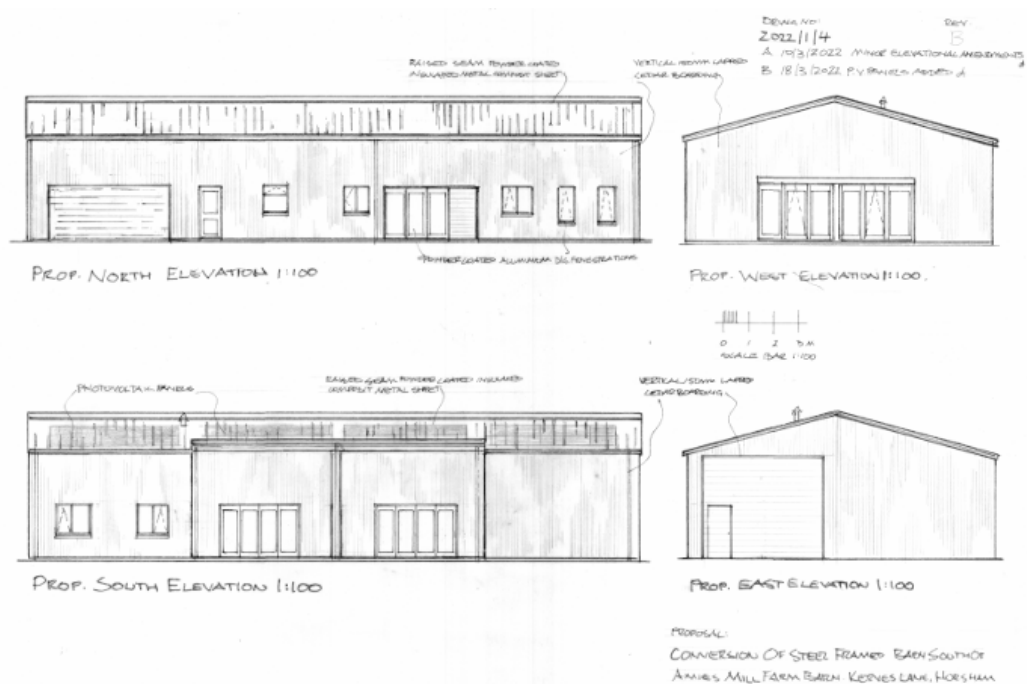
3.4 Planning History

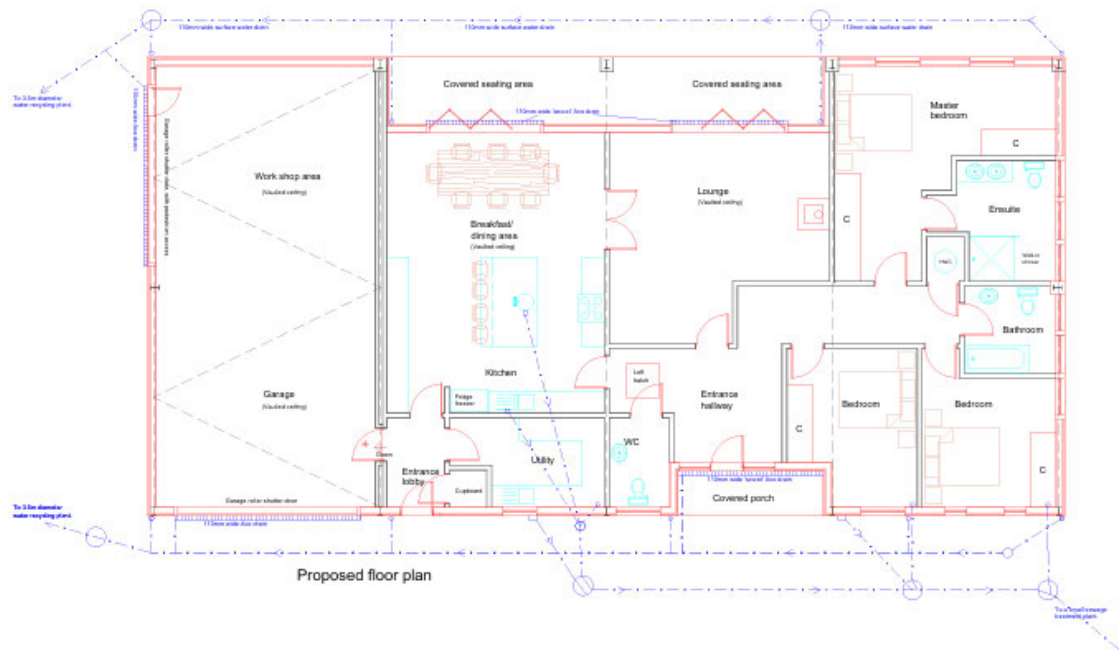
3.4.1 The site has been the subject of a number of previous applications, most notably:

- DC/24/0084 and APP/Z3825/W/24/3348147– Prior Notification for Change of Use of Agricultural Building to a single dwellinghouse and associated building works (granted on appeal 15th January 2025)
- DISC/25/0166 – Discharge of (pre-commencement) Condition 1 to approved application DC/24/0084 (approved 19th August 2025)
- HRA/25/0024 - Application under Regulation 77 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 relating to Prior Approval consent DC/24/0084 (approved 17th November 2025)

3.4.2 The prior approval scheme (DC/24/0084) is for a 3 bedroom dwelling with attached garage/workshop arranged over 284.5sqm. The footprint of the building is 304.3sqm. The sole pre-commencement condition attached to the prior approval, relating to contamination investigations, has been discharged.

Figure 3.3 – Approved Plans





Pre-application advice

- 3.4.3 Pre-application advice was provided by Horsham District Council (ref PE/26/0067) regarding proposals for a new self-build dwelling as an alternative to the above prior approval scheme.

Figure 3.4 – Pre-Application Plans



3.4.4 A copy of the pre-application advice letter is attached at Appendix A, and is summarised below:

- The site lies outside any defined built-up area boundary and, as such, the principle of new residential development would ordinarily conflict with Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), which strictly control development in the countryside. However, significant weight is given to the fallback position established by the extant Class Q prior approval (ref. DC/24/0084) for conversion of the existing agricultural building to a dwelling. The Council advises that this fallback position establishes a realistic and comparable form of residential development, which is likely to outweigh policy conflict in principle. In this context, Policy 28 (replacement dwellings) is considered relevant, and the proposed dwelling - being of comparable scale, reduced footprint (by approximately 27%), and similar siting - would be viewed as acceptable in principle.
- In design terms, the Council considers the proposed replacement dwelling to be appropriate in scale, massing and appearance. The height of the existing building (6m) is not too indifferent from what is proposed (7m) and would enhance visual quality compared to the existing utilitarian barn. The proposed 'mill-style' design which draws on local vernacular, is supported in principle, although clarification of external materials is required at application stage.
- In terms of residential amenity, the Council raises no significant concerns regarding impacts on neighbouring occupiers due to separation distances and site orientation. However, careful consideration is required regarding the relationship with the existing stable building. The Council advises that partial demolition of the stables is not necessarily required to address previous concerns raised about the proximity of horses, provided that the application demonstrates how potential amenity impacts (e.g. noise, activity) would be mitigated through layout and design.
- No affordable housing contribution is required, and there are no overriding concerns in relation to highways, subject to clarification of the access arrangements and provision of adequate parking, cycle storage and EV charging.
- The proposal will need to address technical matters at application stage, including ecology (with particular regard to protected species and Great Crested Newts), drainage, and land contamination. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is strongly recommended.
- Biodiversity Net Gain is noted as a statutory requirement, although the scheme may qualify for exemption as a self-build development.

- 3.4.5 Overall, the Council concludes that, notwithstanding conflict with countryside policies, there is potential for the development to be supported due to the fallback position, subject to the resolution of detailed design and technical matters, particularly in relation to residential amenity and the relationship with the retained stables.

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 Although the existing agricultural building benefits from prior approval for conversion to residential use under Class Q, the current proposal provides an opportunity to deliver a more coherent, functional and higher quality form of development.
- 4.2 The conversion of agricultural buildings can often result in constrained internal layouts, limited opportunity for achieving high environmental performance, and a less satisfactory relationship with the surrounding context. In contrast, a purpose-designed new dwelling allows for a more efficient use of space, improved sustainability credentials and a more appropriate response to the character of the site.
- 4.3 The application therefore seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing building and its replacement with a detached self-build dwelling for occupation by the applicants, Mr and Mrs Mahal.
- 4.4 The proposed dwelling would be positioned broadly within the footprint of the existing building, ensuring continuity with the established built form. However, the footprint would be reduced from approximately 304sqm to 230sqm, representing a reduction of around 24%. This reduction results in a less visually prominent structure and a more efficient use of the site.

Figure 4.1 – Proposed Layout



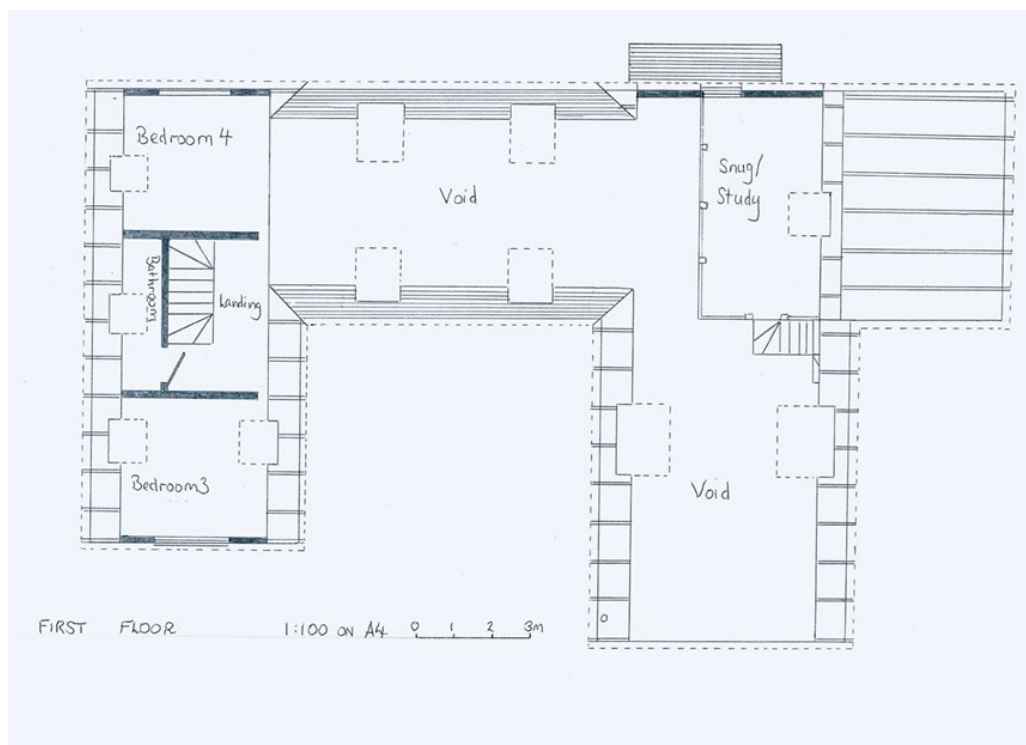
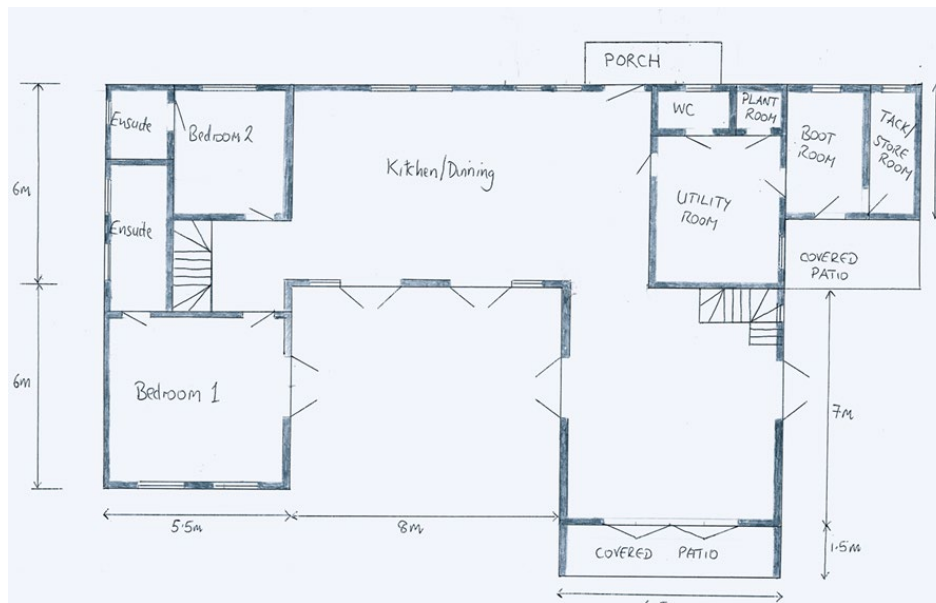
- 4.5 In terms of scale, the building has been carefully designed to remain comparable to the existing structure and the approved fallback scheme. The maximum height would be 7 metres,

only marginally higher than the existing building, with much of the structure sitting at a lower level. The form of the building has been broken down into a single-storey central element with one-and-a-half storey wings, reducing the perceived bulk and creating a more domestic and articulated appearance.

Figure 4.2 – Proposed Front (North) Elevation



- 4.6 The proposed materials have been selected to reflect the rural vernacular and to provide a high-quality finish. The central roof section would be finished in plain clay tiles, while the outer wings and ancillary elements such as the boot room and tack room would incorporate standing seam metal roofing. The external walls would combine brickwork with areas of vertical timber boarding, creating a simple and robust palette appropriate to the agricultural setting.
- 4.7 Internally, the dwelling has been designed to provide a functional and flexible layout. The majority of the accommodation would be arranged at ground floor level, including an open plan kitchen, dining and living area, together with two bedrooms, a utility room and a WC. A partial first floor would provide two additional bedrooms and a study or snug, allowing for adaptable living arrangements.

Figure 4.3 – Proposed Floor Plans

- 4.8 The curtilage would be similar in extent to that approved under the Class Q scheme and would be enclosed using post and rail fencing in keeping with the rural character of the site. Parking would be accommodated on the existing hardstanding to the front of the dwelling, with space for at least three vehicles, together with provision for electric vehicle charging.
- 4.9 The existing stable block to the east would be partially demolished, with only the eastern wing retained. This would provide four stables for the private use of the applicants' horses. The retained stables would be located over 37 metres from the nearest habitable rooms of the

dwelling, and no commercial use is proposed. This is the distance the previous appeal Inspector felt was acceptable. The applicants would be willing to accept a condition restricting the use of the stables if required.

- 4.10 A cycle and bin store would be located to the west of the dwelling, providing space for refuse and recycling storage as well as secure cycle parking. Foul drainage would be served by a package treatment plant, likely to be a Clenviro Matrix CLF1 or similar, positioned to the east of the dwelling. A detailed foul and surface water drainage strategy will be prepared to service the development and this can be conditioned to the planning permission.
- 4.11 Ecological enhancements form part of the proposal and include the provision of bird boxes on the dwelling and retained stables, together with additional features such as a hedgehog house and wildlife-friendly planting.
- 4.12 Access to the site for residential purposes would continue to be taken from the existing track leading to Kerves Lane. During construction, the eastern access from Sedgewick Lane would be utilised to facilitate wheel washing away from the River Arun. Following completion, this eastern access would revert to its permitted agricultural/equestrian use.
- 4.13 Overall, the proposed development represents a clear improvement over the approved fallback scheme, delivering a high-quality, well-designed dwelling that responds positively to its setting while reducing the footprint and enhancing sustainability.

5 DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Design Approach

- 5.1 The design of the proposed dwelling has been carefully informed by the rural context of the site, the form and limitations of the existing agricultural building, and the fallback position established through the approved Class Q prior approval. In addition, regard has been had to pre-application advice provided by the local planning authority.
- 5.2 The principal objective has been to deliver a high-quality dwelling that responds positively to its surroundings and provides a clear and significant enhancement over the approved conversion scheme. Historic mapping indicates that a mill once stood on or close to the site between the 15th and 19th centuries, forming part of the area's agricultural and industrial heritage. Drawing on this history, the proposal reinterprets the robust and functional character of traditional mill buildings, combined with the incremental, courtyard-based arrangement typical of Sussex farmsteads. The resulting design comprises three interlocking barn-like forms arranged around a central open courtyard, oriented southwards towards the surrounding countryside.
- 5.3 In this way, the design acknowledges the site's historic legacy by reflecting the solidity, simplicity and strong relationship with the landscape associated with traditional mill buildings, while delivering a sustainable contemporary home that is firmly rooted in its setting.

Amount and Scale

- 5.4 The proposal comprises a single dwelling, replacing the existing agricultural structure. The footprint of the building has been reduced to approximately 230sqm representing a reduction of around 24% compared to the existing building.
- 5.5 The scale of the dwelling has been carefully controlled to ensure that it remains appropriate to its rural setting. The design adopts a composition in which the central section is single storey, with the outer wings expressed as one-and-a-half storeys. This approach breaks up the overall mass of the building, reducing its visual impact and creating a more balanced and proportionate form.

Layout

- 5.6 The proposed dwelling is positioned broadly within the footprint of the existing building, maintaining the established pattern of development on the site. This approach minimises the impact on the surrounding landscape and reflects the fallback position.

- 5.7 The internal layout has been designed to provide a functional and well-organised living environment, while the external arrangement ensures appropriate separation from neighbouring properties and a clear relationship with the retained stables to the east. The residential curtilage is logical and usable, providing adequate private amenity space.
- 5.8 Parking and turning are accommodated on the existing hardstanding to the front of the dwelling, ensuring that vehicle movements can be managed safely and efficiently without the need for significant additional works.

Appearance

- 5.9 The appearance of the dwelling draws on the character of traditional rural buildings, using a palette of materials and forms that reflect the local vernacular. The outer wings are proposed to be clad in vertical timber boarding, while the central section is finished in brickwork, providing contrast and visual interest. The central section of roof will be finished in plain clay tiles, with the outer wings featuring standing seam metal roofs.
- 5.10 The building is articulated into a series of simple, legible forms that reflect agricultural precedents, helping it to sit comfortably within its rural context. An off-centre timber porch, attached to the left-hand wing, introduces an element of asymmetry and provides a welcoming focal point to the principal elevation.

Landscaping

- 5.11 The landscaping strategy has been developed to complement the rural setting of the site and to integrate the proposed dwelling into its surroundings. The approach is intentionally informal, reflecting the character of the wider farmstead.
- 5.12 The area immediately around the dwelling would be shingled to create a south-facing courtyard with grass beyond up to post and rail fencing.
- 5.13 Native planting will be incorporated where appropriate, and boundary treatments will consist of post and rail fencing in order to maintain an open and rural appearance. The proposed landscaping will not only enhance the visual quality of the site but will also contribute to biodiversity and ecological value.

Sustainability

- 5.14 The proposed dwelling has been designed to achieve a significantly higher level of environmental performance than would be possible through the conversion of the existing agricultural building. A fabric-first approach will be adopted, incorporating high levels of insulation and energy-efficient construction methods to minimise energy demand.

5.15 In addition, the scheme will include efficient heating and ventilation systems, use of renewable (solar) energy, low water use fixtures, and provision for electric vehicle charging.

5.16 Ecological enhancements, including the incorporation of bird boxes and wildlife-friendly planting, form part of the overall sustainability strategy and will provide tangible biodiversity benefits.

Access

5.17 Access to the site will be taken from the existing track leading to Kerves Lane, which currently serves a number of residential properties and is considered to function effectively.

5.18 The site is accessible by private vehicle, as well as by walking and cycling routes connecting to Horsham. Within the site, sufficient space is provided for parking and turning, ensuring safe and convenient access for residents and visitors.

5.19 Overall, the proposal provides a safe and suitable means of access, consistent with the existing arrangement and the fallback position.

6 APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues in the consideration of the proposals are considered to be as follows:

- Principle
- Character and Appearance
- Amenity
- Highways
- Ecology
- Arboriculture
- Drainage
- Contamination

6.2 These are discussed below.

Principle of Development

6.3 The site lies outside the defined built-up area boundary where new residential development is ordinarily resisted under Policies 2, 3 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF).

6.4 However, the site benefits from an extant and implementable prior approval (ref. DC/24/0084) for the conversion of the existing agricultural building to a dwelling. This fallback is a material consideration of substantial weight, establishing the principle of residential use on the site.

6.5 There is a clear and realistic prospect that the fallback could be implemented. The pre-commencement condition has been discharged and ample time remains for the scheme to be built out. The current proposal must therefore be assessed against that lawful fallback position.

6.6 The proposed development results in a reduction in footprint of around 24%. It provides a more coherent and higher quality design, with higher energy performance enabled by the new-build nature of the scheme.

6.7 In addition, the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply, engaging the titled balance under the NPPF. The delivery of a high quality self-build dwelling contributes positively

to housing supply.

- 6.8 Given the Council's lack of a five-year housing land supply, the NPPF 'tilted balance' also applies. In this context, there is a clear planning benefit in delivering a high-quality self-build home on a site where residential use has already been accepted. Subject to the assessment of other material considerations, the development should be considered acceptable in principle.

Character and Appearance

- 6.9 The existing building is a utilitarian agricultural structure of limited visual merit. The proposed dwelling adopts a 'mill-style' vernacular approach, reflecting local rural character through simple gabled forms, vertical timber boarding, brick infill panel, and roofs featuring plain clay tiles and standing seam metal sheeting.
- 6.10 The lower central element and 1.5 storey wings reduce visual mass and create a more articulated and domestic scale.
- 6.11 Importantly the building remains comparable in scale to the fallback, the reduced footprint lessens visual impact and materials are high quality and locally appropriate.
- 6.12 The development would therefore enhance the character and appearance of the site in accordance with Policies 25 and 32 of the HDPF and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Amenity

- 6.13 The nearest neighbouring properties are located approximately 50 metres from the site at their closest points.
- 6.14 Given these separation distances and the orientation of buildings, the proposal would not result in overlooking, loss of light or overbearing impacts
- 6.15 Previous concerns raised during the prior approval process regarding the proximity of stables have been addressed. The majority of the stable block is to be demolished, with only the eastern section retained. This would be located over 37 metres from the nearest habitable rooms with all but one of the windows and doors opening away from the stables. The stables would also be under the control of the applicants for private use only. All horse lorries and trailers will enter and exit via the Sedgwick Lane exit. Horses will not be ridden down Kerves Lane due to its river crossing being distracting and hence dangerous for horse and rider, thus equestrian use will be restricted to the east of the dwelling with no equestrian movements past the dwelling

- 6.16 Overall, the proposal would provide a good standard of amenity for future occupiers without adversely affecting neighbouring properties.

Highways and Parking

- 6.17 Access to the site is via an existing track serving nearby residential properties.
- 6.18 The proposal would not result in a material increase in traffic movements beyond that already established by the fallback scheme. Adequate car and cycle parking is provided on site, along with space for turning and electric vehicle charging.
- 6.19 There are no highway safety concerns, and the development complies with Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF and relevant guidance within the NPPF.

Ecology

- 6.20 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site and proposals was undertaken in March 2026. Habitats identified on-site were found to include artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface, developed land; sealed surface, modified grassland, ruderal/ephemeral, bare ground, and one individual tree. The habitats are common and widespread and considered to be of low ecological value, with limited opportunities for wildlife. The buildings on-site have negligible potential to support bats but were found to support nesting birds. No further surveys have been recommended.
- 6.21 Appropriate mitigation measures are proposed, including timing of demolition works, precautionary construction methods and sensitive lighting design
- 6.22 Enhancements such as bird boxes, a hedgehog house and wildlife-friendly planting are also proposed.
- 6.23 The development qualifies for exemption from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements as a self-build scheme, although it will still deliver biodiversity enhancements in line with local policy. The applicants are registered on the Council's self-build register.

Arboriculture

- 6.24 The site contains limited tree coverage and no significant arboricultural constraints.
- 6.25 The proposal retains the open character of the site and there is scope for incorporating additional planting to enhance its setting.

Drainage

- 6.26 The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding.

- 6.27 Although parts of the access route fall within higher flood zones, this reflects the existing situation and has already been accepted through the fallback approval.
- 6.28 Permeable surfacing will be used where new surfacing is proposed and surface water drainage can be appropriately managed through standard measures.

Contamination

- 6.29 Contamination matters have previously been addressed under the prior approval scheme, with the relevant condition discharged.
- 6.30 The proposed development does not introduce any new risks and can be adequately controlled through standard planning conditions if required.

7 SUMMARY

- 7.1 This application seeks permission for the demolition of an existing agricultural building and the erection of a high-quality self-build dwelling at Amiesmill Farm.
- 7.2 The site benefits from an extant Class Q prior approval for residential conversion, which represents a strong fallback position and establishes the principle of residential development.
- 7.3 The proposed scheme delivers clear benefits over the fallback, including:
- a 24% reduction in footprint
 - a significantly improved design
 - enhanced sustainability credentials
 - better relationship with the surrounding farmstead
- 7.4 While the site lies within the countryside, the conflict with development plan policies is outweighed by the fallback position, coupled with the delivery of a high-quality dwelling, the contribution to housing supply and the absence of technical constraints
- 7.5 The proposal accords with the overarching objectives of the NPPF, particularly in delivering sustainable development and high-quality design.

Appendix A

Pre-Application Advice



**Horsham
District
Council**

Sarah Mahal



Our ref: PE/26/0067
Your ref:
Officer: Sophie Moore
Email: Sophie.Moore@horsham.gov.uk
Tel: 01403 215245
Date: 22nd April 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Location: Amiesmill Farm, Kerves Lane, Horsham, West Sussex

Details: Demolition of an agricultural building along with the part demolition of an equestrian building and the self-build of a single dwelling (as an alternative to prior approval reference DC/24/0084)

Thank you for your recent enquiry regarding the above. I have reviewed the submitted details and the planning history of the site and can advise the following: -

Principle of Development

Horsham District's Planning Framework (HDPF, 2015) Policies 2, 3 and 4 collectively seek to ensure that development is appropriately sited to retain the district's distinctive settlement pattern and rural landscape character. Specifically, Policy 3 designates a series of built-up area boundaries where development is considered acceptable in principle, with development outside of these boundaries more strictly controlled.

Amiesmill Farm is located outside of any defined built-up area boundary and therefore Policies 3 and 4 of the HDPF are of significant weight in the determination of the application.

Policy 4 outlines the circumstances where development outside of a built-up area boundary would be supported. Such development must demonstrate all of the below:

- the site is allocated in the Local or Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins an existing settlement edge.
- the level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type.
- the development is demonstrated to meet the identified local housing need.
- the impact of the development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive long-term development.
- the development is contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape and townscape character features are maintained and enhanced.

Policy 4 clearly states that development outside of built-up areas will only be supported where the site is allocated in the Local or Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins a settlement edge, which is not the case with this site.

Due to its countryside location, the proposal would also be considered against Policy 26 of the HDPF which seeks to protect the countryside against inappropriate development unless it is considered essential and appropriate in scale, and meets one of the following:

- the development supports the needs of agriculture or forestry.
- the development enables the extraction of minerals or disposal of waste.
- the development provides for quiet informal recreational use.
- the development enables the sustainable development of rural areas.

Considering what is being proposed, it is unlikely that the proposal will meet any of the above criteria. On face value, therefore, the proposal would not accord with Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF.

As set out in your submission, a prior approval Class Q application was permitted at the site for the conversion of the agricultural building to one dwelling, under ref: DC/24/0084 (APP/Z3825/W/24/3348147), thereby providing a realistic fallback position. In cases such as these Policy 28 of the HDPF, which sets out considerations for replacement dwellings in the countryside, is relevant. This policy states that proposals for replacement dwellings will be supported outside of the built-up area boundary if the development can be accommodated appropriately within the curtilage of the existing building and is not disproportionate in size to the existing dwelling.

The current plans for the proposed dwelling as shown in the submitted Design & Access Statement (February 2026) show that the dwelling would fit comfortably within the curtilage of the existing building and, although is proposing an increase in storeys from 1 to 2, the height of the existing building (6m ridge height) is not too indifferent from what is proposed (7m max). The proposal would also lead to a reduction in the overall footprint of the building of 27% and be similar in length along the north and south elevations.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the presence of a realistic fallback position that is of a similar scale and siting to that proposed would constitute an already established principle for residential development in this location. This would likely outweigh the fact that the principle of your proposal does not accord with the aforementioned policies. However, permission would be subject to other material planning considerations as discussed below.

With regard to the partial demolition of the existing stable building permitted under DC/10/1606 and reduced in size under permission DC/23/1486, a condition of these permissions is that the building is not used for commercial purposes and therefore Policy 10 (which seeks to support rural economic development) is not relevant in this case.

Affordable Housing

The provision of affordable housing is not considered relevant to this proposal and would not need to be discussed further at application stage.

Character and Appearance

Policy 32 and 33 of the HDPF (2015) require that all development in the district be of high quality and complimentary to locally distinctive character. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of new development is appropriate as well as that a high standard of building materials, finishes and landscaping are used. In addition, Policy 10 of the Nuthurst Neighbourhood Plan is also relevant.

The existing building comprises an open sided barn of metal frame construction which is considered to be of limited aesthetic or visual merit but relates well to surrounding equestrian development. The Class Q prior approval consent permission to convert the barn into a dwelling would involve the installation of cedar boarding on external walls as well as a series of full height

windows. Ultimately however, this existing permission would largely retain the utilitarian character of the existing building.

Existing residential development at Amiesmill Farm consists of several detached dwellings of varying sizes, interspersed by equestrian and farmyard development. There is some uniformity in design and materials used across the existing built development with wood cladding, clay roof tiles and traditionally rural roof types utilised however the dwellings each have their own individual style.

The proposal seeks to demolish the existing barn and replace it with a traditional mill style dwelling, taking inspiration from Amies Mill which previously existed on the wider site. The height of the proposed dwelling would be kept largely within the existing ridge height of 6m, with two intersecting open gable features at a slightly higher ridge height of 7m. This is not thought to result in a significant increase in scale or massing and will instead likely provide visual interest and relief when compared with the design of the existing barn.

Proposed materials include timber cladding and a metal grey roof on the two gabled features, with the central part of the building constructed with brick and a clay tile roof. It should be noted that this is not clearly shown on the submitted plans and it is therefore recommended that these are updated to reflect the intended materials should an application be submitted. Overall, it is considered that the character and appearance of the proposal is in keeping with the character of the area and would not be unacceptable in terms of scale and massing when compared with the existing building.

Residential Amenity

Policy 33(2) of the HDPF (2015) requires development to ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land through loss of privacy, outlook, light, noise, or general disturbance. Similarly, Paragraph 198 of the NPPF requires development to be appropriate for its location and avoid impacts upon living conditions.

The nearest neighbouring dwellings are Amiesmill End and Water Mill Barn, both located approx. 50m away at their closest points. Despite their relative proximity, it is not considered that there would be an unacceptable impact upon the amenity of the occupiers of these dwellings given the dwellings orientation and location on the topography of the site.

It is noted that the prior approval Class Q application (DC/24/0084) was originally refused by Officers due to the proximity of a stable building to the north of the proposed dwelling and concerns around its use as a livery on the amenity of future occupiers. It is understood that this stable building is now within the same ownership as the subject building and therefore any intensification of activity at the stables would be within the control of the future occupier of the proposed dwelling.

The existing stable building has space for 9no. horses and is fairly self-contained due to its U-shape. There are no openings on the elevation facing the proposed dwelling and access is provided via a covered entrance to the rear and a gate at the front of the yard. A condition on the existing permission (DC/10/1606) restricts the use of the stable to private use. While the partial demolition of the stable building would likely reduce the perceived impact on residential amenity, at this stage I would advise that it would not necessarily be required dependant on the final layout and relationship between the uses.

If an application were to be submitted which proposed the retention of the existing stables on site it is recommended that the applicant demonstrates that they have considered the relationship between the proposed dwelling and the existing stable, the level/type of activity occurring at the stable and the way in which the design of the proposed dwelling attempts to reduce amenity impacts (e.g. locating habitable rooms to the south side of the dwelling, limiting opening on the

northern elevation etc.) within the submitted documents. This would echo how the appeal inspector considered the Class Q prior approval appeal.

Details of the proposed garden curtilage will be required as part of any submission.

Highways

Policies 39 and 41 of the HDPF seek to ensure that both sufficient capacity in the existing infrastructure network exists prior to the release of land for development and that adequate parking facilities are provided to meet the needs of anticipated users.

The Location Plan submitted as part of pre-application engagement shows that the site can be accessed via both Kerves Lane and Sedgewick Lane, the latter being the subject of prior approval application DC/19/1358 for use as agricultural access. The primary access point should be clarified at application stage and if Sedgewick Lane is to be utilised, permission for the use of the farm track for anything other than agricultural access will need to be included as part of the application.

Regarding parking provision, it is noted that the submitted Ground Floor Plan does not include space for a garage as was proposed under DC/24/0084 however the submitted Design & Access Statement correctly ascertains the parking requirement for a dwelling of this size and it is clear that there is ample space for this to be provided on the existing area of hardstanding adjacent to the proposed dwelling.

Should an application be submitted, it is recommended that the parking area, cycle storage and proposed EV charging point are clearly shown on relevant plans. Further consideration of public highway impact would be undertaken at this stage, including in consultation with the Local Highways Authority.

Ecology

Policy 25 of the HDPF (2015) seeks to protect existing biodiversity and green infrastructure in the District by ensuring no net loss, while Policy 31 looks to encourage the provision and enhancement of new habitats as well as outlining requirements for areas of particular importance (SPAs, SACs, SSSIs etc.). This is in line with paragraphs 187-188 of the NPPF (2024).

Should an application be submitted, it would need to demonstrate that the proposed development would have no adverse impact on protected species, such as bats, and/or their habitat and provide reasonable and necessary enhancements and mitigations where needed. I would strongly advise that you employ an ecologist to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and undertake any surveys that may be required as a result.

It is noted that the application site falls within the amber impact risk zone for Great Crested Newts (GCN). Therefore, any application would need to demonstrate whether there are any suitable ponds within 250m of the proposal and/or whether any habitat suitable for GCN would be impacted. Your ecologist would be able to advise on this when producing the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach introduced under the Environment Act 2021, to ensure that developments and land management leave the natural environment in a better state than it was before. It contributes towards nature's recovery by helping to deliver habitat creation and enhancements as part of the design of new development.

There is now a statutory requirement to provide a minimum of 10% BNG on development sites. Further information can be found at: -

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/biodiversity-net-gain>

It appears that the proposal would be a 'self-build' which is currently exempt from being required to demonstrate BNG.

Drainage

Though it is acknowledged that there are areas designated as Flood Zone 2 and 3 nearby, the site falls within Flood Zone 1 and is not at risk of surface water flooding. Therefore, as the development is less than 1ha no site-specific Flood Risk Assessment would be required, in line with Policy 38 of the HDPF.

It is however advised that as part of a full application, a foul and surface water drainage strategy is submitted for consultation with our Drainage Officer.

Contamination

Commercial or agricultural buildings 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 structures, made ground, yards and hard standings.

It is therefore recommended that a preliminary contamination risk assessment including a site walkover is provided at application stage to ensure it can be properly determined.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Development within Horsham District Council is now subject to a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The development would therefore be fully CIL liable. Full details of CIL in Horsham District (including the Charging Schedule) can be found on the HDC website at:

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/community-infrastructure-levy/what-is-cil>

It is recommended that you view these pages to help inform what the CIL payment would be for any residential development of this site. Any application will need to include completed CIL forms as part of the submission.

Conclusion

Whilst the principle of housing on this site does not accord with the current development plan for the district, the fact that an extant Class Q prior approval consent for the conversion of the barn to a dwelling exists on the site is considered sufficient to overcome this conflict. It is therefore advised there is potential for development to take place in the manner set out. However, further consideration is required regarding residential amenity, particularly if the existing stable building is to be retained.

Further details on how to apply for planning permission can be found through the following link: -

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/apply-for-planning-permission>

Should an application be submitted, the following documents would be required:

- Location Plan
- Block Plan

- Elevations (existing and proposed)
- Floor Plans (existing and proposed)
- Biodiversity Net Gain Statement
- Biodiversity Survey Report/Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Land Contamination Assessment
- Planning Statement
- Drainage Strategy

The above comments are given as the opinion of the Case Officer and do not prejudice any outcome of a subsequent application. Should you submit a formal planning application, please quote reference number PE/26/0067 in your submission.

Yours faithfully

Sophie Moore
Planning Officer

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

Horsham District Council implemented a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule on 1st October 2017.

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge placed on new development. The funds raised will help to pay for a wide range of infrastructure to support development across Horsham District.

Most new development which creates net additional floorspace of 100m² or more, or creates a new dwelling, (including permitted development), is potentially liable for the levy.

How does it affect you?

Applications for CIL liable development which are determined on or after 1st October 2017 are required to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy (unless the development qualifies for relief or exemption).

Further information and the rates charged by Horsham District Council are set out in the CIL Charging Schedule which can be viewed online at www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/apply/cil

General Consent e.g. Permitted Development

Developments which are permitted by way of a general consent (such as permitted development) may still be liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy if they meet the above criteria.

In these circumstances, you must submit a Notice of Chargeable Development (CIL form 5), notify us of the person who will assume liability to pay the CIL and make any applications for relief or exemption, before the development is commenced.