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Steyping
West Sussex
BN44 3HR

FAO: Planning Department
Horsham District Council
Albery House
Springfield Road
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 2GB

17 February 2026

Re: Prior Approval for Conversion of Part of an Agricultural Building to a Dwelling at Pemberley Copsale Road, Maplehurst RH136QY.

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement supports a Prior Approval application submitted under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

The proposal seeks prior approval for the change of use and conversion of part of an existing agricultural building into a single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3).

The proposal comprises:

- Conversion of 145.18 sqm (GIA) of the building to residential use;
- Retention of 64.28 sqm in continued agricultural storage use;
- A total red-line application area of 641.30 sqm;
- A proposed residential garden and parking area of 431.84 sqm, proportionate to the size and rural context of the dwelling.

The application has been prepared having regard to Horsham District Council's guidance for Class Q prior approval submissions and addresses each matter that the Local Planning Authority may lawfully consider.

The statement is supported by dated photographic evidence, historic land management imagery, and agricultural records demonstrating the established agricultural use of the building and the wider holding.

2. Site and Building Description

The application relates to an existing barn located within the rural holding at Pemberley, Copsale Road, Maplehurst.

The building forms part of a wider holding that has been managed for agricultural purposes for many years and remains in active agricultural management. It lies within a physically contained parcel defined by mature hedgerow boundaries and fencing, which separate it from the wider agricultural land to the south and south-east and the adjoining land to the north and west.

The barn was approved in 2004 under planning permission for:

“Erection of a building comprising 6 stables, 2 tack rooms, store and storage area for hay, straw and machinery.”

The barn lies approximately:

- 12 metres north of an existing stable building, and
- approximately 75 metres from the Grade II listed farmhouse Sheepwash Farm.

It forms part of the established agricultural holding.

The building:

- is structurally sound and capable of conversion without complete or substantial rebuilding,
- lies outside any identified flood risk area,
- benefits from an established agricultural access within the holding, and
- is not adjacent to a public highway.

Photographic evidence submitted with the application shows the building in use for the storage of hay and agricultural equipment and confirms its continued functional relationship with the land and agricultural activity on the holding.

3. Planning History and Lawful Use

3.1 Establishment of the Holding

The site and wider holding benefit from a clear and longstanding rural planning history, including:

- **1999–2000:** Prior notifications approved for the creation of agricultural access and track infrastructure serving the holding, together with a prior notification for an agricultural storage building in the same location as the application barn (*refs: N/62/99, N/35/00 and N/42/00*).
- **2004:** Full planning permission granted for the erection of the application barn comprising stables, tack rooms and storage areas for hay, straw and machinery.

The planning history of the holding also includes the exercise of agricultural permitted development rights under previous ownership, including access and infrastructure works associated with the agricultural management of the land. These permissions were granted on the basis that the land formed part of an agricultural unit, and there has been no material change in the use of the land since that time. The holding has continued to be managed for agricultural purposes, providing continuity in both land use and planning status.

This planning history demonstrates that the holding has been established and managed in an agricultural context well before the relevant qualifying dates for Class Q development.

3.2 Lawful Use of the Building

The application barn has historically been used for a combination of agricultural storage and equestrian purposes, a common arrangement on rural holdings.

The agricultural function of the building has included storage of hay and equipment associated with the management of the holding.

The 2004 planning permission for the application building expressly approved areas of the building for the storage of hay, straw and machinery in connection with the surrounding agricultural land, with a condition restricting those areas to agricultural storage use. This provides further context to the lawful agricultural function of the building as part of the holding.

In determining the application for the lawfully approved stables, the Local Planning Authority noted that the equestrian activity would be accommodated within the newly approved facilities. The application barn was excluded from the development area for that proposal and, as recorded in the officer's report, was to be retained for storage associated with the management of the land. The decision proceeded on the basis that the equestrian function of the application barn had ceased and that the building continued to serve a storage role ancillary to the agricultural holding.

Following the construction and occupation of the lawfully approved stables within the holding, the stabling function of the application barn ceased. The equestrian use of the application barn permanently ended in November 2022, when the horses were relocated to the newly approved facilities. From that point onwards, no horses have been housed within the building, and it has remained available for and in use for agricultural storage purposes associated with the management of the land.

Since that time, the building has remained maintained, accessible and functionally linked to the holding. It has not been abandoned, disused, or severed from the agricultural use of the land.

Having regard to the available evidence, including dated photographs, historic aerial imagery, land management records and the acknowledged functional relationship between the building and the land, the evidence indicates (on the balance of probabilities) that the application building has been used for agricultural purposes on and since the relevant qualifying date.

3.3 Agricultural Use of the Holding

The agricultural use of the land associated with the building is evidenced by:

- historic aerial imagery showing haymaking activity and tramlines within the fields from at least 2005 onwards,
- records of agricultural subsidy claims confirming the land's inclusion within a declared agricultural holding, and
- dated photographic evidence demonstrating haymaking and agricultural storage activity between 2018 and February 2026.

The holding produces approximately 150 large hay/silage bales per year.

This evidence confirms that the building has consistently formed part of an active holding where agricultural land management has been ongoing.

While the intensity of use of the building has varied over time, including periods where parts of the building were lightly used or vacant, such variation is consistent with the seasonal nature of agricultural land management, and there is no evidence of any intervening material change of use away from agriculture.

Agricultural use does not require constant or intensive activity, and periods of reduced use or seasonal operation are inherent characteristics of agricultural land management.

3.4 Previous Applications and Appeals

The application barn has previously been the subject of full planning applications for live/work dwellings, which were refused on countryside policy grounds.

In determining those applications and subsequent appeals, neither the Local Planning Authority nor the Planning Inspector made any finding that:

- the building had been abandoned,
- the building had fallen out of lawful use, or
- the building was incapable of conversion in physical terms.

Those refusals related to materially different proposals assessed under full planning policy and do not prejudice consideration of the current proposal under Class Q permitted development rights.

4. Proposed Development

The proposal seeks prior approval for the conversion of 145.18 sqm of the existing agricultural building into a single dwelling, with the remaining 64.28 sqm retained in agricultural storage use.

The total red-line application area extends to 641.30 sqm, including a residential garden and parking area of 431.84 sqm. The retained storage area will remain physically and functionally separate from the dwelling.

The development will involve:

- internal reconfiguration to create a single residential unit (145.18 sqm);
- retention of 64.28 sqm in agricultural storage use;
- replacement of six existing clear roof panels above the residential area with low-profile rooflights set flush within the roof plane; and
- glazing of existing openings where required.

No extensions, enlargements, or increases in footprint, ridge height or eaves height are proposed. All works fall within the scope of Class Q(c) and represent works reasonably necessary to facilitate the permitted change of use.

5. Compliance with Class Q

5.1 Class Q(a) – Permitted Development

The proposal involves the change of use of an existing building on a rural holding to a single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) and falls within the scope of Class Q.

The proposed dwelling would have a gross internal floor area of 145.18 sqm, in accordance with the floorspace limitation set out in Class Q. The remaining 64.28 sqm of the building would be retained in agricultural storage use and would remain physically and functionally separate from the dwelling. No internal access is proposed between the dwelling and the retained storage area.

The building forms part of an established agricultural unit and, following the permanent cessation of equestrian use in November 2022, its last use prior to the application and at the relevant qualifying date was agricultural storage associated with the management of the land.

5.2 Building Operations (Class Q(c))

The building is structurally capable of conversion without complete or substantial rebuilding. The proposed works involve repair and adaptation only and do not constitute rebuilding or enlargement.

The retained storage area would continue to serve the agricultural holding and does not form part of the dwellinghouse.

6. Prior Approval Matters

6.1 Transport and Highways

The proposal utilises the existing access serving the holding. The existing access lies within land in the applicant's ownership and has historically served the agricultural holding. No alterations to the access are proposed. A single dwelling would generate traffic levels comparable to or lower than historic use of the site. No highway safety concerns arise.

6.2 Noise

The site lies within a rural context. The proposal would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers.

6.3 Contamination

No contaminative uses have been identified.

6.4 Flood Risk

The site lies outside identified flood risk areas.

6.5 Design and External Appearance

External alterations are minimal and preserve the simple rural character of the building.

6.6 Historic Environment

The building lies approximately 75 metres from a Grade II listed farmhouse. Previous decisions have concluded that proposals involving this building would not result in unacceptable harm to the setting or significance of the listed building.

6.7 Habitats and Water Neutrality

Natural England withdrew its Water Neutrality Position Statement on 31 October 2025. Horsham District Council has confirmed that, from 1 November 2025, no separate water neutrality statement, financial contribution, or bespoke planning obligation is required for new development.

This proposal will comply with Policy 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework and will meet the Building Regulations Part G Optional Technical Standard of 110 litres per person per day. Compliance will be demonstrated at Building Regulations stage.

The Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, will undertake an Appropriate Assessment as required. No additional applicant-led mitigation is necessary.

Water efficiency will be achieved through the specification of low-flow sanitaryware and fittings, including dual-flush WCs (maximum 4/2.6 litres), low-flow basin and kitchen taps, flow-restricted showers, and water-efficient white goods where installed. Compliance will be demonstrated at Building Regulations stage.

7. Conclusion

The proposal has been prepared having regard to the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the GPDO.

The proposal seeks prior approval for the conversion of 145.18 sqm of an existing agricultural building to a single dwelling, with 64.28 sqm retained in agricultural storage use. The total red-line application area extends to 641.30 sqm, including a proportionate residential garden and parking area of 431.84 sqm.

The building forms part of an established holding, has been used for agricultural storage associated with the management of the land, and has not been abandoned or disused. Following the relocation of equestrian activity to the lawfully approved stables, the last use of the application building prior to the application has been agricultural storage.

The proposed works are limited, proportionate, and fall within those permitted by Class Q. None of the prior approval matters give rise to unacceptable impacts.

Earlier refusals for materially different proposals under full planning policy do not prejudice the current application.

The photographic and documentary evidence appended to this statement demonstrates continued agricultural use of the building and the land up to February 2026.

It is respectfully requested that prior approval is granted.

Yours Faithfully,



APPENDIX – PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF AGRICULTURAL USE

This appendix provides dated photographic evidence demonstrating the continued agricultural use of the application building and the associated landholding over an extended period. The photographs illustrate that the building has remained physically and functionally associated with agricultural land management and that equestrian use ceased prior to the relevant qualifying date for Class Q development.

Current Site Context and Access

Photographs

Current – Access Facing North and South East, and the application building

These photographs show the established access serving the holding and the relationship between the application barn and the surrounding agricultural land. The access remains consistent with agricultural use and has not been altered to serve residential development.



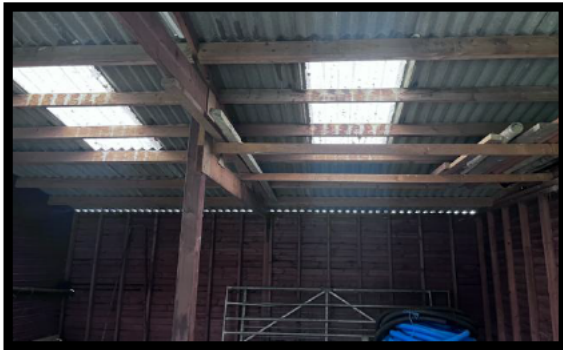
Agricultural Use of the Building (2022–2026)

Photographs

Existing clear roof panels – February 2026

CCTV capture from the stable building tack room camera – 25 July 2023

These images show the application barn in agricultural use, including storage of gates, fencing and other agricultural materials associated with the management of the land. The clear roof panels are existing features of the building.



Evidence of Agricultural Use Before & After Cessation of Equestrian Activity

Photographs

Evidence of agricultural use – July 2019, Feb 2023, July 2024 and December 2024

These photographs confirm continued agricultural storage within the building, including machinery, hay, fencing, gates and other agricultural materials, both before and after the cessation of equestrian use in November 2022.





Evidence of Haymaking Activity (2018–2025)

Photographs

Evidence of haymaking – August 2018, May 2022, August 2023, July 2024 and August 2025

These photographs show repeated haymaking activity within the fields associated with the application building over a number of years. This indicates consistent agricultural land management and supports that the building functions as part of an active agricultural holding.





31/07/2024



28/08/2023



28/08/2023



21/05/2024 13:38:44 SUN

Penberley East Gate



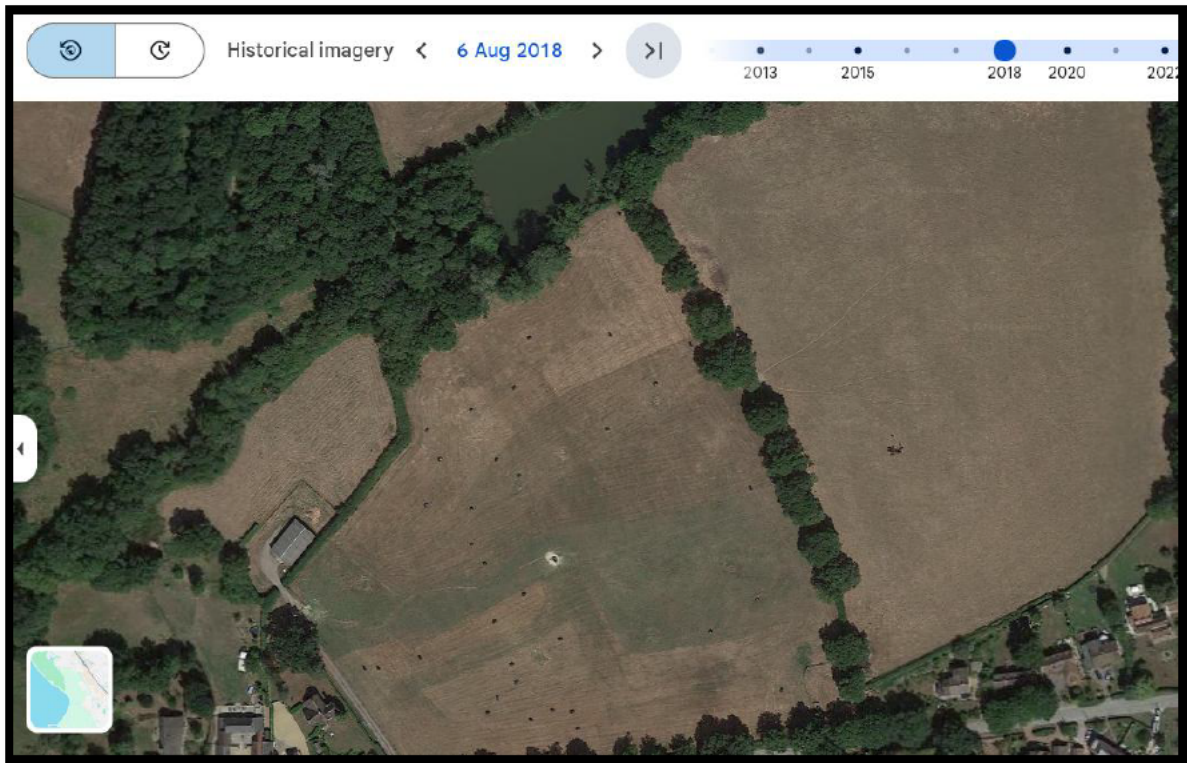
02/06/2022 15:27:20 THU

Penberley East Gate



27/05/2022 14:13:11 FRI

Penberley East Gate

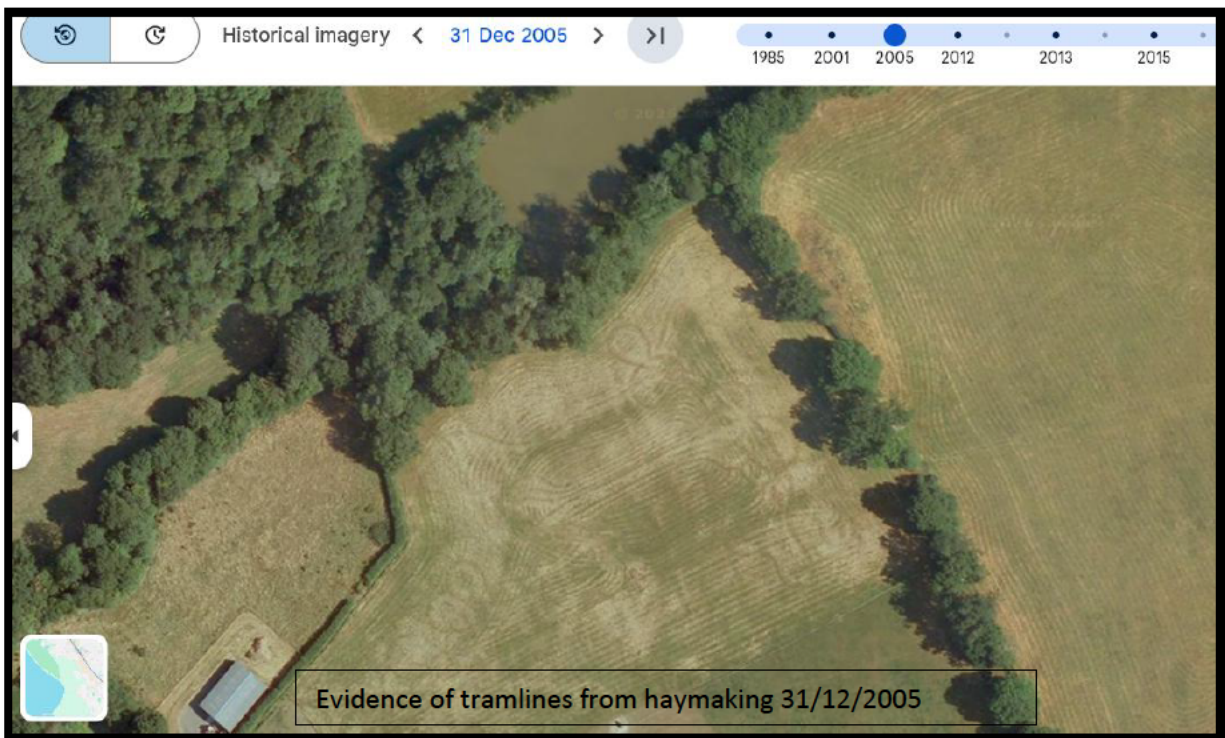


Historic Agricultural Land Management

Photographs

Historic aerial imagery showing tramlines from haymaking – December 2005 and February 2014

The aerial imagery shows repeated haymaking activity within the fields associated with the application building over a number of years. This indicates consistent agricultural land management and supports the conclusion that the building functions as part of an active agricultural holding.



Agricultural Subsidy Records

Document

Single Payment Scheme (SPS) records – 2006 to 2009

These records confirm that the land formed part of a declared agricultural holding during this period and support the evidence of long-established agricultural use of the site.



Evidence of previous owners SPS payments 2006-2009

Enter a company name or place

e.g. Nestle or Windsor

Search

W A MORTON

W A MORTON is a recipient of farm subsidies from United Kingdom.

W A MORTON has received (at least) [REDACTED] in payments of farm subsidies from the European Union under the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy).

Address

SHEEPWASH FARM MAPLEHURST
HORSHAM, West Sussex, England
GB-RH13 6QY

Details of payments

Year	Scheme	Amount
2006	SPS (single payment scheme)	
2008	SPS (single payment scheme)	
2008	Additional amounts of aid	
2009	SPS (single payment scheme)	
2009	Additional amounts of aid	
2007	Additional amounts of aid	
2007	SPS (single payment scheme)	
2007	Additional amounts of aid	
Total:		



FarmSubsidy.org is a project of the [Open Knowledge Foundation Germany](#), a non-profit organisation working on transparency of public money.

Digital photographs and associated metadata can be made available on request. Footage from on-site farm cameras is also available, if required.