

Planning Statement

Demolition of The Old Stable and Construction of Replacement Livestock Building

12th March 2026

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HIGH BEECH FARM,

Demolition of The Old Stable and Construction of Replacement Livestock Building

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an application for the demolition of The Old Stable and the construction of a sensitively designed replacement livestock building.

The purpose of this statement is to set out the policy context, assess the appropriateness of the proposal, and demonstrate its compliance with relevant national and local planning policies. The proposal responds directly to pre-application advice issued by Horsham District Council and addresses all relevant considerations including design, landscape, ecology, and heritage.

2. Site Context and Description

The site comprises The Old Stable, a historic rural building situated within a countryside location. The surrounding landscape includes agricultural fields, hedgerows, mature vegetation, and intermittent visibility from local lanes. The building forms part of an informal farmstead group but is not listed or located within a conservation area. Its landscape contribution is modest and largely contextual.

The site sits outside defined settlement boundaries, and development is therefore directed by policies concerning replacement buildings, countryside protection, and rural character.

3. Proposed Development

The proposal involves:

- Demolition of The Old Stable.
- Construction of a new livestock building designed in traditional rural vernacular.
- Retention and enhancement of existing landscape features.
- Sensitive boundary treatments, avoiding suburbanisation.
- Delivery of biodiversity enhancements to achieve mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.

4. Planning Policy Framework

The proposal has been assessed against the following:

4.1 National Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2025): Sustainable development, heritage, rural housing, good design, and biodiversity.

4.2 Local Policy – Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF)

- Policy 26: Countryside Protection.
- Policy 28: Replacement Dwellings.
- Policy 31: Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity.
- Policies 32 & 33: Design, Character & Landscape.
- Policy 34: Heritage

These policies form the basis of determining the suitability of the demolition and the build of a replacement livestock building.

5. Principle of Development

Policy 28 supports a replacement building that is appropriately contained within the residential curtilage and is not disproportionately larger than the existing building. The proposed replacement structure is only marginally larger in footprint, as acknowledged during pre-application discussions, and its accompanying outbuildings remain subordinate.

Horsham District Council has confirmed no fundamental concern with the proposed building size or siting. The principle of development is acceptable and policy-compliant.

6. Assessment of existing building

This section provides a proportionate heritage justification for the proposed demolition of The Old Stable and its replacement with a new agricultural building. Although the structure has basic historic character, it is not a listed building nor a designated heritage asset. Its contribution to local heritage significance arises primarily from its traditional rural form, age, and relationship to the wider agricultural landscape.

Under national policy (**NPPF 203**), non-designated heritage assets require a balanced judgement that weighs the asset's significance against the benefits of the proposal.

The replacement building adopts traditional agricultural vernacular, ensuring that any heritage impact is therefore low and capable of full mitigation.

6.1 Significance of The Old Stable

The application site comprises a traditional timber-framed agricultural outbuilding characteristic of the Sussex vernacular. The building is of a simple linear form, clad in vertical weatherboarding, with a combination of corrugated metal sheeting and surviving clay plain tile roofing.

The scale, materials and functional detailing reflect its historic use as stable and general farm storage buildings, typical of small-scale rural farmsteads in the Wealden area. While altered through incremental re-roofing and repair, the building retains a legible agricultural character and make a positive contribution to the rural setting.

It is not statutorily listed and does not exhibit architectural refinement or intact historic detailing of a level suggesting national significance; however, it is considered to hold local heritage value as a representative example of a Sussex vernacular farm structure.

Significance

- The Stables represents a vernacular agricultural structure typical of Sussex farmsteads rather than a high-status estate stable. (See appendix 1 for assessment of its built significance).
- This is a typical, modest Sussex vernacular stable and outbuilding range of local heritage value, important as part of rural character and agricultural history, but not of high architectural or national significance in its current altered state.
- Low to moderate local heritage value as representative Sussex agricultural outbuilding. Its significance is therefore minor and primarily contextual.

Detractions to Significance

However:

- Alterations, deterioration, and loss of historic integrity limit its significance.
- Extensive corrugated re-roofing has reduced integrity.
- Original detailing is limited.
- Structural distortion and deterioration are evident.
- They do not appear rare or architecturally refined.
- Their historic fabric appears partially compromised.

Under the NPPF, any harm to a **non-designated heritage asset** should be balanced against public benefits. In this case, the level of harm from demolition would likely be classified as **low**. Further, as no statutory designation applies then the classification of harm is not even applicable.

The Stable's Contribution to Landscape Character

- The stable provides a small contextual contribution to the rural landscape.
- It is partially screened and does not form part of a coherent or highly significant historic group.
- The building is isolated and not part of an intact historic farmstead group.
- It sits within a landscape already containing modern agricultural structures.

Character and Status of Stable

Externally:

The stable appears old and significantly weathered, displaying a strong sense of rural character and long-term exposure to the elements. It seems either disused or only lightly used, as there are no clear signs of active agricultural activity and vegetation has begun to encroach along parts of the structure.

The vertical timber cladding is faded, warped, and uneven, showing years of sun, wind, and moisture damage. The corrugated metal roof is heavily rusted, with a deep reddish-brown patina, although it still appears structurally intact. Some areas of the building look slightly misaligned, indicating gradual structural movement over time.

The adjoining lean-to section appears more fragile and worn, with heavier weathering and possible sagging. Despite its aged and neglected condition, the stable remains standing and retains a minor rustic quality, though it would require substantial repair and maintenance to restore full functionality.



Internally

The internal parts of the stables are largely unused, with a clear sense of long-term wear and minimal recent maintenance. The timber framing and roof structure are exposed and visibly weathered, though they seem generally intact. The timber beams appear to be later machine cut lengths of timber and the corrugated roof sheeting is present above the rafters.

The timber boards forming the walls and partitions are worn, stained, and uneven, with areas of surface deterioration and discoloration. The internal dividing walls are made of later timber that has been inserted to create pens or enclosures for the animal. There are signs of dampness, particularly along the lower wall sections where green staining and moss growth are visible, indicating prolonged moisture exposure and poor ventilation.

The floor is hard and compacted, with debris, loose materials, and discarded items scattered throughout, reinforcing the impression of disuse. Some internal fittings, such as partitions and doors, remain in place but look aged and possibly unstable. Overall, while the main structure stands, the interior would require significant cleaning, repair, and moisture management to restore it to functional stable use.



Overall, the stable is structurally standing but in an **advanced weathered condition**, likely requiring significant restoration to return to full functional use. It has rustic character but shows clear signs of age, exposure, and deferred maintenance. Any reconstruction would require the removal, repair and replacement of any of the features which currently give it any of its minor quality.

6.2 Overall Condition and Viability Assessment

The building suffers from:

- Structural deterioration.
- Functional obsolescence.
- Unsuitability for viable conversion without significant reconstruction.

Observation of the stables shows extensive decay and health and safety risks. Repair would require substantial reconstruction and its associated costs. Also. It no longer meets the standards required of equestrian accommodation.

These factors diminish the heritage value and limit the building's realistic future use.

Element	Condition	Risk Level
Roof covering	Poor	High
Roof structure	Fair–Poor	Moderate–High
Timber frame	Unknown but likely compromised	Moderate
Envelope weather-tightness	Poor	High
Suitability for conversion	Limited	High intervention required

**Table 1: Assessment of condition/
Risk**

The building presents significant practical limitations. The roof coverings are deteriorated and likely allow water ingress, while visible sagging suggests structural weakness requiring major repair or replacement. Timber framing may be compromised at ground level due to prolonged moisture exposure.

The structure is not weather-tight, lacks insulation and has minimal foundations, making it unsuitable for habitable conversion without extensive reconstruction. Upgrading to meet current Building Regulations would require substantial structural strengthening, new floors, full re-roofing, and service installation. Door openings and internal spans are limited for modern agricultural use. Overall, adaptation would involve disproportionate intervention relative to its lesser utility and poor condition.

6.3 Justification for demolition

The application relates to the demolition of a group of former agricultural outbuildings of timber-framed construction with vertical weatherboarding and predominantly corrugated metal sheet roofing. The buildings are of simple utilitarian form and reflect a broadly typical Sussex vernacular agricultural character. However, they have been substantially altered through incremental re-roofing, repair and replacement works, resulting in a significant loss of original fabric and integrity. Surviving traditional clay tile elements are limited and no historic fixtures, fittings, or notable architectural detailing remain.

The buildings are not statutorily listed, are not identified as non-designated heritage assets within the Horsham District planning records, and do not lie within the curtilage of a listed building. They are not located within a Conservation Area. While the site lies within the rural area of the District, the structure is modest and a commonplace example of a former agricultural building. It does not exhibit architectural distinction, rarity, or strong group value and there are many better examples in the region. As such, they are considered to hold at most limited local heritage interest.

In accordance with Paragraph 209 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application, and a balanced judgement is required having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset. In this instance, given the limited significance of the building and its compromised condition, the level of harm arising from demolition would be negligible to low.

The proposals have been brought forward in recognition of the buildings' deteriorating structural condition, including evident distortion to the roof structure and degradation of timber elements.

Retention and repair would require substantial reconstruction, resulting in further loss of historic fabric and limited heritage gain. Demolition will facilitate a more coherent and sustainable form of development that enhances the visual quality of the site and contributes positively to the rural character of the area.

The proposal therefore accords with Policy 34 (Cultural and Heritage Assets) of the Horsham District Planning Framework, which seeks to conserve and enhance heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Given the limited significance of the existing buildings and the absence of statutory designation, their removal is considered justified and proportionate.

Impact of Demolition

The demolition will result in the loss of a modest, non-designated asset. However:

- Heritage significance is limited.
- No designated assets are affected.
- Replacement is sensitively designed to reflect rural vernacular.
- The wider landscape character can be enhanced.
- Photographic and descriptive recording prior to demolition.

6.4 Assessment of the replacement building

The replacement building is a modern agricultural structure of simple, utilitarian design.

It is a large, single-span portal-frame building with a pitched roof and long, linear form. The lower wall sections are clad in profiled insulated composite panels finished in a light beige tone, providing durability, weather resistance, and improved thermal performance compared to traditional timber boarding.

The upper gable section is finished in vertical timber cladding, introducing a more rural aesthetic and referencing traditional agricultural materials.

The building sits on a concrete slab foundation, with the wall panels raised slightly above ground level. External fixings and panel joints are visible, reflecting contemporary construction methods.

The overall appearance is clean, functional, and robust, designed for modern agricultural or storage use, with improved longevity, structural efficiency, and compliance with current building standards.

In contrast to the former stables, the replacement building presents a more cohesive and structurally efficient form. It is weather-tight and suited to modern operational requirements while incorporating limited vernacular cues through the timber-clad upper section.

6.5 Enhancement Through Replacement

The replacement livestock building is designed to:

- Reinforce rural character using appropriate materials.
- Incorporate vernacular design cues.
- Improve visual quality over the degraded existing structure.
- Integrate sensitively with planting and landscape features.

The replacement building brings enhancement in several practical and visual respects when compared to the former deteriorating stables.

Visual Improvement

The previous structure is visibly weathered, distorted and patched with rusting corrugated sheets, contributing to a tired and fragmented appearance. The new building presents a cohesive, clean-lined form with consistent materials and a unified roof structure. The timber-clad upper section references traditional agricultural materials, softening its appearance and helping it sit more comfortably within the rural setting.

Structural Integrity and Longevity

The portal-frame construction provides structural stability and durability. Unlike the former sagging timber structure, the replacement is weather-tight, properly founded and designed for long-term use, reducing ongoing deterioration and maintenance issues.

Improved Site Organisation

By consolidating agricultural functions into a single, efficient structure, the development rationalises the site layout and removes redundant, decaying buildings. This reduces visual clutter and creates a more orderly farmstead arrangement.

Sustainability and Performance

Insulated composite panels improve thermal performance and reduce energy loss. Modern construction standards ensure better resistance to moisture, wind loading and ground conditions, enhancing resilience and reducing future repair needs.

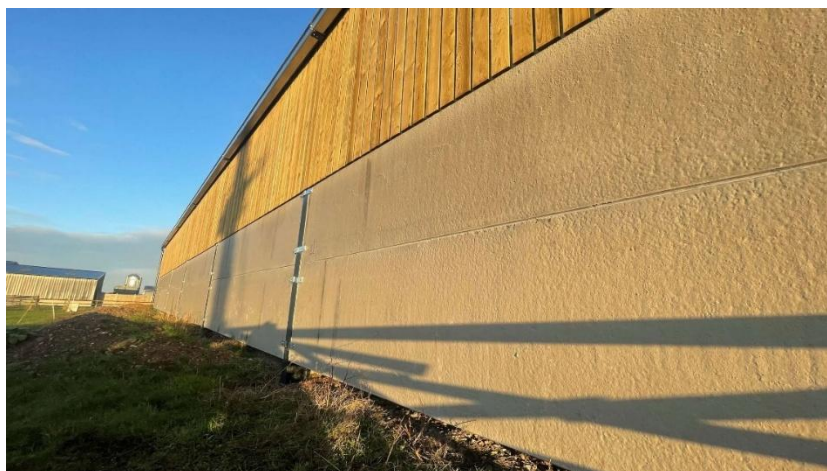
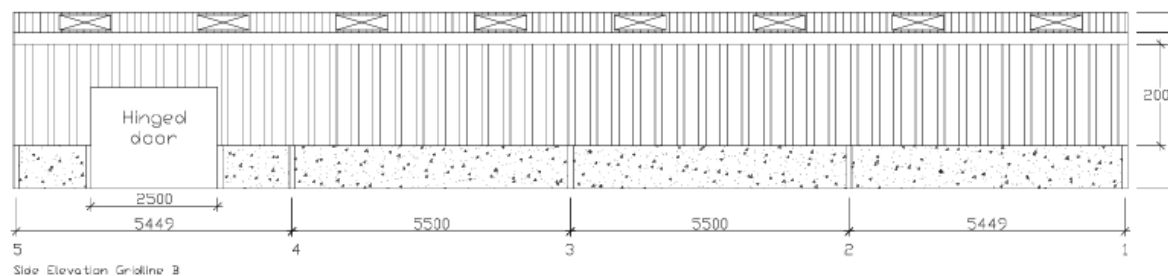
Agricultural Need

The new livestock building is required to provide safe, weather-tight accommodation for stock, replacing the deteriorated stable that no longer meets welfare or operational standards. Its modern construction, layout and capacity support efficient farm management, secure housing, and year-round husbandry, ensuring the unit remains viable and compliant with agricultural requirements.

Contribution to Rural Character

While contemporary in construction, the use of timber cladding and agricultural proportions ensures the building remains subservient to the landscape and retains a functional rural character, rather than introducing a suburban or domestic form.

Overall, the proposal replaces a deteriorating and compromised structure with a well-designed, durable and visually coherent building that enhances the appearance, usability and long-term sustainability of the site.



6.6 Planning Balance

In assessing the planning balance, it is acknowledged that the demolition of the existing agricultural outbuildings would result in the loss of structures that possess limited local heritage interest as modest examples of Sussex vernacular farm buildings. However, their significance is low, having been substantially altered, structurally compromised and largely devoid of intact historic fabric.

The level of heritage harm is therefore considered negligible. This limited harm is clearly outweighed by the public and site-specific benefits of the proposal, including the removal of deteriorating buildings, enhancement of the site's visual appearance, provision of a structurally sound and weather-tight replacement building, improved operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

The development represents a proportionate and well-considered response to the site's context and accords with local and national planning policy objectives. The limited harm arising from demolition is outweighed by the clear benefits:

- High-quality design enhancing rural landscape character.
- Sustainable replacement agricultural building.
- Ecological and biodiversity gains.
- Removal of a degraded building.
- Construction and local economic activity.

The scheme delivers environmental, social, and economic benefits. The proposal represents sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF.

7. Design, Scale, and Appearance

The proposed structure has been designed in a sympathetic rural vernacular, drawing on traditional Sussex forms, materials, and proportions. Its scale is modest and appropriate, and its massing helps retain a sense of openness. Boundary treatments reflect pre-application advice by avoiding tall timber panel fencing and instead using post-and-rail fencing with native planting.

The proposal enhances visual quality compared with the deteriorated existing structure. It avoids suburbanisation and respects landscape character and key views.

The development therefore complies with HDPF Policies 32/ 33 and the NPPF's requirement for high-quality, context-led design.

8. Landscape and Visual Impact

The agricultural building sits comfortably within the rural setting and does not encroach into open countryside. The building's height, massing and materials are appropriate, while visual impact is softened by retained vegetation and proposed native planting. The proposal does not harm rural character and provides a modest enhancement in design quality over the existing stable building.

Views from public areas are limited and will not be harmed. The development avoids suburbanisation and respects the area's rural character. Visual impact is therefore acceptable and capable of mitigation. The scheme therefore complies with Policy 26.

9. Ecology and Biodiversity

The site is within an area with potential for protected species. The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and required species surveys (including bats and Great Crested Newts, as requested by the LPA). The scheme will deliver at least **10% Biodiversity Net Gain**, supported by habitat creation, hedgerow enhancements, and ecological mitigation.

The proposals therefore comply with Policy 31 and national BNG requirements.

10. Access and Highways

The proposal uses an existing access point and does not increase traffic generation. Any required clearance works will be minimal and sensitive to the rural lane. Surfacing materials will be informal and appropriate to the countryside, in line with LPA advice. The scheme does not create highway safety concerns

11. Sustainable Development (NPPF)

The proposal delivers:

- **Social benefits:** improved working farm accommodation in place of a degraded structure.
- **Environmental benefits:** biodiversity enhancements, sustainable design, and uplift in landscape quality.
- **Economic benefits:** support for rural construction and local supply chains.

It therefore meets the NPPF's economic, social, and environmental objectives.

12. Conclusion

This Planning Statement demonstrates that the demolition of The Old Stable and construction of a replacement building is fully compliant with the Horsham District Planning Framework and the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal respects rural character, enhances the appearance of the site, and provides a sensitively designed structure that improves upon the existing situation.

The scheme accords with the NPPF and HDPF policies concerning heritage, design, and landscape character. It is therefore concluded that planning permission should be granted.

The proposed demolition and replacement building represent a landscape-sensitive and design-led enhancement to the site. The scheme accords with Policies 26, 28, 31, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, responds positively to the Local Planning Authority's pre-application advice, and delivers a high-quality home for 'Livestock' that respects and reinforces rural character.

Planning permission can therefore be **fully supported**.

13. Commentary of Impact of New Development in the countryside

The proposed development has been carefully designed to satisfy all relevant criteria for new development in the countryside. The owner has identified a real need for improved livestock accommodation at the farm. The proposed footprint and scale is essential to meet the functional needs for rural use.

In respect of demolition, the existing building is acknowledged to possess limited local historic interest; however, it is structurally compromised, substantially altered and of modest architectural quality. Its removal would result in negligible heritage harm. The loss of historic fabric is justified by condition and viability considerations and can be proportionately recorded if required. The character of the wider area would not be harmed by its removal.

In principle, the proposal accords with countryside protection policies as it replaces an existing building within an established curtilage rather than introducing isolated new development. It does not result in suburbanisation or encroachment into open countryside, and the site's established use and containment ensure that openness and landscape character are preserved.

In terms of scale, height and massing, the replacement livestock building is proportionate to the existing structure and sits comfortably within the established footprint and domestic envelope. Any ancillary structures are clearly subordinate, complying with Policy 28.

The design reflects rural vernacular through simple form, agricultural proportions and the use of sympathetic materials, ensuring compliance with Policies 32 and 33. The architecture avoids suburban detailing and instead reinforces the site's rural character.

Finally, landscape and visual impacts are limited. The development remains contained within the existing site boundaries, retains surrounding vegetation, avoids urban-style boundary treatments and preserves key views. Overall, the proposal represents a well-considered replacement that enhances the site while fully respecting countryside planning objectives.

14. Permitted Development and Class B Assessment

The applicant has carefully reviewed the Planning Officer's comments alongside the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), specifically Part 6, Class B and the Interpretation of Classes A–C at paragraph D.1(5)(a). Paragraph D.1(5)(a) confirms that the erection of any additional building within the curtilage of another building is to be treated as an extension of that building and not as an "original building." The applicant accepts that this provision governs how new agricultural buildings are categorised within the unit.

However, while this interpretation confirms that a new building would not be treated as an “original building,” it does not automatically render the proposal permitted under Class B. Class B permits development reasonably necessary for agriculture on units of less than 5 hectares, but this is subject to strict conditions and limitations. These include restrictions on the cumulative ground area of non-original buildings, specific limitations relating to the housing of livestock (including separation distances from protected buildings and functional necessity requirements), and the overarching requirement that the development be genuinely reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture on that unit.

The Planning Officer’s view appears to be that the proposed livestock building exceeds what can be undertaken under the Prior Approval regime, either due to the livestock housing provisions or because of the scale and functional characteristics of the building. While paragraph D.1(5)(a) clarifies categorisation, it does not disapply or override the specific operational and livestock-related limitations within Class B.

In light of this interpretation and the Officer’s position, the applicant acknowledges that the proposal may fall outside the scope of permitted development under Class B and therefore requires consideration through a Full Planning Application. This application has accordingly been prepared to robustly address the principle of development, agricultural justification, design, landscape impact and policy compliance in full.