



Planning Statement

Change of use from residential to veterinary practice

1 Woodcot, New Road, Billingshurst

prepared by

WPS Planning

Planning Statement
3 Station Road



Prepared by:	Doug Wright
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of one single storey dwelling within the residential curtilage of 3 Station Road, Billingshurst.

1.2 The application follows the refusal of planning permission under reference DC/25/1946, which sought the demolition of the existing dwelling and redevelopment of the site to provide three dwellings. That proposal was refused on the grounds of:

- Unacceptable harm to neighbouring residential amenity
- Harm to protected trees through encroachment into Root Protection Areas
- Insufficient ecological information in respect of bats

1.3 This revised application does not seek to reintroduce that form of development. Instead, it presents a fundamentally different and significantly reduced scheme, both in terms of scale and impact. The proposal has been comprehensively redesigned from first principles, taking full account of the Council's previous concerns and the technical constraints of the site.

1.4 The key revisions include:

- A reduction in the number of dwellings from three to one
- Retention of the existing dwelling on site
- A transition from two storey development to a single storey form
- A revised layout that responds directly to arboricultural and neighbouring amenity considerations

1.5 The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate that the revised proposal:

- Addresses and overcomes each of the previous reasons for refusal
- Complies with the relevant policies of the Development Plan
- Represents sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

1.6 This statement should therefore be read as a comprehensive justification of a materially improved scheme, which has been carefully designed to ensure policy compliance and acceptability in planning terms.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The application site relates to 3 Station Road, a detached residential property located on the northern side of Station Road within the settlement of Billingshurst. The site lies wholly within the defined built-up area boundary, where residential development is supported in principle under the Development Plan.

2.2 Station Road is a well-established residential street characterised by a varied mix of detached and semi detached dwellings, generally set within relatively spacious plots. The pattern of development along this frontage is typically of a lower density, with buildings set back from the road and separated by gaps that contribute to a sense of openness.

2.3 To the rear of the site lies Cleve Way, which exhibits a contrasting pattern of development, comprising more compact terraced housing. The relationship between these two areas is an important contextual consideration, as the site effectively forms a transitional interface between differing urban grain and density.

2.4 The existing dwelling on the site is positioned toward the eastern side of the plot and is orientated broadly north/south, with a substantial rear garden extending toward the west and north. The site benefits from an existing vehicular access from Station Road, which is shared with neighbouring

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properties.

- 2.5 A public footpath runs along the western boundary of the site, providing pedestrian connectivity between Station Road and the wider settlement. This contributes to the site's accessibility and reinforces its sustainable location.
- 2.6 The site is not located within a Conservation Area, nor is it subject to any heritage designations or identified flood risk constraints. However, there are a number of mature trees within and adjacent to the site, including specimens protected by Tree Preservation Orders. These trees make a positive contribution to the character and visual amenity of the area and represent an important material consideration in the design of any development.
- 2.7 The surrounding context is therefore characterised by:
- A mix of dwelling types and densities
 - A transition between lower-density frontage development and higher-density rear development
 - Established residential character with strong landscaping features
 - Good accessibility to local services, facilities, and transport routes
- 2.8 In summary, the site represents a sustainable and well-located residential plot, capable of accommodating additional development, provided that it is sensitively designed to respond to its context and constraints.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The most relevant planning history relating to the site is as follows:

- DC/25/1946 – Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 1 no. detached dwelling and 1 pair of semi-detached dwellings (3 dwellings total) – Refused

3.2 This application followed pre-application discussions (ref. PE/25/0027), which had initially explored the potential for a higher density form of development on the site. Notwithstanding this, the formal application for three dwellings was ultimately refused by the Local Planning Authority.

3.3 The refusal was based on three principal grounds:

1. Residential Amenity:

The proposed development was considered to result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring occupiers, particularly those to the rear (Cleve Way), due to the combined effects of insufficient separation distances, overlooking from first-floor windows, and an overbearing sense of enclosure arising from the scale and siting of the buildings.

2. Impact on Trees:

The proposal failed to demonstrate that development could be accommodated without encroachment into the Root Protection Area (RPA) of protected trees, including a mature ash tree of recognised public amenity value. The scheme was therefore found to conflict with the requirements of BS5837:2012 and Policies 31 and 33 of the HDPF.

3. Ecology (Bats):

Insufficient ecological information was submitted to demonstrate

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that the demolition of the existing dwelling, identified as having moderate bat roost potential, would not adversely affect protected species. The absence of bat emergence surveys meant that the Local Planning Authority could not rule out harm at the determination stage

- 3.4 While the principle of residential development on the site was accepted, the refusal clearly identified specific and focused concerns relating to design, layout, and supporting information, rather than a fundamental objection to development of the site itself.
- 3.5 This is an important distinction. The current application has been prepared with full regard to the findings of the previous decision and represents a direct and proportionate response to those concerns. In particular:
- The quantum of development has been significantly reduced from three dwellings to one
 - The existing dwelling is retained, thereby removing the need for demolition and associated ecological impacts
 - The layout has been fundamentally reconfigured to avoid conflict with protected trees
 - The scale has been reduced to a single storey form, directly addressing previous amenity concerns
- 3.6 Accordingly, the planning history of the site should not be seen as a barrier to development, but rather as providing a clear framework for an acceptable scheme, which the current proposal seeks to deliver.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 1 no. detached single storey dwelling within the residential curtilage of 3 Station Road, Billingshurst.
- 4.2 The proposal represents a comprehensive redesign of the previously refused scheme, with a clear emphasis on reducing built form, respecting site constraints, and delivering a policy-compliant form of development.

Overview

- 4.3 The key components of the proposal are as follows:
- Retention of the existing dwelling at 3 Station Road
 - Construction of one new dwelling only, replacing the previously proposed three units
 - A single storey form of development
 - Utilisation of the existing access arrangement from Station Road
 - Provision of associated private amenity space and parking
- 4.4 The proposal therefore represents a low-density, subservient addition within the plot, rather than a comprehensive redevelopment of the site.

Layout and Siting

- 4.5 The proposed dwelling is positioned within the plot to ensure an appropriate relationship with:
- The existing host dwelling
 - Neighbouring properties, particularly to the rear (Cleve Way)
 - Retained trees and their Root Protection Areas

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- 4.6 The layout has been carefully informed by arboricultural and amenity considerations. In particular:
- The building is located outside identified Root Protection Areas, ensuring no encroachment into sensitive tree rooting zones
 - The dwelling is offset from shared boundaries, maintaining a suitable degree of separation
 - The orientation avoids direct alignment with neighbouring rear elevations, reducing potential for overlooking or visual intrusion
- 4.7 The site layout drawing demonstrates a clear and logical arrangement that balances built form with open space and landscape features.

Scale and Appearance

- 4.8 A defining characteristic of the proposal is its single storey scale, which represents a deliberate response to the concerns raised in the previous refusal.
- 4.9 The dwelling has been designed to:
- Present a low-profile form, minimising visual impact
 - Remain subordinate to the existing dwelling
 - Avoid any perception of overdevelopment or dominance within the plot
- 4.10 The reduction in height ensures that the development does not give rise to overlooking, loss of privacy, or an overbearing relationship with neighbouring properties.
- 4.11 In terms of appearance, the dwelling adopts a simple and sympathetic architectural approach, utilising materials and detailing that reflect the character of the surrounding area. This ensures that the development

integrates effectively with its context, in accordance with good design principles.

Access, Parking and Servicing

- 4.12 The proposal utilises the existing vehicular access from Station Road, which currently serves the site and adjacent properties. No alterations to the access arrangement are proposed.
- 4.13 Given the modest scale of development, the additional traffic generated by a single dwelling would be minimal and would not materially affect highway safety or the operation of the local road network.
- 4.14 Parking provision is accommodated within the site in accordance with local standards, and sufficient space is available for:
- On-site vehicle parking
 - Cycle storage
 - Refuse and recycling storage
- 4.15 These elements are integrated into the layout in a manner that does not detract from the overall appearance or functionality of the development.

Trees and Landscaping

- 4.16 The proposal has been developed with full regard to the presence of protected trees within and adjacent to the site.
- 4.17 A key design principle has been the avoidance of harm, achieved through:
- Locating the dwelling outside Root Protection Areas
 - Retaining existing trees of amenity value
 - Incorporating appropriate protection measures during construction

- 4.18 The submitted Tree Protection Plan demonstrates how retained trees will be safeguarded throughout the development process.
- 4.19 The proposal therefore not only avoids harm, but also maintains the verdant character of the site, which is an important component of the local townscape.

Ecology

- 4.20 A further key aspect of the proposal is the retention of the existing dwelling, which was previously identified as having moderate bat roost potential.
- 4.21 By avoiding demolition, the proposal:
- Removes any direct impact on a potential bat roost
 - Eliminates the need for further bat emergence surveys
 - Adopts a precautionary, policy-compliant approach to ecological protection
- 4.22 This represents a clear and robust response to the ecological concerns raised in the previous refusal.

Summary

- 4.23 In summary, the proposal delivers a carefully considered, low-impact form of development that:
- Significantly reduces the scale and intensity of development
 - Responds directly to site constraints, including trees and neighbouring properties
 - Avoids the issues that led to the refusal of the previous scheme
- 4.24 The result is a modest, sustainable and policy-compliant development, appropriate to its context and capable of being accommodated without harm.

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 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy
 - 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 Council Planning Framework (HDPF) – Adopted November 2015
 - Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
 - Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
 - Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
 - Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
 - Policy 33 - Development Principles
 - Policy 40 – Sustainable Transport
 - Policy 41 – Parking
- Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan
 - Policy BILL 1 – Built up Area Boundary
 - Policy BILL 2 – Housing Design & Character
 - Policy BILL 3 – Local Character and Heritage
 - Policy BILL 7 – Trees, Hedges & Woodland
 - Policy BILL 14 – Residential Parking Provision

6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 6.1 The site is located within the defined built-up area boundary of Billingshurst, identified as a larger settlement within the settlement hierarchy under Policy 3 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF). As confirmed within the Council's own assessment of the previous application, the principle of residential development on the site is accepted. The proposal therefore accords with the spatial strategy of directing development to sustainable locations where services and facilities are readily accessible.
- 6.2 The development comprises a modest form of infill within an established residential curtilage and does not represent encroachment into the countryside or conflict with any strategic or environmental designations. It is therefore consistent with Policies 1 and 3 of the HDPF, which together seek to deliver sustainable patterns of development.
- 6.3 In addition, significant weight must be afforded to the fact that the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, with supply identified at approximately 1.7 years. In such circumstances, the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged.
- 6.4 Paragraph 11(d) requires that permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusal, or any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 6.5 In this case, the proposal would deliver an additional dwelling within a sustainable settlement. Whilst modest in scale, this nonetheless contributes toward addressing the identified housing shortfall and attracts weight in favour of the development. The acceptability of the proposal therefore turns on whether any residual harms would outweigh these benefits.

Design and Character

- 6.6 Policy 32 of the HDPF seeks high quality design, while Policy 33 requires development to respect local character, integrate effectively with its surroundings, and avoid overdevelopment.
- 6.7 The Council's previous concerns related in part to the density and prominence of the earlier scheme, noting that development along Station Road is characterised by a more spacious and less intensive pattern of development, and that the introduction of three dwellings would result in a more dominant built form.
- 6.8 The proposal represents a clear and proportionate response to those concerns. The reduction from three dwellings to a single unit materially alters the quantum of development and results in a form of development that is commensurate with the character of the area.
- 6.9 The proposed dwelling is single storey in form, ensuring that it remains visually subservient within the plot and does not compete with the scale or presence of surrounding built form. The modest footprint and restrained massing ensure that the development sits comfortably within the site and maintains an appropriate balance between built development and open space.
- 6.10 In appeal decisions, Inspectors consistently attach significant weight to reductions in scale and massing where these directly address concerns of overdevelopment. In this instance, the proposal achieves a form of development that is proportionate, contextually responsive, and visually contained.
- 6.11 Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF and the design objectives of the NPPF, in particular paragraph 135, which requires development to be sympathetic to local character and maintain a strong sense of place.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 6.12 Policy 33 of the HDPF requires that development does not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. This includes consideration of overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, and overbearing impact.
- 6.13 The previous refusal was firmly grounded in the relationship between the proposed dwellings and neighbouring properties to the rear, with the Council identifying that the combination of two storey scale, proximity to the shared boundary, and substandard separation distances (circa 17–18m) would result in a harmful loss of privacy and an overbearing effect.
- 6.14 The proposal has been fundamentally redesigned to address these concerns.
- 6.15 Firstly, the development is now entirely single storey, which is a decisive and material change. Inspectors frequently place significant weight on the distinction between single and two storey development in assessing amenity impacts. The absence of first-floor accommodation removes the primary source of overlooking and materially reduces any perception of intrusion.
- 6.16 Secondly, the reduced height and massing ensure that the development does not give rise to an overbearing impact. The building presents as a low-profile addition, which would not dominate the outlook from neighbouring properties or result in any undue sense of enclosure.
- 6.17 Thirdly, the siting and orientation of the dwelling have been carefully arranged to minimise its relationship with neighbouring rear elevations. The proposal avoids direct window-to-window relationships and ensures that any views are oblique and filtered.
- 6.18 Fourthly, the overall intensity of development has been substantially reduced. The previous scheme introduced three dwellings, with associated levels of activity, noise, and movement. The current proposal introduces a single dwelling, resulting in a materially lower level of activity and associated impacts.

- 6.19 Taken together, these changes represent a complete and effective resolution of the previous amenity concerns. The proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring occupiers and would provide an appropriate standard of amenity for future residents.
- 6.20 The development therefore complies with Policy 33 of the HDPF and paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF, which requires development to create a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Trees and Landscaping

- 6.21 Policies 31 and 33 of the HDPF require the retention and protection of trees of amenity value and expect development to be designed in accordance with BS5837:2012.
- 6.22 The Council's previous refusal identified that the earlier scheme involved unacceptable encroachment into the Root Protection Area (RPA) of a protected ash tree, which would likely result in harm to its health and longevity.
- 6.23 The proposal has been informed by arboricultural constraints from the outset and represents a design-led response to these issues.
- 6.24 The layout has been amended to ensure that the proposed dwelling is located entirely outside the RPAs of retained trees, thereby avoiding direct conflict with root protection requirements. The submitted Tree Protection Plan demonstrates that RPAs can be protected through the implementation of appropriate fencing, exclusion zones, and construction methodologies.
- 6.25 In appeal decisions, Inspectors regularly support proposals where tree impacts have been avoided through design rather than mitigation. In this case, the proposal adopts precisely that approach.
- 6.26 Furthermore, the reduction in the scale and intensity of development significantly reduces the likelihood of indirect impacts, such as future pressure for tree removal or pruning. The relationship between the proposed dwelling

and retained trees is now considered to be sustainable in the long term.

- 6.27 The proposal therefore complies with Policies 31 and 33 of the HDPF and would not result in harm to trees of recognised amenity value.

Ecology

- 6.28 Policy 31 of the HDPF and the NPPF require that development conserves biodiversity and avoids harm to protected species.

- 6.29 The previous refusal was based on insufficient ecological information, specifically the absence of bat emergence surveys for a building identified as having moderate roost potential.

- 6.30 The proposal addresses this issue through avoidance, which is the most robust and preferred approach within the mitigation hierarchy.

- 6.31 The existing dwelling is retained in full and is not subject to demolition or alteration. As such:

- The structure identified as having bat roost potential remains unaffected
- There is no loss of potential roosting habitat
- There is no risk of disturbance to bats

- 6.32 In these circumstances, there is no longer a pathway for harm, and the previous reason for refusal is effectively neutralised.

- 6.33 Inspectors routinely find that where a proposal avoids impact on a potential roost, the requirement for further survey work falls away. This is consistent with the approach set out in the NPPF (paragraphs 180–186), which seeks to avoid harm to biodiversity in the first instance.

- 6.34 The proposal therefore complies with Policy 31 of the HDPF and relevant national policy.

Overall Planning Balance

- 6.35 The proposal represents a materially different scheme to that previously refused. It is not a marginal amendment, but a comprehensive redesign that directly addresses each of the reasons for refusal.
- 6.36 The key changes include:
- A reduction from three dwellings to one
 - A move from two storey to single storey development
 - Retention of the existing dwelling
 - A layout informed by arboricultural and amenity constraints
- 6.37 As a result, the proposal no longer gives rise to the adverse impacts previously identified in respect of residential amenity, trees, or ecology.
- 6.38 In the context of paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, the proposal delivers a clear benefit in the form of an additional dwelling within a sustainable location. Whilst modest, this benefit attracts weight, particularly in light of the Council's housing land supply shortfall.
- 6.39 There are no longer any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh this benefit, nor are there any policies within the Framework that provide a clear reason for refusal.
- 6.40 Accordingly, the proposal represents sustainable development when assessed against the Framework as a whole, and there is a clear presumption in favour of granting planning permission.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 This application proposes a fundamentally revised and materially reduced form of development at 3 Station Road, comprising a single-storey dwelling within the curtilage of an existing residential property.

7.2 The proposal has been specifically designed in direct response to the previous refusal of application DC/25/1946 and represents a clear and proportionate evolution of the scheme, rather than a reiteration of the earlier development. The key concerns previously identified by the Local Planning Authority, namely impacts upon neighbouring residential amenity, harm to protected trees, and uncertainty regarding impacts on bats, have all been comprehensively and demonstrably addressed.

7.3 In particular:

- The impact on neighbouring amenity has been resolved through the adoption of a single-storey form, the removal of all first floor overlooking, and a significant reduction in scale and massing. The development can no longer reasonably be described as overbearing or intrusive, and it now provides a relationship with neighbouring properties that is both appropriate and policy compliant.
- The impact on protected trees has been addressed through a revised layout that positions all built development outside Root Protection Areas, in accordance with BS5837:2012 and supported by a robust Tree Protection Plan. The proposal avoids both direct and indirect harm and ensures the long-term retention of trees that contribute positively to the character of the area.
- The ecological concerns relating to bats have been resolved through design-led avoidance. The retention of the existing dwelling removes any potential impact on a structure previously identified as

having bat roost potential, thereby eliminating the need for further survey work and ensuring full compliance with Policy 31 and national policy.

- 7.4 The proposal therefore no longer gives rise to any of the adverse impacts that formed the basis of the previous refusal. Instead, it represents a modest, well-considered and policy-compliant form of residential development.
- 7.5 In terms of the wider planning balance, the site lies within a sustainable location within the built-up area of Billingshurst, where the principle of development is accepted. The proposal would deliver an additional dwelling and make a small but meaningful contribution toward housing supply at a time when the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.
- 7.6 In the context of paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, and having regard to the Development Plan as a whole, there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal, nor are there any policies which provide a clear reason for refusal.
- 7.7 Accordingly, the proposal represents sustainable development and there is a clear presumption in favour of granting planning permission, and it is therefore respectfully concluded that planning permission should be approved.