



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/25/1953

Alders, Horsham Road, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3AA

DESCRIPTION:

Change of use of 2no. outbuildings to be used as self-contained holiday lets (Use class C3).
(Retrospective).

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/20/2131

Change of use of a redundant agricultural building to
a dance studio (Class Sui Generis).

Application Permitted on
18.02.2021

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site relates to Alders, Horsham Road, Steyning, located within the countryside to the north-west of Steyning. The site lies on the western side of the B2135 (Horsham Road), with vehicular access taken directly from this route. The land to the south falls within the South Downs National Park, such that the National Park boundary runs immediately opposite the site on the southern side of the B2135.

The site comprises a substantial residential curtilage set within an undulating plot with a large barn and two outbuildings. The most westerly of the two outbuildings subject to this application is positioned at a materially lower level than the remainder of the site, taking advantage of the natural topography. Levels vary across the land, with a noticeable fall across the site

The two detached outbuildings are located within the wider residential planning unit. They are physically well separated from one another, positioned approximately 58 metres apart. In relation to the principal dwelling (Alders), the nearer outbuilding is situated approximately 57 metres away, whilst the second is located approximately 86 metres from the main house. This degree of separation results in a dispersed arrangement across the wider plot, rather than a tight cluster of built form.

Both outbuildings are served by an internal access track that extends from the main access onto Horsham Road and runs through the site. An amenity pond is present within the grounds, contributing to the semi-rural character of the site and reinforcing its spacious, landscaped setting.

The site boundaries are well defined by mature and established trees and hedgerows on all sides. This vegetation provides strong visual containment, limiting wider views into and out of the site and reinforcing its verdant countryside character.

Overall, the site reads as a large, well-landscaped residential plot in a countryside location, with ancillary built form dispersed across an undulating and heavily screened parcel of land, immediately opposite the South Downs National Park boundary.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

This application retrospective permission for the change of use of two existing detached outbuildings to form two self-contained holiday let units (retrospective).

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 11 - Tourism and Cultural Facilities
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 30 - Protected Landscapes
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Steining Neighbourhood Plan (2022):

SNDP1 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
SNDP3 – Contribution to Character
SNDP4 - Improving Our Facilities

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council is currently in the process of reviewing its development plan however at this stage the emerging policies carry only limited weight in decision making. As the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for the determination of this application must be considered as to whether they are 'out of date' (NPPF paragraph 11d). This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, whether the Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (NPPF footnote 8).

All other policies within the HDPF as itemised above have been assessed against the NPPF and are considered to be consistent such that they continue to attract significant weight in decision making.

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 10: Flooding
Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 16: Protected Landscapes
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport

Policy 25: Parking
Policy 28: Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation
Strategic Policy 30: Enhancing Existing Employment
Policy 31: Rural Economic Development
Strategic Policy 34: Tourism Facilities and Visitor Accommodation

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

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

Planning Advice Notes:

Facilitating Appropriate Development
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: Comment [Summary]

The extent of earthworks and foundations etc. required to achieve the positioning of the buildings/structures is unclear. If works were principally re-configuration of existing structures, recent ground disturbance is likely to have been limited.

The building closest to the Horsham Road is set back slightly from the boundary cypress hedging. Its construction/placement and services excavations/connection will not foreseeably have impacted upon its continued health/function as a screen to this boundary.

The hedge is currently maintained quite high and will be somewhat oppressive in terms of early morning sunlight levels to the building.

The building to the North of the pond is adjacent to a belt of screening boundary vegetation that separates it from the arable field to the West. This belt of trees is of mixed species and condition. No individual trees of merit are in close proximity to the building. Some failed willow is present that may require future management.

Future pressures for lopping/removal of vegetation for a view/evening sunlight are unlikely to be significant within the context of proposed building use.

South Downs National Park Authority: No Comment (23.01.26)

WSCC Highways: No Objection [Summary]

In summary, the LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

No letters of Objection nor support have been received

Parish Comments:

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 the Development

The site lies within the countryside under HDPF Policy 26. Policy 26 seeks to protect the countryside for its intrinsic character and beauty, but it does not preclude all forms of development. Proposals that support rural economic activity and are compatible with countryside character may be acceptable in principle.

HDPF Policies 7, 10 and 11 support sustainable economic growth, including rural diversification and tourism-related development where compatible with environmental protection policies. Policy 11 in particular supports tourism and visitor accommodation that respects the character of the area and does not result in unacceptable impacts.

The proposal represents the re-use of existing buildings within an established residential curtilage. No new built form is proposed. The development would contribute modestly to the local visitor economy, consistent with Policies 7, 10 and 11 and SNP Policy SNDP4 (Improving Our Facilities).

The site lies outside but immediately opposite the boundary of the South Downs National Park. In accordance with HDPF Policy 30, development outside protected landscapes should not result in harm to their setting. Given the contained nature of the site and absence of new built form, the proposal would not undermine the setting of the National Park.

Subject to detailed considerations below, the principle of development is considered acceptable.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character from inappropriate development. Proposals should take into account townscape characteristics, with development seeking to provide an attractive, functional and accessible environment that complements the locally distinctive character of the district. Buildings should contribute to a sense of place, and should be of a scale, massing, and appearance that is of a high standard or design and layout which relates sympathetically to the landscape and built surroundings.

The application relates to two existing single-storey timber-clad outbuildings. They are modest in scale and domestic in character, with materials typical of rural ancillary structures.

The buildings are set within a spacious and well-landscaped plot, separated by approximately 58 metres and located 57 and 86 metres respectively from the principal dwelling. The most westerly building sits at a materially lower level, further reducing its visual prominence.

The site is strongly contained by mature trees and hedgerows on all boundaries, limiting visibility from Horsham Road and wider viewpoints. No external alterations of material significance are proposed.

Whilst the cumulative effect of the developments is to add two additional holiday lets to the site, the overall size of the site can accommodate the additional developments. The visual screening and physical separation between the accommodation on site ensures there is no materially harmful effect on the informal, rural character of the area or the ambience on the site, either from a guest perspective or from the perspective of the occupants of the main dwelling or its neighbours.

Given their form, scale, materials and the absence of additional built development, the proposal would not appear incongruous or urbanising within the rural setting. The development accords with HDPF Policies 25, 26, 32 and 33 and SNP Policy SNDP3 in that it preserves landscape character and reflects local distinctiveness.

Residential Amenity:

HDPF policies 23 and 33 of the HDPF requires consideration be had to the resulting amenities of neighbouring occupiers of nearby land and property, for example, through overlooking or noise.

The two outbuildings are well separated from each other and from the main dwelling. Their separation distances (57m and 86m from the dwelling; 58m between each other) ensure no undue overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing impact or noise conflict between occupants.

The site is located within a rural context with no immediately adjoining residential properties in close proximity to the buildings. The limited scale (two units only) means activity levels would be modest.

The proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to residential amenity and complies with HDPF Policies 32 and 33.

Trees and Landscaping:

The site benefits from mature and established boundary vegetation providing strong visual containment and ecological value. The Council's Arboricultural Officer has raised no objection to the proposal.

No tree removal or significant landscaping alterations are proposed. The proposal therefore accords with Policies 25 and 31 of the HDPF and SNP Policy SNDP1.

Highways Impacts:

Policy 40 of the HDPF states that transport access and ease of movement is a key factor in the performance of the local economy. The need for sustainable transport and safe access is vital to improve development across the district.

Policy 41 of the HDPF states that adequate parking facilities must be provided within the developments to meet the needs of the anticipated users.

Access is taken from the existing vehicular access onto the B2135 (Horsham Road). The development utilises the established access track within the site. West Sussex County Council Highways Authority has raised no objection. The scale of development (two units) is unlikely to generate significant vehicle movements. Parking provision can be accommodated within the spacious site. The proposal accords with HDPF Policies 40 and 41.

Economic Development and Tourism

The mixed use as holiday let accommodation contributes modestly to the local economy by supporting tourism and visitor stays in Steyning. This aligns with the broader economic objectives of the HDPF to promote sustainable economic development and tourism, particularly where there is no harm to local environment, amenity, or infrastructure.

Although the economic benefits are modest in scale, they nonetheless contribute to local visitor economy in accordance with development plan policies.

Water Neutrality:

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality.

On 31st October 2025 Natural England formally withdrew the 2021 Position Statement, citing a package of measures that they were satisfied would safeguard the Arun Valley sites. Principal amongst these measures is a reduction in the Southern Water abstraction licence 'by March 2026'. However, given the licence change has not yet taken place Horsham District Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, cannot yet be certain that new development will not result in adverse impacts on the Arun Valley sites.

To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000 litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching. Natural England standing advice dated 10 November 2025 raises no objection to using these savings to enable development to come forward. The standing advice clarifies that it functions as Natural England's formal response pursuant to Regulation 63(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to all relevant planning applications which seek to achieve water neutrality using the above Southern Water savings.

Officers have undertaken an Appropriate Assessment which demonstrates that the anticipated increase in mains water consumption from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day.

Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby complying with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

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. Off-site

gains (on unregistered sites) and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

The Applicant has demonstrated that the development is exempt from the requirement to achieve a minimum 10% BNG by reason of:

- The application is retrospective made under Section 73(A) of the Town and Country Planning Act.

Conclusions and Planning Balance:

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan in this instance comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and the Steyning Neighbourhood Development Plan, read alongside the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a material consideration.

The proposal relates to a retrospective change of use of 2no. existing detached outbuildings to be used as holiday let accommodation. The development does not involve any new built form, extensions, engineering works or alterations to site levels.

In assessing the proposal against the development plan there would be no unacceptable harm to:

- Countryside character (Policies 25 and 26)
- The setting of the South Downs National Park (Policy 30)
- Residential amenity (Policies 32 and 33)
- Highway safety (Policies 40 and 41)
- Trees, biodiversity or green infrastructure (Policies 25 and 31; SNP SNDP1)

When considered cumulatively, the proposal accords with the development plan when read as a whole and does not give rise to any material harm that would justify refusal. The absence of new development, together with the lack of technical objections and the modest economic benefits arising from the proposal, weigh in favour of the development.

Accordingly, it is concluded that there are no material considerations that indicate a decision other than in accordance with the development plan, and the planning balance weighs in favour of the grant of planning permission.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2. **Regulatory Condition:** The residential accommodation hereby permitted shall, when occupied as holiday accommodation be managed in accordance with the following:
 - i) The accommodation shall be occupied for holiday and short-term let purposes only;
 - ii) The accommodation shall not be occupied as a person's sole, or main place of residence;
 - iii) The accommodation shall not be occupied by any one person for a period exceeding 28 days in any calendar year;
 - iv) The accommodation shall at all times be managed and supervised by the owners / occupants of Alders
 - v) The owners / operators shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names of all occupiers of the accommodation on the site, and of their main home addresses, and shall make this information available to the Local Planning Authority upon request.

Reason: To maintain the availability of the site as short term holiday tourist accommodation in accordance with Policies 10, 11 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

3. **Regulatory Condition:** Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (and/or any Order revoking and/or re-enacting that Order) no development falling within Classes A, B, C, D or E of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Order shall take place to the holiday let accommodation hereby permitted without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and due to preserve the historic character of the site in accordance with Policies 33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

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/25/1953

Schedule of plans/documents **approved:**

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan		1.01 REV A	11.12.2025
Block plan		1.02	27.11.2025
Floor plan	Chanctonbury view existing and proposed floor plan	1.03	27.11.2025
Floor plan	Lake view existing and proposed floor plan	1.05	27.11.2025
Elevation plan	Chanctonbury view existing and proposed elevations	1.04	27.11.2025
Elevation plan	Lake view existing and proposed elevations	1.06	27.11.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Daniel Holmes Date: 03.03.26

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 06.03.2026