

Planning Statement

Replacement Stable Barn at Furzeffield Farm, Honeybridge Lane, Ashurst, West Sussex

Prepared by: **Mr Adam Cove & Mrs Imogen Cove**

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the replacement of existing stable buildings at Furzeffield Farm, Honeybridge Lane, Ashurst, West Sussex, with a single American barn-style stable building.

The application seeks permission to replace a number of existing stable structures currently serving the established equestrian enterprise at the site. The existing buildings are fragmented, visually untidy, and in a poor state of repair. The proposal consolidates the existing facilities into a single purpose-built structure that will improve the functionality, appearance, and operation of the yard.

The proposal forms part of the continued investment and improvement of the existing rural equestrian business operating from Furzeffield Farm.

This statement explains the background to the proposal, the planning context of the site, the need for the development, and assesses the proposal against relevant national and local planning policy.

2. Site and Surroundings

Furzeffield Farm is located on Honeybridge Lane, Ashurst, within a rural countryside setting outside of the defined built-up area boundary.

The site comprises an established equestrian yard with existing stable buildings, associated hardstanding, paddocks, access tracks, and related rural infrastructure. The wider holding also includes other rural business uses associated with the operation of the farm and surrounding land.

The existing stable accommodation has evolved incrementally over time and currently consists of several separate stable structures spread across the site. These buildings are of varying age and condition and present a fragmented and inefficient layout.

The application site is well contained within the existing developed area of the equestrian yard and benefits from an established vehicular access and existing servicing infrastructure.

3. The Proposal

The application seeks full planning permission for the replacement of the existing stable buildings with a single American barn-style stable structure.

The proposed building measures approximately 20 metres by 15 metres and incorporates:

- Internal stable boxes
- Central access aisle
- Wash bay
- Tack room

The proposal consolidates the existing equestrian accommodation into one cohesive structure, resulting in a more efficient operational layout and improved visual appearance.

The building has been designed in a simple agricultural/equestrian style appropriate to its rural setting, incorporating:

- Green box-profile steel roof sheeting
- Vertical timber weatherboarding
- Traditional pitched roof form

The proposal does not introduce a new use to the site and does not intensify the existing equestrian activity. The building is intended solely to replace the existing stable provision currently operating from the site.

The proposed development utilises the existing access arrangements and established infrastructure serving the yard.

Surface water and foul drainage associated with the development will connect into the existing drainage system serving the site.

4. Planning History and Pre-Application Discussions

The wider site benefits from an established planning history associated with the equestrian use and related rural enterprises.

Pre-application advice was sought from Horsham District Council under reference PE/25/0048.

Within the pre-application response, the Council acknowledged that replacing the existing stable buildings with a single American barn-style structure would:

- Allow for a neater site layout
- Improve the appearance of the site
- Consolidate existing development

The Council also acknowledged that the replacement structure would occupy a smaller overall footprint than the combined existing buildings.

The proposal submitted under this application has been developed having regard to the comments and recommendations provided through the pre-application process.

In addition to pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority, specialist consultant input has been obtained where required to support the application.

A bat survey has been undertaken in respect of the existing stable buildings and confirmed that there was no evidence of bat roosting or bat activity within the structures.

5. Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports sustainable rural development and recognises the importance of supporting a prosperous rural economy.

Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should enable:

- The sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses
- The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses
- Sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments

The proposal directly supports an established rural equestrian enterprise and represents investment into the improvement and rationalisation of existing facilities.

The proposal makes efficient use of an already developed part of the site and replaces outdated and poor-quality structures with a single well-designed building more appropriate to the character and appearance of the rural setting.

The proposal therefore accords with the objectives of the NPPF.

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF)

Policy 1 – Sustainable Development

Policy 1 supports sustainable development that improves the economic, social, and environmental conditions within the district.

The proposal supports an existing rural business, improves operational efficiency, and results in visual enhancements to the site.

Policy 4 – Economic Development

Policy 4 supports sustainable economic development within the district.

The continued investment in the equestrian facilities at Furze Field Farm contributes positively to the rural economy and supports the ongoing viability of the established business.

Policy 25 – The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Policy 25 seeks to protect landscape character and environmental quality.

The proposal consolidates existing development within the established yard area and replaces a fragmented collection of structures with a single cohesive building. The proposed materials and design are appropriate to the rural context and will improve the visual appearance of the site.

Policy 26 – Countryside Protection

The site lies outside the built-up area boundary where development must demonstrate an essential need for a countryside location.

The proposal directly supports the operation of the established equestrian use already operating from the site and does not introduce unrelated development into the countryside.

The development replaces existing stable accommodation with improved facilities necessary for the continued operation and management of the equestrian enterprise.

Policy 33 – Development Principles

Policy 33 requires development to function well, complement local character, and achieve high standards of design.

The proposal responds positively to the existing rural character of the site through its scale, form, and choice of materials. The consolidation of buildings into a single structure creates a more coherent and visually appropriate arrangement.

6. Need and Justification for the Development

There is a clear operational and visual justification for the proposed development.

The existing stable buildings are in poor condition and have evolved incrementally over time, resulting in an inefficient and visually fragmented arrangement.

The proposed replacement barn will:

- Improve the day-to-day operation of the equestrian business
- Provide modern and practical stable accommodation
- Improve welfare and management facilities
- Create a more organised and efficient site layout
- Enhance the visual appearance of the equestrian yard
- Reduce the overall developed footprint

The proposal represents a logical and proportionate investment into an established rural business.

Importantly, the proposal does not intensify the use of the site and does not result in encroachment into undeveloped countryside.

7. Ecology and Environmental Considerations

A bat survey has been undertaken in respect of the buildings proposed for replacement.

The survey concluded that there was no evidence of bat roosting or bat activity within the structures.

The proposal is therefore not expected to result in impacts upon protected species.

The application is accompanied by the relevant supporting environmental information, including Biodiversity Net Gain information and a Water Neutrality Statement, in accordance with current local requirements.

8. Consultation and Engagement

Pre-application discussions were undertaken with Horsham District Council prior to the submission of this application.

The proposal has evolved following consideration of the advice received from the Local Planning Authority.

The applicant has also engaged relevant professional consultants in relation to ecological matters and supporting technical information.

Given the nature and scale of the proposal, together with its position within an existing established equestrian yard, no wider public consultation has been undertaken prior to submission.

9. Conclusion

The proposed replacement stable barn represents a clear improvement to the existing equestrian facilities at Furzefield Farm.

The proposal replaces outdated and poor-quality stable buildings with a single well-designed structure that:

- Improves operational efficiency
- Enhances the visual appearance of the site
- Supports an established rural business
- Consolidates built form within the existing yard
- Reduces the overall footprint of development
- Respects the character of the countryside

The proposal accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

The development represents an appropriate and sustainable form of rural development and it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.

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