Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/25/0796
Land at 508295 131784, The Haven, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9BL

DESCRIPTION:
Construction of an agricultural building for the purpose of storing manure with a concrete floor.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:
None relevant

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site forms part of Gibbons Mill Farm, The Haven, located within the parish of Rudgwick to the southwest of the village. The site lies outside of any defined built-up area boundary and is therefore designated as countryside. Gibbons Mill Farm is an established agricultural holding comprising approximately 178 hectares of owned land, with a further 100 hectares held on various tenancies. The farm operates as a dairy enterprise with a herd of around 500 cows. The proposed building would be sited on land currently used for cropping within the wider farm unit.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a new agricultural building for the storage of manure. The building would measure approximately 30.2 metres by 18.2 metres, with a height of 9.4 metres to the ridge and 6.7 metres to the eaves. It would have a typical agricultural appearance, comprising a dual-pitched roof and constructed with a concrete floor, concrete stock walling, vertical timber cladding and a fibre cement sheet roof incorporating 20 rooflights. No additional hardstanding is proposed around the building, with access to be provided via existing routes serving the site.

The intended use of the barn is to store manure solids, which are currently stored in field heaps. Following consultation with a number of agencies, including the Environment Agency, the applicant has advised that the construction of a dedicated roofed manure store is recommended in order to reduce the potential risk of runoff from temporary field heaps.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development

Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction

Rudgwick Neighbourhood Development Plan

Supplementary Planning Guidance:
Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Rudgwick Parish Design Statement

Planning Advice Notes:
Shaping Development in Horsham (SDPAN)
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

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 Arboricultural officer: No Objection
Comments: No significant concerns. No trees/woodland will be directly affected by the proposed siting of the building, with reasonable separation maintained to Chephurst Copse to the East. The control of run-off will be required in accordance with relevant building control/environment health constraints to ensure no contamination of watercourses or landscape assets.

HDC Environmental Health: Comments
28/07/2025 – No comment from Environmental Health.
30/07/2025 – There is a residential property within 100m of the site, so there is potential for fly and odour issues. Current objection but it may be appropriate to require a manure management plan

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:
Representations:
1 letter of Support has been received from 1 address, supporting the application on the following grounds:

- Notes the applicant is a local farmer, emphasising the importance of supporting the farming industry.

1 neutral letter has been received from 1 address, on the following grounds:

- Rudgwick Preservation Society raises no objection but raises the question as to where the effluent is to be directed.

Parish Comments:
Rudgwick Parish Council: No Objection

Member Comments:
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

Principle of Development:

The application site is not within a defined Built-up Area Boundary (BUAB) and is therefore considered to form part of the District's countryside. Policy 26 (Countryside Protection) of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) is therefore of key importance when determining this application. This Policy makes provision for development in the countryside where certain criteria are complied with. In addition, Policy 10 (Rural Economic Development) of the HDPF and Paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are also relevant when considering the acceptability of development in the countryside where it is proposed to contribute to sustainable rural economic development and rural employment opportunities.

Policy 26 of the HDPF aims to protect the countryside from inappropriate development and states that development in these locations would only be considered acceptable if it is essential to the countryside location and meets one of four criteria. In accordance with the first criteria of Policy 26, development in countryside locations is considered acceptable in principle if it supports the needs of agriculture. In addition to this, in order to be acceptable under Policy 26, any proposal in the countryside must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Acceptable development would not lead to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and would protect, conserve and enhance the key features of the landscape in which it is located.

Policy 10 of the HDPF aims to support rural economic development in order to generate economic, social and environmental benefits for local communities. The principle of rural economic development proposed in the countryside will be supported by the Council if it maintains the quality and character of the area and contributes to the sustainable farming enterprises within the district. Paragraph 83 of the NPPF echoes the aims of HDPF Policy 10 and seeks to support a prosperous rural economy by allowing the sustainable growth of rural businesses.

The application is for approximately 537.56 square metres of an agricultural storage building within an established farm holding. As such, provided that the use of the building is strictly to support the needs of agricultural activities on the associated holding; and that is of an appropriate scale and design to accommodate these needs, it would be considered acceptable in principle.

There is a clear demonstratable requirement for the building, supported by reports from the Environment Agency and ADAS, on behalf of Southern Water, outlining the environmental advantages of the scheme and to benefit the ongoing operation of the farm. In summary, it is considered that provided the scale and use of the building is fully justified in terms of the needs of the applicant's farming enterprise; then this type of development in this location is in accordance with HDPF Policies 10 and 26, as well as NPPF Paragraph 83; and the principle is considered to be acceptable.

Design and Appearance:

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 proposal comprises a new agricultural storage barn measuring approximately 30.2 metres by 18.2 metres, with a height of 9.4 metres to the ridge. The proposed materials, including a dual-pitched roof, concrete floor, concrete stock walling, vertical timber cladding and a fibre cement sheet roof, are typical of modern agricultural buildings and reflect its intended use. The barn would provide a single internal space with five large openings on the northern elevation to enable easy access for machinery.

Given the agricultural use of the land and the form and appearance of the building, it would not appear out of place in the proposed location. Furthermore, the site benefits from substantial screening, including a mature belt of trees and hedgerows surrounding the site and Chephurst Cope to the east, which would soften views of the building.

Taking into account the siting, scale and agricultural character of the development, the proposed barn would integrate acceptably within the site and would not result in harm to the rural landscape character. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policies 25, 26, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF).

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF requires that new developments do not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of nearby properties and land.

It is noted that no letters of objection have been received. The development would serve an existing agricultural field and would not introduce a new use to the site. Agricultural vehicles already access the field, and the proposal simply seeks to accommodate its continued agricultural use. It is therefore not considered that the proposal would result in any adverse impact on the occupiers of residential properties in the surrounding area, the nearest of which is located approximately 100 metres away, across fields and boundary hedgerows.

Comments from the Environmental Health Officer regarding the suggestion for a manure management plan are noted. However, given that the building would be situated within an established agricultural unit, it is not considered reasonable or necessary to impose such a condition on an agricultural building.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would not cause adverse impacts to residential amenity, in accordance with Policy 33 of the HDPF.

Highways Impacts:

Policy 40 of the HDPF promotes development that provides safe and adequate access, suitable for all users.

The proposal would not require the creation of any new access, with the building to be served by existing farm tracks. The Supporting Statement by ADAS, on behalf of Southern Water, confirms that the location has been chosen away from the main dairy unit to avoid the need for large volumes of manure to be transported along the public highway within a short period of time in the spring. Storing manure at the proposed location would mitigate this, minimising potential impacts on highway safety and maintaining the efficiency of the local road network.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would not result in any adverse impacts on highway safety or the operation of the local highway network, in accordance with Policy 40 of the HDPF.

Water Neutrality:

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

The proposal is for the erection of an agricultural building for the storage of manure. The development does not include any fixtures or fittings that would involve water consumption. Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposal would not give rise to any additional likely significant effects on the protected Arun Valley sites.

The proposed development will not result in any increase in mains water demand and therefore will not lead to adverse effects on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA or Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination. The proposal can therefore be screened out at the HRA Stage 1 Screening and does not require progression to Appropriate Assessment. On this basis, the development is considered acceptable in ecological terms and compliant with Policy 31 of the HDPF and relevant national policy

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed. The Applicant has submitted a Biodiversity Metric which demonstrates a 10% net gain is achievable by way of onsite biodiversity gains. A condition requiring a Biodiversity Gain Plan will ensure this is delivered.

Conclusions:

The proposed agricultural barn is directly related to the needs of an established dairy enterprise and is essential to its continued operation and good land management. The development is acceptable in principle, of an appropriate design and scale for its countryside setting and would not result in harm to the rural landscape, residential amenity, highway safety or ecology.

The application is therefore considered to comply with the NPPF and the relevant policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework and Rudgwick Neighbourhood Plan. Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal is acceptable.

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 **Regulatory Condition**: The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the application form and approved plans.

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).

4 **Regulatory Condition**: No additional external lighting or floodlighting 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).

5 **Regulatory Condition**: Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order amending or revoking and/or re-enacting that Order), the premises hereby permitted shall be used for agricultural purposes only, as defined in Section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and for no other purposes whatsoever without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: The site lies in an area where, in accordance with Policy 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) development which cannot be justified as essential to the needs of agriculture or forestry would not normally be permitted.

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/25/0796

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Elevation plan	Proposed Elevations	G [1] REV A	13.05.2025
Roof plan	Roof/Floor Plan	G [2] REV A	13.05.2025
Location & Block plan	Site Location and Block Plan	DEXXXX/01 REV P1	03.06.2025
Supporting Statement	BNG Metric Calculation Tool	NONE	02.08.2025
Supporting Statement	BNG Plans	NONE	02.08.2025
Supporting Statement	Biodiversity Gain Plan	NONE	02.08.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Sam Nye Date: 01/10/2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial ..... Date: .....