

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 12 September 2026 19:22:10 UTC+01:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/1182
Categories: Comments Received

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 12/09/2026 7:22 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Limekiln Farm Ghyll House Farm Broadwater Lane Copsale Horsham West Sussex RH13 6QW
Proposal:	Variation of Condition 1 of previously approved application DC/23/1325 (Construction of a stable block with associated storage and staff room facilities. Construction of machinery/hay storage barn and a water borehole plant room. Construction of a sand school) for variations to the machinery barn and stable block designs.
Case Officer:	Daniel Holmes

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address: Old Post Office Nuthurst Street, Nuthurst Horsham

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Member of the Public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Design - Other
Comments:	As constructed, the development that is the subject of this retrospective application is a material departure from the scheme previously approved by the Council, both in its appearance and in the nature and amount of accommodation now incorporated within

the buildings. Accordingly, it would seem appropriate for the Council to consider this application as variations to the original application, rather than as minor changes to what has actually been constructed.

The application represents a significant departure from the design and landscape justification originally put before the Council. The original Planning Statement supporting DC/23/1325 placed considerable emphasis upon the "rural and tranquil character of this countryside location." In particular, paragraphs 3.7 and 3.9 stated: "It is important for the benefit of the animals and for those using the public right of way at Limekiln Farm that new structures respect the rural, tranquil nature of the landscape."

It went on to explain that, because of the proposed "colours and finishes", the buildings would "blend in with the surrounding area." Most importantly, paragraph 3.9 expressly stated: "The proposed stable block and the barn will be single storey in design..."

The development for which retrospective approval is now sought differs materially from that description. For example, the current Planning Statement acknowledges that the machinery barn approved under DC/23/1325 was to be clad with vertical American western cedar timber slats in a "Yorkshire" pattern. Instead, it has been constructed with black corrugated metal cladding. On a building of this substantial scale, the resulting appearance is considerably more industrial and warehouse-like than the timber-clad rural building originally presented to the Council.

This is particularly important given the isolated countryside location at the end of a rural track and the proximity of the public right of way. The applicant's original case for the development relied specifically upon the proposed design, colours and finishes enabling these large structures to blend into their rural surroundings. It would therefore seem appropriate for the Council to consider whether or not the landscape and visual impact of the development as actually constructed has fallen short of the prospective landscape and visual impact on which the original application - and the Council's approval - relied. In doing so, it should be remembered that design, appearance, materials and character are expressly identified by the Council as material planning considerations.

The application introduces a substantial mezzanine floor and change in the character of the barn that conflicts with the development for which permission was given. Although the introduction of a substantial mezzanine floor into the machinery/hay barn is described as a "hayloft", the application also confirms that it incorporates both a staircase and a separate office area, features which suggest that it is not in fact a "hayloft" at all.

The introduction of the "hayloft" is also difficult to reconcile with the unequivocal statement made in support of the original application that the barn would be "single storey in design." The mezzanine also appears substantial in relation to the overall building. It would therefore seem appropriate for the Council to consider whether this represents a materially different form and intensity of accommodation from the machinery/hay storage building originally considered acceptable.

While the applicant states that an office is required so that legally required agricultural-business documents may be stored securely, there is no reason advanced as to why this is required to be done in the "hayloft", given that other office accommodation has already been approved elsewhere on the site in connection with DC/25/0883 (granted permission on 28 July 2026). It therefore seems appropriate for the Council to require a clear functional justification for the scale of the mezzanine and office accommodation, including why such accommodation is reasonably necessary within this particular barn.

There are substantial doubts as to whether the scale and internal arrangement of the altered barn are reasonably proportionate to the agricultural/equestrian operation they are said to serve. While the retrospective statement explains that the additional mezzanine is necessary to maximise hay storage and states that a shortage of hay supply in the previous season created a requirement for maximum possible storage, observational evidence supports the contention that over recent months this site has normally hosted no more than the same three horses grazing. Given the substantial size of the building and additional mezzanine storage now proposed retrospectively, it would seem reasonable for the applicant to be required to provide objective evidence demonstrating the operational requirement for this amount of storage, having regard to the scale of the equestrian/agricultural operation actually undertaken - and envisaged - at Limekiln Farm.

This is particularly relevant in a countryside location, where the justification for the scale and need for rural development is an important planning consideration. The Council has previously treated the "justification for need and scale" and landscape impact as key issues when assessing rural buildings in the countryside.

The stable block has also changed from the approved development. The retrospective application seeks approval for an additional stable and repositioned windows resulting from changes to the staff dayroom, WC and washdown facility. It introduces a number of altered window arrangements, including windows serving the staff dayroom and washdown area.

Taken individually, some of these alterations might appear relatively modest. However, it would be appropriate for the Council to assess their cumulative effect alongside the

mezzanine, staircase, office and other alterations, and to consider whether the buildings as now constructed remain consistent with the limited rural/equestrian purposes for which permission was originally granted.

Given the isolated countryside location, there is a substantial case for imposing robust conditions restricting the buildings to their authorised agricultural/equestrian purposes and preventing their use as residential accommodation or other non-agricultural commercial business without a further express grant of planning permission.

The altered configuration of the barn raises fire safety considerations over and above those considered under the original application. Condition 6 of DC/23/1325 was imposed specifically to ensure the safe development and operation of the site and required details of access and circulation for fire and rescue vehicles. In subsequently considering that condition, the Council noted that West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service was satisfied with fire-appliance access and turning arrangements and that an alternative firefighting water supply would be provided by a pond capable of holding up to 65,000 litres.

However, the building now requiring retrospective approval is materially different internally from the one originally approved. It now incorporates additional hay storage at mezzanine level, an office and staircase. The applicant also confirms that batteries and electrical equipment associated with the solar roof panels are located in the ground-floor machinery store underneath the mezzanine. Given the combination of machinery, electrical/battery equipment, substantial quantities of hay/haylage and occupied office accommodation within the altered building, it must surely be incumbent upon the Council to consult West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service again, or otherwise obtain appropriate specialist confirmation that the previously accepted fire and rescue arrangements remain adequate for the building in its altered form. It also seems appropriate for the Council to take into account the rural setting and surrounding vegetation and mature trees when re-assessing the consequences of a significant fire at this isolated site.

It is particularly concerning that the retrospective application also seeks the removal of Conditions 10 and 11 of DC/23/1325, stating that this would enable the Planning Authority to reconsider whether the conditions are necessary. These were not, however, incidental conditions.

Condition 10 expressly prevented development above ground-floor slab level until a suitably qualified consultant had prepared a mitigation scheme demonstrating how borehole water would be treated to meet the requirements specified by the condition. It also required the borehole and mitigation scheme to be implemented

before first occupation and thereafter maintained and operated. The stated reason included ensuring water neutrality and avoiding adverse effects upon the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Condition 11 similarly prohibited development above ground-floor slab level until a Private Water Supply Management Plan had been submitted to and approved by the Council. That plan was required to deal with water sampling and testing, risk assessment, maintenance and servicing, treatment equipment, record keeping and ongoing annual review.

The documentation on the planning portal does not appear to provide evidence that either Condition 10 or Condition 11 was discharged before construction progressed. Indeed, the February 2025 discharge application DISC/24/0212 dealt expressly with Conditions 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13 and 14, but not Conditions 10 or 11. It would therefore seem appropriate for the Council to establish clearly:

- whether Conditions 10 and 11 were complied with at the construction stage at which they took effect;
- whether the development has already progressed beyond that stage;
- whether the borehole/private water supply is now operational;
- what has changed in planning policy, environmental circumstances or technical evidence since the Council considered these safeguards necessary in August 2024; and
- whether the relevant environmental and private-water-supply consultees support their removal.

The fact that removal may now have been suggested for consideration does not, in itself, establish that the safeguards originally imposed are no longer necessary.

The applicant's July 2026 Planning Statement expressly describes this as a Section 73A application seeking approval for "retrospective adjustments" to DC/23/1325 and records that the application followed a recommendation from the Council's Enforcement Team. While appreciating that the retrospective nature of an application is not, of itself, a reason for refusal, nor should the fact that the alterations have already been carried out weigh in favour of approving them.

It therefore seems appropriate for the Council to consider whether the development as actually constructed would have been considered acceptable had this design been presented at the outset. Factors to be considered in such an assessment should include a cumulative evaluation of the effect of:

- the extensive black corrugated metal cladding;
- the substantial mezzanine/hay loft;
- the office and staircase;
- the altered machinery barn doors;
- the additional stable;

the revised windows and internal accommodation;
the increased storage capacity; and
the proposed removal of Conditions 10 and 11.

Conclusion

The original permission required the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. The present application demonstrates that material elements of the development were instead constructed differently; in effect, the development under consideration in the current application is one that has not only been built without planning permission, it has been built in seemingly wilful opposition to some of the key elements of the original permission

It would therefore seem appropriate for retrospective permission for the alterations to be refused unless the Council can satisfy itself, on appropriate evidence, that the development as actually constructed remains justified in scale and function, is acceptable in its countryside and landscape setting, and does not undermine the safeguards imposed through the original permission. In particular, this would call for the Council:

- (i) to re-assess the landscape impact of the black corrugated-clad buildings against the rural design and landscape case upon which DC/23/1325 was originally presented;
 - (ii) to require proper justification for the scale and operational necessity of the mezzanine, additional hay storage and office accommodation;
 - (iii) to consider the cumulative implications of the alterations to both buildings and impose appropriate restrictions against unauthorised residential use;
 - (iv) to reconsider fire and rescue arrangements in light of the building's altered internal configuration and uses; and
 - (v) not to remove Conditions 10 and 11 without clear technical and environmental evidence demonstrating that those safeguards are no longer necessary, together with clarification of their compliance history.
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Kind regards

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