



Planning Statement

Replacement of caravan with new dwelling

Land at New Barn Farm, Capel Road

prepared by

WPS Planning

Planning Statement
Land at New Barn Farm

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Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA	1
3.0 PLANNING HISTORY OF THE SITE	2
4.0 THE PROPOSAL	4
5.0 PLANNING POLICY	4
6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT	6
7.0 CONCLUSION	14

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of a replacement dwelling at Land at New Barn Farm.
- 1.2 The application seeks permission to replace an existing caravan, which benefits from a Certificate of Lawfulness for residential use, with a permanent dwelling of high design quality. The proposal represents a logical progression from a temporary form of accommodation to a permanent structure, delivering significant improvements in visual amenity, environmental performance, and residential living standards.
- 1.3 The lawful status of the existing residential use is a key and overriding material consideration in the determination of this application. It establishes the principle that a dwelling can be occupied on the site on a permanent basis and therefore fundamentally shapes the planning balance.
- 1.4 This statement demonstrates that the proposed development is acceptable in principle, responds appropriately to its rural context, and complies with the relevant provisions of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site forms part of New Barn Farm, located within a rural area characterised by a mix of agricultural, equestrian, and sporadic residential uses. The site currently accommodates a caravan that is lawfully occupied for residential purposes.
- 2.2 The wider context is typical of the countryside within Horsham District, where built form is generally dispersed and associated with farmsteads, rural enterprises, and isolated dwellings. The site sits within an established working landscape, where agricultural buildings, equestrian structures, and domestic properties coexist.

- 2.3 Immediately surrounding the site are elements of the farm and equestrian use, which include outbuildings and associated land. These structures tend to be functional in appearance, with simple forms and utilitarian materials. As such, the character of the area is not one of pristine or undeveloped countryside, but rather an active and evolving rural environment.
- 2.4 Importantly, there is an existing dwelling located to the south of the site, which provides a clear domestic reference point in the immediate context. This contributes to a pattern of development that is not isolated, but instead forms a loose grouping of buildings associated with the farmstead.
- 2.5 The existing caravan, by contrast, is limited in both scale and visual quality. Its temporary and utilitarian appearance does not positively contribute to the character of the site or its surroundings. While its presence establishes residential use, it does little to reinforce local distinctiveness or landscape quality.
- 2.6 The site is accessed via existing arrangements associated with the lawful residential use, and these are well established within the context of the farm.
- 2.7 Overall, the site and its surroundings are defined by a blend of agricultural, equestrian, and residential uses, providing a context within which a modest, well-designed dwelling can be appropriately accommodated.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The most significant planning history relating to the site is the granting of a Certificate of Lawfulness for the residential use of the existing caravan. This confirms that the use of the land as a single dwellinghouse is lawful and immune from enforcement action.
- 3.2 This is a critical material consideration and carries substantial weight in the determination of the current application. It establishes that a residential unit can lawfully occupy the site on a permanent basis, independent of the current application.

Planning Statement

Land at New Barn Farm

- 3.3 The implications of this are significant. The lawful use creates a fallback position whereby the caravan can remain on site indefinitely and continue to be occupied. This fallback must be taken into account when assessing the acceptability of the proposed development.
- 3.4 In planning terms, the proposal therefore does not introduce a new residential use but instead seeks to replace and upgrade an existing lawful unit. This distinction is fundamental when considering compliance with countryside policies, which are primarily concerned with restricting new dwellings rather than improving existing lawful uses.
- 3.5 There is no planning history that restricts or undermines this lawful position. As such, the site benefits from a clear and robust planning baseline, which strongly supports the principle of the proposed development.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a single permanent dwelling (Use Class C3) to replace the existing caravan.
- 4.2 The proposed dwelling has been carefully designed to provide a high-quality family home that responds appropriately to its rural context. The accommodation is arranged over two storeys and comprises:
- Ground Floor: entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, dining area, study, and WC
 - First Floor: three bedrooms, bathroom, and central hallway
- 4.3 The layout is functional and well considered, providing a clear improvement in terms of space, usability, and residential amenity when compared to the existing caravan. The proposed dwelling has been given a slight rotation to its position in the site. This is to avoid overlooking towards the neighbouring existing dwelling to its southern side, and to allow better views towards the fields and forests.

- 4.4 In terms of scale and form, the dwelling adopts a traditional pitched roof design, with a ridge height of approximately 8.0 metres. The massing is simple and coherent, ensuring that the building sits comfortably within the context of surrounding farm and equestrian structures.
- 4.5 The design approach reflects both the agricultural character of the site and the domestic scale of the nearby dwelling to the south, creating a balanced and contextually appropriate form of development. The building avoids overly complex or suburban design features, instead adopting a restrained and rural aesthetic.
- 4.6 The roof plan and overall form demonstrate a well-articulated structure that responds to the functional requirements of the dwelling while maintaining a clear and legible architectural language.
- 4.7 The proposal utilises the existing access arrangements associated with the lawful residential use and does not introduce any additional units or intensification of development.
- 4.8 Overall, the proposal represents a high-quality replacement dwelling that significantly improves upon the existing situation, both in terms of design and functionality, while remaining appropriate to its rural setting.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that this should run through both plan making and decision taking. In terms of the determination of planning applications this should mean the approval of developments that accord with the development plan without delay, and that where the development plan is silent or relevant policies are out of date, that permission be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or policies of the NPPF indicate otherwise.

- 5.2 Sustainable development is seen within the NPPF as having three roles, namely an economic, social and environmental role which should be a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking.
- 5.3 The following sections within the NPPF (2024) are important factors in the assessment of the proposal:
- Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
 - Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
 - Section 11 – Making effective use of land
 - Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

Local Plan

- 5.4 In terms of the local planning policy context for the Application Site, the adopted Development Plan for the Horsham District is composed of the following relevant documents:
- Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) – Adopted November 2015.
 - Policy 1 - Sustainable Development
 - Policy 15 - Housing Provision
 - Policy 32 – The Quality of New Development
 - Policy 33 – Development Principles
 - Policy 41 – Parking
 - Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19)
 - Policy 1 - Sustainable Development
 - Policy 8 – Sustainable Design and Construction
 - Policy 19 - Development Quality
 - Policy 20 – Development Principles
 - Policy 24 – Sustainable Transport
 - Policy 25 – Parking

6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 6.1 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and confirms that proposals should be approved unless adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Paragraph 12 confirms that decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, while Paragraph 124 promotes the efficient and effective use of land.
- 6.2 At the local level, HDPF Policy 26 (Countryside Protection) seeks to restrict new development in the countryside unless justified by specific circumstances. However, this policy must be applied with regard to the planning status of the site and any fallback positions. Policy 33 (Development Principles) supports development that contributes to the overall quality of the area and promotes sustainable patterns of development.
- 6.3 The principle of development in this case is not assessed in a vacuum but must be considered in the context of the Certificate of Lawfulness, which confirms that the site benefits from an established and unrestricted residential use. This is a decisive material consideration that fundamentally alters the policy context.
- 6.4 The lawful use of the caravan means that a residential unit can continue to occupy the site indefinitely without further consent. As such, the proposal does not represent the introduction of a new dwelling into the countryside in real planning terms, but rather the replacement of an existing lawful residential unit with a permanent structure.
- 6.5 This distinction is critical when applying Policy 26. While the policy seeks to resist new isolated dwellings, the proposal does not create a new planning unit or extend residential encroachment into undeveloped countryside. Instead, it

Planning Statement

Land at New Barn Farm

represents a qualitative improvement of an established use, which aligns with the broader objectives of sustainable development.

- 6.6 The fallback position carries substantial weight. The continued occupation of the caravan, potentially with further physical degradation over time, would result in a poorer visual and environmental outcome compared to the proposed dwelling. The proposed development offers clear benefits, including improved design quality, enhanced sustainability credentials, and significantly better living conditions.
- 6.7 In decision-making terms, it is necessary to consider whether it would be reasonable to refuse a proposal that results in a clear improvement over an extant lawful use. In this case, such a refusal would be difficult to justify given that the fallback scenario would remain implementable and less desirable in planning terms.
- 6.8 Furthermore, the proposal aligns with the objectives of the NPPF in promoting sustainable development, improving the quality of the built environment, and making efficient use of land. The lawful residential use ensures that the site is already contributing to housing provision, and the proposal simply enhances that contribution.
- 6.9 Accordingly, the principle of development is not only acceptable but is strongly supported, with the fallback position carrying decisive weight in favour of the proposal.

Scale, Design and Appearance

- 6.10 HDPF Policy 32 (The Quality of New Development) requires that development respects and enhances the character and appearance of the surrounding area, taking account of local distinctiveness. Policy 33 (Development Principles) requires development to be of a high standard of design and to integrate successfully with its context.
- 6.11 At the national level, NPPF Paragraph 131 identifies good design as a

fundamental component of sustainable development, while Paragraph 135 requires development to be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, and appropriate to its setting.

- 6.12 The proposed dwelling has been carefully conceived to respond to both the immediate site context and the wider rural setting, including the established farm and equestrian uses at New Barn Farm and the presence of a residential property to the south.
- 6.13 The design adopts a simple and robust architectural language, characterised by pitched roof forms, balanced proportions, and a restrained palette. This reflects the vernacular of agricultural buildings and rural dwellings, ensuring that the proposal does not appear suburban or out of place.
- 6.14 The internal layout has been designed to provide a functional and efficient arrangement of accommodation across two storeys, including a range of living spaces at ground floor level and three bedrooms at first floor level. This layout is typical of a modest rural dwelling and represents a significant improvement over the constrained and limited accommodation provided by the existing caravan.
- 6.15 The scale of the building, including a ridge height of approximately 8.0m, is entirely appropriate within the context of surrounding farm and equestrian buildings, many of which are of greater bulk and visual presence. The dwelling does not appear dominant or disproportionate when viewed in this context.
- 6.16 Importantly, the design also takes reference from the dwelling to the south, ensuring compatibility in terms of domestic scale, proportions, and form. This creates a sense of continuity and reinforces the perception of a small cluster of development, rather than an isolated or intrusive structure.
- 6.17 The proposal therefore achieves a careful balance: it is clearly a domestic building, but one that is informed by its rural surroundings and avoids suburban design cues. This ensures that it integrates effectively into the landscape and contributes positively to local character.

Planning Statement

Land at New Barn Farm

- 6.18 In comparison to the existing caravan, which is temporary, visually poor, and lacking in architectural merit, the proposed dwelling represents a substantial and unequivocal improvement.
- 6.19 The scheme is therefore fully compliant with Policies 32 and 33 and aligns strongly with national design guidance.

Impact on the Character of the Area

- 6.20 HDPF Policy 25 (The Natural Environment and Landscape Character) requires development to conserve and enhance the character and quality of the landscape. Policy 26 (Countryside Protection) seeks to ensure that development does not harm the intrinsic character of the countryside.
- 6.21 The site forms part of a working rural landscape, where agricultural activity, equestrian uses, and scattered residential development combine to create a varied and functional environment. Built form is already an established component of this landscape.
- 6.22 The proposed development does not introduce a new or unfamiliar form of development but instead reinforces the existing pattern of land use. The scale, form, and siting of the dwelling have been carefully considered to ensure that it sits comfortably alongside existing buildings.
- 6.23 The current caravan detracts from the character of the site due to its temporary nature and utilitarian appearance. It lacks permanence and makes little positive contribution to the landscape. Its replacement with a well-designed dwelling will result in a significant enhancement to visual amenity, improving both the immediate site and its wider setting.
- 6.24 The relationship with the dwelling to the south further supports the proposal. By reflecting its scale and domestic proportions, the new dwelling contributes to a more coherent and legible grouping of development. This avoids the perception of isolated or sporadic built form and instead reinforces a logical and established pattern of rural occupation.

- 6.25 The proposal also respects the openness and rural character of the wider area. It does not introduce urbanising features or excessive built mass and remains proportionate to its setting.
- 6.26 In this context, the development not only avoids harm but actively contributes to the objectives of Policies 25 and 26 by enhancing the visual quality of the site and reinforcing local character.

Residential Amenity

- 6.27 HDPF Policy 33 (Development Principles) requires development to provide a high standard of amenity for both existing and future occupiers.
- 6.28 At the national level, NPPF Paragraph 135(f) requires that development creates a high standard of amenity for users.
- 6.29 The proposed dwelling delivers a substantial and meaningful improvement in residential amenity compared to the existing caravan. The internal layout provides generous and flexible living accommodation, including a lounge, kitchen/dining area, study, and three bedrooms.
- 6.30 The design ensures adequate levels of natural light, internal space, and functionality, all of which are inherently limited within the existing caravan. The proposal therefore represents a significant uplift in the quality of accommodation available on the site.
- 6.31 In terms of external impacts, the rural nature of the site ensures that there are very limited neighbouring receptors. The nearest dwelling to the south is sufficiently separated to prevent any adverse impacts in terms of overlooking, overshadowing, or loss of privacy.
- 6.32 The siting, scale, and orientation of the building have been carefully considered to ensure that it does not appear overbearing or intrusive when viewed from neighbouring land. Window placement has also been designed to minimise any potential for overlooking.

Planning Statement

Land at New Barn Farm

- 6.33 The proposal therefore achieves a high standard of amenity for future occupants while ensuring that the amenity of neighbouring properties is fully protected.

Highways and Access

- 6.34 HDPF Policy 40 (Sustainable Transport) requires development to provide safe and suitable access and to ensure that impacts on the transport network are acceptable.
- 6.35 At the national level, NPPF Paragraph 115 states that development should only be refused on highways grounds if the residual cumulative impacts would be severe.
- 6.36 The proposal utilises the existing access arrangements, which already serve the lawful residential use of the site. There is no requirement for new or altered access, and the existing arrangements are considered adequate.
- 6.37 As the site already benefits from a lawful residential use, the proposal does not result in a material intensification of traffic movements. The scale of the dwelling is modest, and trip generation is likely to be comparable to that of the existing use.
- 6.38 There are no identified issues in terms of visibility, access geometry, or highway safety. The proposal therefore does not give rise to any adverse impacts on the local highway network.
- 6.39 In this context, the development fully complies with Policy 40 and national transport guidance.

Overall Planning Balance

- 6.40 The presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in NPPF Paragraph 11 requires that proposals should be approved unless adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 6.41 HDPF Policy 33 supports development that contributes positively to the character

and function of an area.

6.42 The proposal delivers a range of clear and significant planning benefits, including:

- The replacement of a visually poor and temporary caravan with a high-quality permanent dwelling
- A marked enhancement to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area
- A substantial improvement in residential amenity and living conditions
- The efficient and sustainable use of land through the optimisation of an established residential use

6.43 These benefits are reinforced by the strong fallback position, which establishes that a residential unit can lawfully remain on the site in its current form.

6.44 There are no identified adverse impacts arising from the proposal. On the contrary, the development represents a clear and logical improvement over the existing situation in all respects.

6.45 When assessed against the development plan as a whole, and taking into account material considerations, the proposal is fully compliant with relevant policies and aligns strongly with the objectives of sustainable development.

6.46 The planning balance therefore weighs decisively and unambiguously in favour of the proposal, and planning permission should be granted.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The overarching policy framework is provided by NPPF Paragraph 11, which establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and requires that planning permission be granted unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 7.2 At the local level, HDPF Policy 33 (Development Principles) supports high-quality development that contributes positively to the character and function of an area, while Policies 25, 26, 32, and 40 collectively seek to ensure that development respects landscape character, protects the countryside, achieves high standards of design, and provides appropriate access.
- 7.3 This application seeks permission for the replacement of an existing caravan, which benefits from a Certificate of Lawfulness for residential use, with a permanent dwelling of high design quality. The lawful status of the site is a decisive and overriding material consideration, firmly establishing the principle of residential development.
- 7.4 The proposal does not introduce a new dwelling into the countryside in real planning terms, but instead represents a logical and sustainable evolution of an established lawful use. The fallback position, allowing the indefinite retention and occupation of the caravan, carries substantial weight and must be given full regard in the planning balance. When compared to this fallback, the proposed development delivers a clear and unequivocal improvement in all respects.
- 7.5 In design terms, the dwelling has been carefully conceived to reflect the existing farm and equestrian character of the site, as well as the domestic scale and form of the dwelling to the south. The result is a building that integrates successfully into its surroundings, reinforcing the existing pattern of development while avoiding suburbanisation or visual harm.
- 7.6 The proposal will deliver a significant enhancement to the character and

appearance of the site, replacing a temporary and visually poor structure with a well-designed and permanent dwelling. It also provides a substantial uplift in residential amenity, offering a high standard of accommodation consistent with modern expectations.

- 7.7 There are no material harms arising from the development. The proposal does not adversely impact the character of the countryside, neighbouring amenity, or the local highway network. Instead, it aligns with the objectives of both national and local planning policy by promoting sustainable development, improving design quality, and making efficient use of land.
- 7.8 When assessed against the Development Plan as a whole, and having full regard to material considerations, the proposal is fully compliant with HDPF Policies 25, 26, 32, 33, and 40, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7.9 The planning balance is therefore clear. The benefits of the proposal, combined with the strong fallback position, significantly and decisively outweigh any limited or theoretical policy conflict.
- 7.10 Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposal represents a sustainable and policy-compliant form of development, and planning permission should be approved.