

MME PLANNING SERVICES

Erection of a mixed-use barn building to be used for the stabling of horses and the storage of hay, plant, and machinery and creation of a sandschool.

at

Pinkhurst, Pinkhurst Lane, Slinfold, West Sussex,
RH13 0QR

Planning Statement

Ref: P-074a

July 2026

Version 1

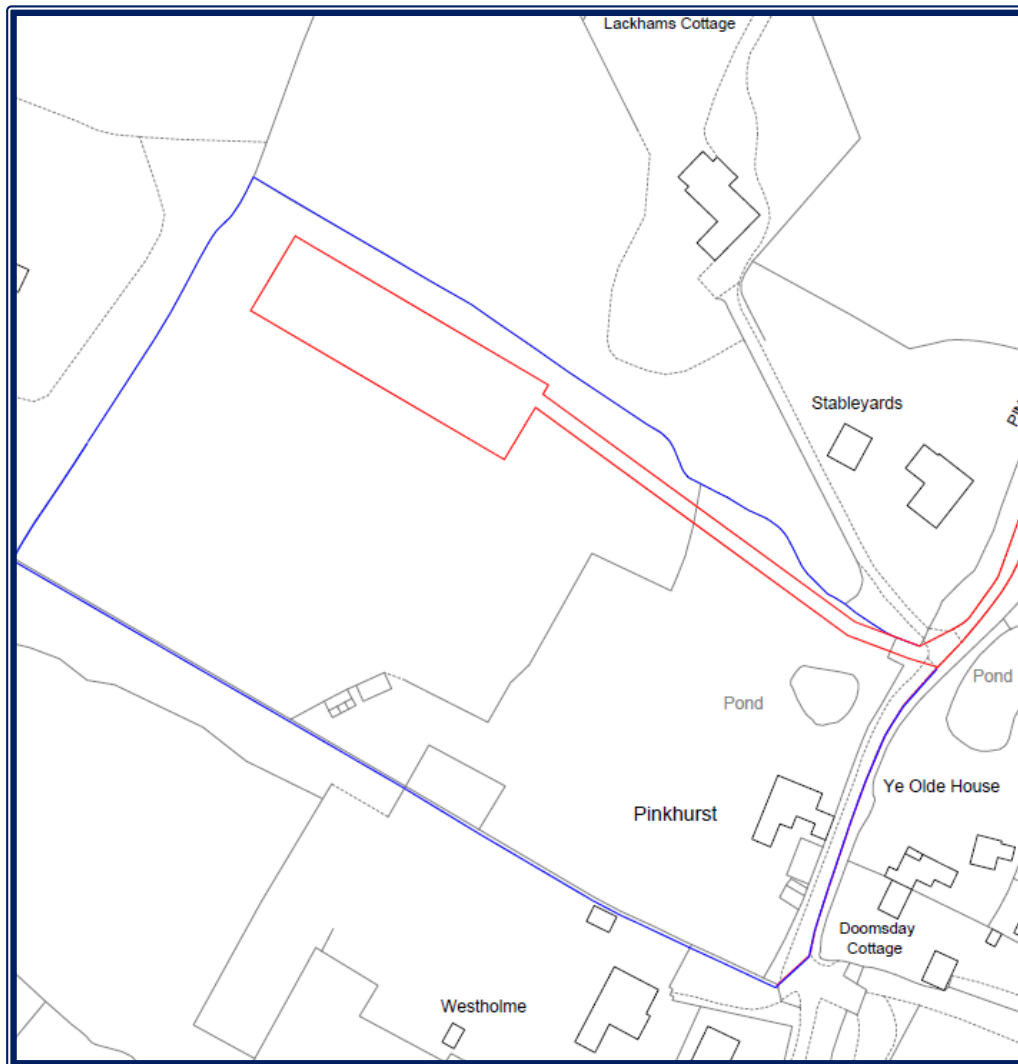


Figure 1: Site Location / Red Line Area

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 MME Planning Services is instructed to submit an application for the erection of a mixed-use barn building to be used for the stabling of horses and the storage of hay, plant and machinery and creation of a sandschool at Pinkhurst, Pinkhurst Lane, Slinfold, West Sussex, RH13 0QR.
- 1.2 This statement sets out the proposed scheme in detail with regard to the following aspects; the planning history of the site, the development proposals, the relevant planning policy, the planning merits of the scheme and how the proposals comply with the Council's policies.

2. Site, Surroundings and Background

- 2.1 The application site is located on the western side of Pinkhurst Lane, outside of any defined built-up area boundary. The site is therefore located within a countryside setting in policy terms. The site comprises a relatively large dwelling to the eastern portion of the site, which is surrounded by woodland defining the residential curtilage / wider land under the ownership of the applicant.
- 2.2 The wider site comprises the main dwelling and a former Cottage where the ground floor has previously been converted into a garage, as well as some dilapidated shed and agricultural buildings. The landholding totals approximately 2 hectares and is bound by a line of woodland on three sides as well as vegetation to the eastern boundary fronting onto Pinkhurst Lane.
- 2.3 The wider area is predominantly characterised by agricultural and horse grazing fields enclosed by woodland and soft landscaping which would be typical of the Itchingfield and Barns Green Wooded Farmlands Character Area, which the site is located within. The site itself is also reflective of this character. Sporadic residential and commercial development is positioned along Lyons Road. The closest built-up area boundary is that of Broadbridge Heath, located some 830m away to the east.

3. Planning History

3.1 N/A.

4. Proposals

4.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of a mixed-use building for the stabling of horses and the storage of hay, plant, and machinery and the creation of a sandschool.



Figure 2: Proposed Block Plan

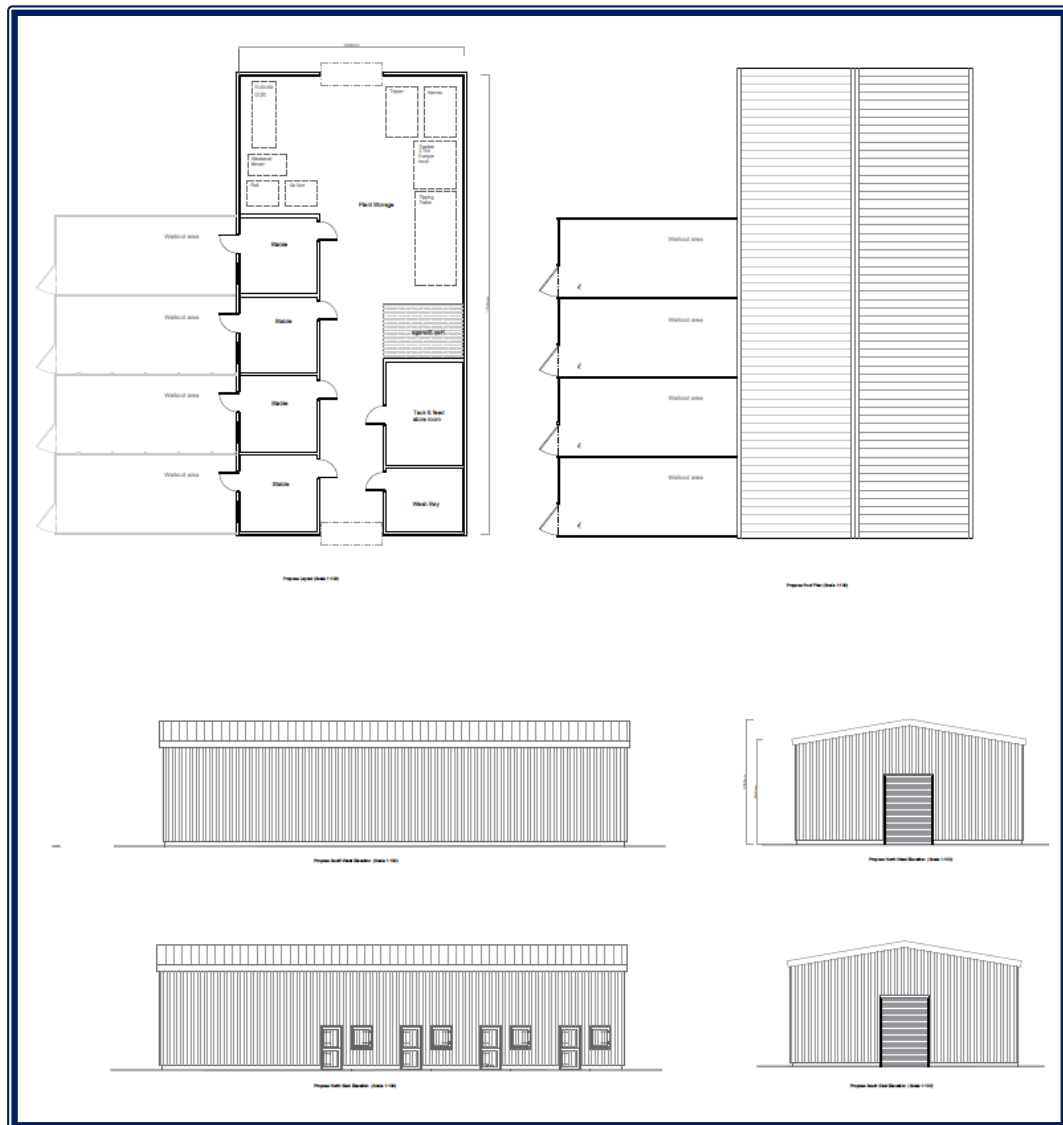


Figure 3: Proposed Elevations and floor Plans of Barn

- 4.2 The proposed building would measure approximately 22m by 10m and would have an overall height of approximately 6m. The building would have metal profiled sheet roofing, and timber cladding with a brick plinth to the external walls with 2no roller shutter doors for heightened security and timber stable doors. The proposed building would consist of 4no individual stables, tack / feed room and wash bay and an area for the storage of machinery, equipment, and hay. The proposals also include small walkout areas serving each of the individual stables, bounded by post and rail fencing.
- 4.3 The proposed building would have a utilitarian and functional form and appearance, typical of similar buildings found within this rural setting. As detailed above, the site and location of the proposed barn is surrounded by extensive woodland. As such, the proposed barn would not be clearly visible outside of the site or from any public vantage points.

- 4.4 The proposed sandschool would measure approximately 40m by 20m and would be constructed with an appropriate composition to provide a suitable surface for horses. The sandschool would also be bounded by post and rail fencing which is highly appropriate for this development in this location. The proposed building and sandschool would be used for private purposes by the applicants.

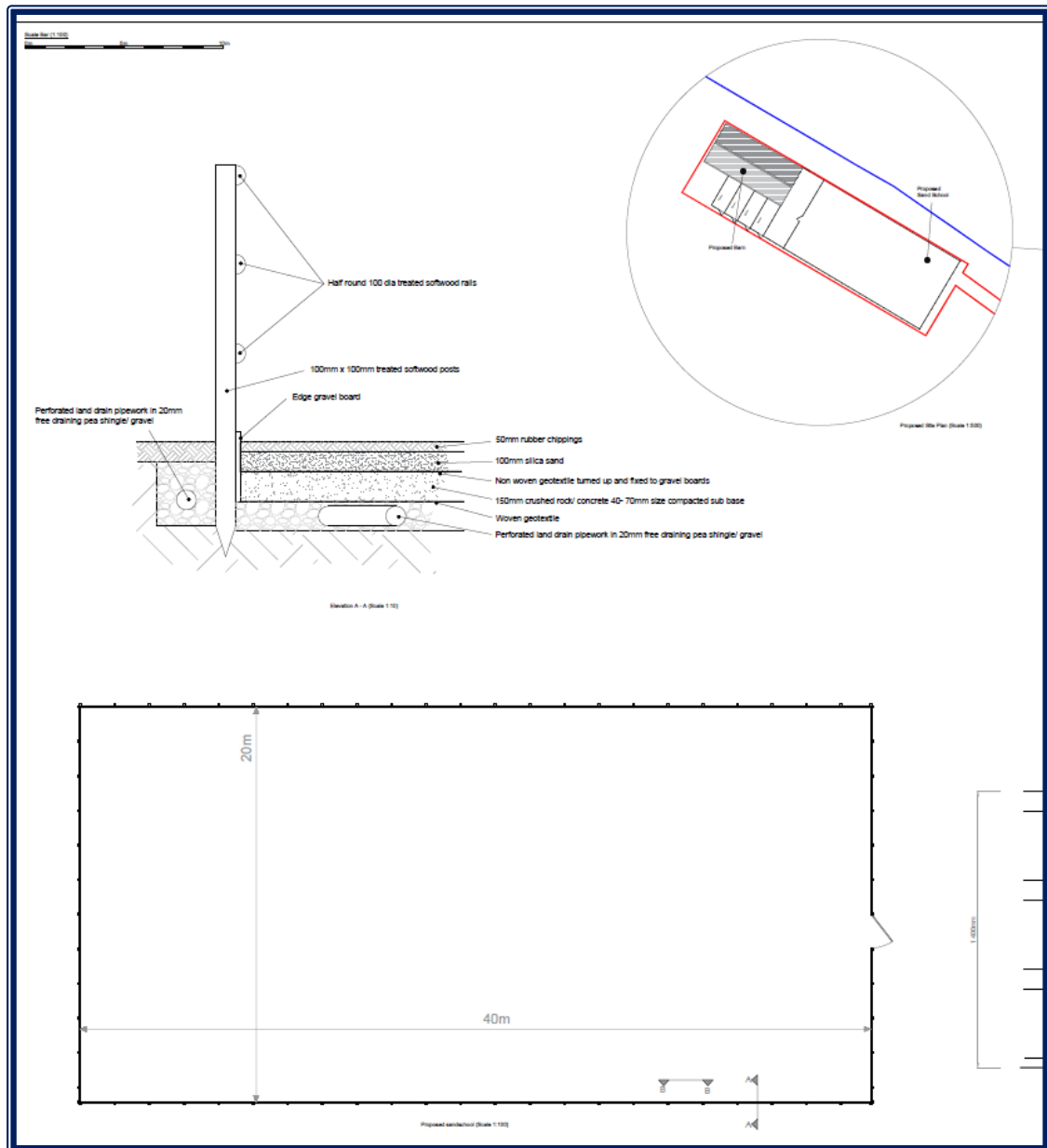


Figure 4: Proposed Sandschool Details

5. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2026) and National Guidance

- 5.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework for the preparation of local plans for housing and other development. The NPPF should be read as a whole.
- 5.2 Running throughout the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development is achieved through three main objectives: economic, social and environmental.
- 5.3 Policy S3 of the NPPF establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development and development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in the NPPF should be approved without delay. Where the development proposal is located within a settlement, Policy S4 of the NPPF provides that development should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the Framework. Where development is proposed outside a settlement, Policy S5 of the NPPF identifies the categories of development which should be approved, subject to the same assessment of benefits and adverse effects.

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015)

- 5.4 The NPPF also requires local planning authorities to maintain an effective and up-to-date development plan. Policy PM2 sets out the framework for the preparation and review of local plans and spatial strategies and that preparation of a new local plan must be commenced no later than five years after adoption of the current plan. Horsham District Council has submitted its new local plan for examination, however at this stage, the emerging policies carry only limited weight in decision-making.
- 5.5 A Local Development Scheme (LDS) was published in February 2025 by the Council. The LDS sets out the production timetable for the New Local Plan anticipated to be adopted in April 2026. Notwithstanding the above, as the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for determining this application are now considered to be 'out-of-date'. Proceedings for the new Local Plan have now re-opened, however, as detailed above, the new local plan carries limited weight in decision-making at this stage.

5.6 While considered to be out of date, the main HDPF policies relevant to this application are as follows:

- Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
- Policy 29 - Equestrian Development
- Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33 - Development Principles
- Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41 – Parking

Slinfold Neighbourhood Plan (2021)

5.7 Neighbourhood Plan policies relevant to this application are as follows:

- Policy 3: Green Infrastructure
- Policy 4: Conserve and Enhance Biodiversity

Planning Advice Note(s) (PAN)

5.8 Relevant PANs to this application are as follows:

- Shaping Development in Horsham District
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

6. Planning Considerations

Principle / Need

6.1 Policy S5 of the NPPF states that:

“Only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework:

a. Development for: agriculture, horticulture and forestry; outdoor sport and recreation; allotments; cemeteries and burial grounds; mineral extraction and processing; engineering operations and infrastructure (including for transport, energy, water and telecommunications); roadside facilities in accordance with policy TR5; national defence and security; or which is solely for nature conservation, restoration and/or enhancement”.

6.2 The proposed building and sandschool would be used for private purposes, for the stabling of horses and for the storage of hay and equipment and machinery for the maintenance of the land under the ownership of the applicant. The applicant currently owns and keeps horses off-site, owing to the lack of stabling facilities on-site. The intention would be to bring the horses on site / into the proposed building. The applicant has a total of 4no horses which are currently located / stabled elsewhere within the District at Hazel Copse, Knowle Lane, Rudgwick, RH12 3BD.

6.3 As detailed above, the wider holding of Pinkhurst consists of some 2ha which the applicant purchased in 2025, with the main dwelling used as the applicant’s main residence together with his immediate family. The applicant also intends to purchase additional land within the immediate vicinity. As such, it is the intention of the applicant to maintain the land to a very high standard. The applicant owns an array of machinery which is used to maintain the land, however, similar to the horses, they are currently stored off-site.

6.4 Taking the above into account, it is viewed that the two main policies which must be considered for a development of this type are Policies 26: Countryside Protection and 29: Equestrian Development of the HDPF.

6.5 Policy 26 states that:

“Outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of the following criteria: support the needs of agriculture or forestry; enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste; provide for quiet informal recreational use; or enable the sustainable development of rural areas. In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location.

Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the level of overall activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and /or enhances the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located.”

6.6 Policy 29 states that:

“Development for equestrian related development will be supported provided that: 1. It can be demonstrated that the re-use of existing buildings on site for related equestrian use is not appropriate; before new or replacement buildings are considered; 2. The proposal would be appropriate in scale and level of activity, and be in keeping with its location and surroundings, and where possible is well related to existing buildings; 3. The proposal should where possible be well related to a bridleway network”.

6.7 As detailed above, the site is within a rural setting, outside of any defined built-up area and is situated in the countryside in policy terms and in terms of context and character. It is therefore considered reasonable to expect that in this location and similar rural settings, landowners and residents would expect to have to keep machinery and maintain their land as they require. It would also be reasonable to expect a certain level, standard and size of equipment to be stored in order to maintain land accordingly.

6.8 The applicant has the following machinery and equipment –

- Kubota G26 compact tractor
- Twaites 3 Ton Dumper truck
- Chain Harrow
- 2.4m topper
- Tipping Trailer
- Westwood ride-on lawn mower
- Honda TRX 500 quad bike and trailer
- Numerous hand tools such as chainsaws, strimmers etc.

6.9 Taking the above into account, it is considered that in this context, a building of this type would be reasonably necessary and expected and would therefore be essential in this countryside location. The development would also provide quiet informal recreational use in the form of private stables and storage.

- 6.10 Further to the above, it is noted that a similarly designed building has been approved on land directly adjoining the application site at Meadowhurst, Lyons Road, Slinfold under planning reference DC/25/0196.
- 6.11 While it is acknowledged that every application and site context should be considered on its own merits, there is an expectation that a consistent approach is applied to decision-making.
- 6.12 The officer report pertaining to application reference DC/25/0196 states that: “It is accepted that dry, covered storage is necessary for hay in order to protect their quality and prevent mould growth, which can be harmful to livestock. Covered storage for machinery is also beneficial in terms of protecting equipment from weathering and improving security. The development would also provide quiet informal recreational use in the form of private stabling and associated storage”.
- 6.13 “The submitted statement explains that the proposed barn would also be used for the storage of hay cut from the holding. The development would support the needs of the agricultural land, offering dedicated storage space for machinery and hay. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policy 26 of the HDPF”.
- 6.14 With regards to the equestrian element of the proposed development, the proposed building has been designed to specifically support the requirements of the applicants and their horses, with associated tack / feed room and wash bay included within the building. Given these requirements and the private use of the building, the proposed size and scale is considered to be appropriate. The proposed barn has been designed to allow for direct external access from the stables for horses, with the provision of external windows for appropriate ventilation and light.
- 6.15 In addition, the proposed sandschool is considered to be of an appropriate size for the intended private use and its composition would ensure a suitable surface is provided for the applicant’s horses to use.
- 6.16 As detailed above, while there are currently no horses present on site, they are located elsewhere within the District. Notwithstanding this, it is contended that the presence of horses on site at the time of the application is not a requirement of Policy 29 of the HDPF.

- 6.17 In addition, there are multiple examples of private stables and equestrian facilities which have been permitted by the Council during the lifetime of the HDPF. Examples include references DC/20/1058, DC/21/1551, DC/21/1414, as well as the recent approval at Meadowhurst referenced above. Again, while it is acknowledged that each application is assessed on its own merits, the examples above include development on agricultural land, previously undeveloped land, and relatively large buildings with multiple stable blocks.
- 6.18 Looking at the specific criteria within Policy 29, it is noted that there are no existing buildings on the site that are suitable for conversion to provide the required stabling facilities. In addition, the site is located in close proximity to existing bridleways to the south and north-west.
- 6.19 As such, it is considered that the requirements of Policy 29 have been met and the proposal would be in line with similar examples of approved equestrian developments within the district.
- 6.20 Overall, the proposed development is considered to comply with Policy S5 of the NPPF and Policies 26 and 29 of the HDPF and would be acceptable in principle.

Design, Appearance, and Impact on the Setting

- 6.21 Policy 25 of the HDPF seeks to protect the natural environment and landscape character of the District, including the landform, development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats. Development will be required to protect, conserve, and enhance landscape and townscape character, taking account of areas or features identified as being of landscape importance, individual settlement characteristics and settlement separation. In addition, development will be supported where it maintains and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network.
- 6.22 Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF require development to be of a high standard of design and layout. Development proposals must be locally distinctive in character and respect the character of their surroundings. Where relevant, the scale, massing and appearance of development will be required to relate sympathetically with its built-surroundings, landscape, open spaces and to consider any impact on the skyline and important views.
- 6.23 The proposed barn would be of a typical design for such buildings in a countryside location. The proposals would comprise timber cladding to the external walls, a metal profiled roof, roller shutter doors and timber stable doors.

- 6.24 The roller shutter doors have been included to ensure maximum security for the building, and it is considered that the proposal would be reflective of the rural setting and informal private use. The proposed sandschool is also considered to be appropriately designed and scaled for the intended use, and given the countryside location.
- 6.25 The proposed barn and sandschool would be positioned towards the north-western corner of the site, as detailed on the proposed plans. As referenced above, the site is bounded on three sides by extensive mature woodland / boundary trees and vegetation, which is reflective of the Itchingfield and Barns Green Wooded Farmlands Character Area assessment, which states that the area is characterised by a strong sense of enclosure. The proposed development would also be set back considerably from the front boundary of the site. Taking into account this context and the size and scale of the proposal and site, the proposed development would result in a form of development which would be proportionate and typical in this rural setting.
- 6.26 Given the design, the palette of materials and the siting, the proposals would not appear prominently or be out of keeping within this context. The proposal would not be clearly visible from any other public vantage points, and overall, would represent an appropriate form of development.
- 6.27 Overall, the proposals would represent appropriate development within this countryside setting and would be in accordance with Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF. The applicant would be willing to accept conditions regarding the private use of the building, the prohibition of any commercial use, proposed external materials, landscaping enhancements, and external lighting to be added to any permission.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.28 Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.
- 6.29 The application site is located some distance from residential properties, and separated by the existing dense woodland which surrounds the site. Given this spatial context, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in adverse impact to the amenities of neighbouring properties through outlook, loss of light or privacy.

- 6.30 In addition, given the private use of the proposed development and small scale, it is not considered that there would be a marked increase in noise or activity which would have a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity, or which would be unexpected in this location.

Parking and Highways

- 6.31 Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF require that development provides safe and suitable access and adequate parking and facilities to meet the needs of anticipated users, with consideration given to the needs of cycle parking, motorcycle parking and electric/low emission vehicles.
- 6.32 No alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular access arrangement, with the site served by an existing access from Pinkhurst Lane. Given the nature of the proposals and private use, it is not anticipated that the proposal would give rise to a material intensification of use of the existing access point.
- 6.33 Therefore, there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal and the application would be in accordance with the above policies.

Ecological and Biodiversity Considerations / Enhancements

- 6.34 Policy 31 of the HDPF states that –
- “Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and/or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks”.
- 6.35 The application is supported by a detailed Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA). The PEA sets out recommendations and mitigation measures to ensure that there would be no detrimental impact on any protected species or habitats. The applicant would be happy to agree to suitable conditions to cover these requirements.

- 6.36 It is noted that the PEA makes recommends bat surveys to be carried out on 2no existing buildings within the wider site, close to the south-western boundary. Notwithstanding this, as detailed within the submitted plans, the proposed development would not impact upon these buildings and therefore, these surveys are not considered to be necessary.
- 6.37 As such, the submitted details provided demonstrate that the proposed development would be in accordance with Policy 31 of the HDPF.

7. Summary and Conclusion

- 7.1 Overall, the proposal represents an appropriate form of development within the countryside setting which would be reasonably required to support the management of the site and its intended private equestrian use. The proposals would be acceptable in terms of design and impact on the setting, and would not appear prominently within this context given the materials to be used and extensive soft landscaping enclosing the site.
- 7.2 It has been demonstrated that the proposed private use would be commensurate with this countryside location and would be typical of other developments and similar to other examples permitted by the Council. The proposal would be in accordance with Policies 25, 26, 29, 32 and 33 of the HDPF and therefore, the Local Planning Authority is respectfully asked to grant permission accordingly.