Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/24/1164
Swains Farm, Brighton Road, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9RP

DESCRIPTION:
Demolition of agricultural building and erection of 4nos residential dwellings.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/22/2118	Prior Notification for Change of Use of an Agricultural Building to residential (Use Class C3) to form 4no dwellinghouses.	Prior Approval Required and PERMITTED on 04.01.2023
DISC/24/0193	Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 1 to approved appliction DC/22/2118	Application Permitted on 27.09.2024
DC/25/0781	Removal of modern agricultural building and replacement with 4 new-build residential dwellings with associated landscape works.	Pending Consideration
DC/25/1039	Prior Notification for Change of Use of Agricultural Building to 8no. dwellinghouses.	Prior Approval Required and PERMITTED on 19.08.2025
DC/25/1661	Prior Notification for change of use of an agricultural building to 4no dwellinghouses (C3 Use Class).	Prior Approval Required and PERMITTED on 08.12.2025

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site lies within the rural countryside outside of the built-up area boundary of Henfield, and consists of an agricultural building set within a courtyard made up of a mixture of concrete, sand and gravel. To the east of the application site is a Grade II listed farmhouse known as Swains farm and two small workers bungalows. To the north is a small rural agricultural building. The site is accessed along an access track to the north of Brighton Road after Swains Farm shop and is shared with the cricket club. The access track is a Public Right of way.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The proposal would result in the demolition of the existing agricultural building and replace it with four detached dwellings, each with their own car port. The dwellings would each have a garden amenity space and the dwellings would be separated by a shared central hardstanding which would form a courtyard appearance with limestone chippings. The site boundary treatments between the dwellings would be brick wall and the external boundaries would be post and rail. The external materials would be a mixture of red brick and weatherboard and the roof tiles would be hanging tile. Each of the dwellings area bungalows with 2 bedrooms. The proposed dwellings would have a ridge height of 5.6 metres, an eaves height of 2.5, a width of 16.5 metres and a depth of 12.65 metres approximately.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
Policy 9 - Employment Development
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 – Parking

Henfield Neighbourhood Plan:
Policy 1 – A Spatial Plan
Policy 2 – Housing Allocations
Policy 10 – Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 12 – Design Standards for New Development

Henfield Parish Design Statement
Paragraph 33 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council is currently in the process of reviewing its development plan however at this stage the emerging policies carry only limited weight in decision making. As the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for the determination of this application must be considered as to whether they are 'out of date' (NPPF paragraph 11d). This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, whether the Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (NPPF footnote 8).

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the supply currently calculated as being 1.7 years. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing development within the District (unless footnote 7 or Paragraph 14 applies to relevant applications), with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying only moderate weight in decision making.

All other policies within the HDPF as itemised above have been assessed against the NPPF and are considered to be consistent such that they continue to attract significant weight in decision making.

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):
Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion
Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection

Strategic Policy 15: Settlement Coalescence
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Strategic Policy 23: Infrastructure Provision
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Strategic Policy 37: Housing Provision
Strategic Policy 38: Meeting Local Housing Needs
Policy 39: Affordable Housing
Policy 40: Improving Housing Standards in the District

Supplementary Planning Guidance:
Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Planning Advice Notes:
Facilitating Appropriate Development
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES
Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:
Natural England: Standing advice

Landscape Consultant: Objection [Summary]
While the principle of development is not opposed, it is considered that the current layout fails to respond to the rural character and visual sensitivities of the site, particularly regarding its proximity to a Grade II Listed Building and views from nearby Public Rights of Way. In addition, there remains a lack of justification for the proposed layout, an omission of key local landscape character assessments, and insufficient detail regarding boundary treatments and hard landscaping.

HDC Environmental Health Officers: No Objection
Commercial or agricultural buildings can be subject to significant contamination risks arising from their use, construction and storage of machinery equipment fuels or other chemicals. Potentially hazardous materials may also be incorporated in made ground, yards and hard standings. The application proposes new dwellings with private garden areas and is therefore considered to be particularly sensitive to risks from ground contamination. A limited site investigation prepared in support of application DISC/24/0193 confirmed the presence of significantly elevated lead and arsenic. The development is therefore clearly at risk of significant harm from ground contamination. To ensure the application is properly determined a preliminary risk assessment, including an exploratory intrusive investigation should be provided.

HDC Conservation Officer: No Objection [Summary]
The permitted prior approval scheme will have a harmful impact on the setting of the listed building. This revised scheme to demolish the agriculture shed and replace it with four detached dwellings will have a neutral impact within the setting of the listed building. It will certainly be a more favourable scheme than the fallback.

WSCC Highways: No Objection [Summary]
The Local Highway Authority does not consider that the proposal for 4 dwellings would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 115), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

HDC Arboricultural Officer: No Objection

The submitted application form states that there are no trees on the site or any on the adjacent property that may influence development.

The willows growing in the area of former ponds immediately adjacent to the building appear to be on the subject property. They would foreseeably be coppiced or felled as part of the sites re-development and regeneration of the ponds area.

The belt of trees alongside (north of) the access track (PROW) to the dwelling Pigeon Croft appear to be outside of the red site line, forming the boundary of the Council (HDC) owned woodland on Henfield Common. They are a group of mixed native broadleaf species that have a height commensurate with that of the wider woodland area that adjoins on the opposite side of the access track.

Re-development of the site as proposed for habitable purpose will foreseeably place the belt of off-site trees (immediately to the South) under pressure for lopping/felling to improve light levels to the new houses and gardens.

The belt of trees is within the ownership of HDC and control of future works in this respect appears to be reasonably assured.

WSCC Public Rights of Way: No Objection [Summary]
No objection on the basis that the proposal would not alter the existing footpath surfacing.

HDC Ecological Consultant: No Objection [Summary]
No objection, subject to the use of appropriate conditions.

NatureSpace (District Newt Licencing): No Objection
The applicant has the option to follow pre-cautionary working methods. This can be secured by condition by requiring compliance with the survey and site risk assessment Sylvatica Ecology, July 2024.

Southern Water: Comment
No soakaways, swales, ponds, watercourses or any other surface water retaining or conveying features should be located within 5 metres of public or adoptable gravity sewers, rising mains or water mains.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:
Representations:
None received.

Parish Comments:
Parish Council: Objection
The planning application is contrary to HD Planning Framework Policy Numbers:-

- 1 as it is not a strategic site in the Local Plan
- 2 as it is not a nominated site in the Neighbourhood Plan
- 3 as it is not within an existing built-up area
- 10 as it does not maintain the quality and character of the area; does not contribute to diverse and sustainable farming enterprises; or promote recreation;
- 23 as the site cannot be served by safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access; or cannot be supplied with essential services, such as water, power, sewage and drainage, and waste disposal; or provide adequate vehicle parking; or would have an unacceptable impact on the landscape
- 26 as the site lies outside built-up area boundaries and does not support the needs of agriculture or forestry; does not enable the extraction of minerals or disposal of waste; or provide for quiet informal recreational use or enable the sustainable development of a rural area
- 27 as the site will generate urbanising effects within the settlement gap, including artificial lighting, and traffic movements
- 33.2 as there is loss of amenity to the neighbouring property; or the design is not sensitive to surrounding buildings

- 33.3 as the scale and massing and appearance of the proposal is out of keeping and unsympathetic with the built surroundings.

Member Comments:
None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

The application site is located outside of any built-up area, and within the countryside in policy terms, where residential development is more greatly restricted. The application site has been subject of two Class Q Prior Approval under planning references: DC/25/1039, which sought the conversion of the existing building into 8x dwellings, and; DC/25/1661 for the conversion of the building into 4x dwellings. Both of the granted consents included a pre-commencement contamination condition, neither of which have been discharged.

Class Q.2(4) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) states that any consented scheme '*must be completed within a period of 3 years starting with the prior approval date*'. The expiration of each of these consents to be completed is 18.08.2028 and 08.12.2028 respectively. Whilst it is not inconceivable that the discharge of conditions procedure could be undertaken and approved within this period, the fact remains that the conditions at the point of considering the present proposal have not been discharged. Furthermore, Officers acknowledge that a previous prior approval scheme was also granted (DC/22/2118) which included a similarly worded condition. This condition was discharged under application reference DISC/24/0193. The 2022 permission has since lapsed (as of 04.01.2025), and though this demonstrates that it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the condition *could* be discharged, the conditions attached to both the 2025 consents remain in situ.

It is further noted that the 2025 Class Q consents included Phase 1 and 2 surveys (desk based and on-site respectively), the Council's Environmental Health Officer noted an absence of information relating to the private amenity spaces- hence the requirement for the conditions. The Council therefore retains the need for the condition on both consents.

Owing to the presence of pre-commencement conditions attached to each Class Q consent, both of which are considered to go to the 'heart of the consent', these consents (at the time of writing) are not considered to represent a viable fallback in the alternat to the present proposal. As such, and given the location of the site outside of the defined built-up area boundaries, the Council's restrictive housing policies are applicable, namely Policy 4 (settlement expansion) and Policy 26 (countryside protection).

Policy 2 of the HDPF sets out the district's spatial strategy, directing growth to the main settlements. Under Policy 3, the application site is located outside any defined settlement boundary and is therefore considered to be within the countryside for policy purposes.

Policy 4 supports settlement expansion only where the site is allocated in the Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan, adjoins an existing settlement edge, is proportionate to the scale and function of the settlement, meets identified local housing needs, does not prejudice long-term comprehensive development, and is contained within a defensible boundary while maintaining landscape and townscape character. The HDPF's settlement hierarchy emphasises that the most sustainable locations for new housing are the larger settlements of Horsham, Southwater, and Billingshurst, with only limited development elsewhere where supported by an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

In this countryside location, Policy 26 applies. It seeks to protect the rural area from inappropriate development unless it is essential to the countryside and meets one of four criteria: supporting agriculture or forestry; enabling minerals or waste operations; providing quiet informal recreation; or enabling sustainable rural development. The proposed residential scheme is not essential to this location and does not meet any of the criteria.

Paragraph 82 of the National Planning Policy Framework encourages rural exception sites to deliver affordable housing. The proposal does not include any affordable units and therefore does not benefit from this provision.

Policy 1.2 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan states that development outside defined boundaries will only be supported where it accords with national policy and the HDPF in respect of countryside development. As the site lies outside the BUAB and the proposal is not essential to its countryside setting, it conflicts with Policies 1, 3, 4, and 26 of the HDPF.

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (1.7 years at the time of writing). In response, the Council published the 'Facilitating Appropriate Development' (FAD) document in 2022, now superseded by 'Shaping Development in Horsham District' Planning Advice Note (SDPAN). This guidance acknowledges that applications on unallocated sites outside BUABs may come forward in the absence of a five-year supply. It states that proposals will be considered positively where they meet all of the following criteria:

- The site adjoins the existing settlement edge;
- The scale of expansion is appropriate to the settlement;
- The proposal meets local housing needs or supports community facilities;
- The development does not prejudice long-term comprehensive development; and
- The site is contained within a defensible boundary and maintains/enhances landscape character.

The proposal does not meet these criteria, as the site does not adjoin a settlement edge. The existing agricultural barn is functional and rural in character, blending into the landscape. Its presence, and lack of a viable fallback position, do not justify the construction of four new detached dwellings extending significantly into open countryside. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF and does not benefit from the provisions of the SDPAN.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character from inappropriate development. Proposals should take into account townscape characteristics, with development seeking to provide an attractive, functional and accessible environment that complements the locally distinctive character of the district. Buildings should contribute to a sense of place, and should be of a scale, massing, and appearance that is of a high standard or design and layout which relates sympathetically to the landscape and built surroundings.

Policy 33(3) of the HDPF states that development will be required to *'Ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development… relates sympathetically with the built surroundings'*.

Policy 12 of the Henfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan states that as appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals will be supported where their design and detailing meet the relevant requirements in the Henfield Parish Design Statement. In addition, as appropriate to the site concerned, the scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials of all new

development proposals are of a high quality and reflect the architectural and historic character and scale of the surrounding buildings and street scene/landscape.

In design terms, the site currently comprises an agricultural building of approximately 361sqm with a dual-ridge roof and an associated area of hardstanding. Visually, the site reads as part of the wider rural landscape, reinforced by its location outside the Built-Up Area Boundary and its modest, functional agricultural character. The proposed development would introduce a substantial amount of new built form (588.48sqm in total) spread widely across the plot. This would far exceed the scale and footprint of the existing agricultural building and extend well beyond the land associated with the Class Q consents.

To the east lies the Grade II listed Swains Farmhouse and two small workers' bungalows, while to the north sits a modest agricultural structure. The proposed dwellings would introduce a distinctly residential character that contrasts sharply with this context, resulting in a suburbanising effect at odds with the prevailing pattern of development. The scale and spread of the new dwellings would also be inconsistent with the nearest residential properties, which are semi-detached and significantly more modest in form than both the proposed units and the existing agricultural building.

The Council's Landscape Consultant has objected on the grounds of harm to landscape character. The scheme introduces a substantial quantum of built form and adopts a modern suburban design approach that draws little from the rural vernacular. The appearance and distribution of the dwellings would markedly domesticate the site, far more so than the earlier prior-notification consents. The enlarged curtilages would create generous garden areas, further reinforcing a domestic character that would contrast strongly with the open fields to the west and increase the perception of encroachment into the countryside. Proposed boundary treatments, comprising brick walling and post-and-rail fencing, would leave the residential use visually exposed to the surrounding landscape. Overall, the Class Q consents position would represent a more contained and less harmful form of development than the current proposal.

The Council's Conservation Officer raises no objection subject to conditions under Policy 34 of the HDPF; however, this assessment relates solely to the impact on Swains Farmhouse and does not address the wider countryside character or settlement pattern. Given that the farmhouse historically sat within an agricultural landscape, its setting would reasonably be expected to include farmland. As such, limited weight can be afforded to this consultation response in the context of broader landscape and character considerations.

Taken as a whole, the siting, scale, and layout of the proposal would fail to integrate sympathetically with the established pattern of development and would amount to an overdevelopment of the site. The scheme would erode the open rural character of the area and appear visually incongruous within its countryside setting. The development therefore conflicts with Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policy 12 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF continues that development shall be required to ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land.

Policy 12 of the Henfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan states that the design of development should respect the amenities of occupiers/users of nearby property and land. The design should also achieve satisfactory access without harming the amenities of neighbouring properties and residents.

The siting and layout of the proposed dwellings, together with their relationship to neighbouring properties, are considered sufficient to avoid any unacceptable impact on neighbouring amenity. With regard to waste storage and collection, the Highways Authority has noted potential amenity concerns arising from residents having to transport bins over a distance to the collection point. A shared collection area is suggested as a more appropriate arrangement. If the development were otherwise acceptable, a condition would be imposed requiring detailed proposals for bin storage and collection.

Each dwelling would be provided with private amenity space; however, the garden area for Plot 1 includes an existing pond within the red line boundary. This feature would significantly compromise the usability and quality of the garden and is likely to lead to pressure from future occupiers to infill the pond to create a more functional space. Were the scheme acceptable in all other respects, it would be recommended that the red line boundary be amended to exclude the pond to safeguard its retention, though this would result in a more constrained garden area.

Highways Impacts:

Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF promote development that provides safe and adequate access, suitable for all users.

Policy 4 of the Henfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan states that as appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should conform to West Sussex Highway Standards, and adequate offroad car parking should be provided for all developments in accordance with West Sussex Parking Standards.

The access from Brighton Road would remain and Highways have been consulted as part of the proposal who have no objections in terms of the safety of the existing access. The block plan indicates that each property would have provision for 2 cars within a car port. Overall, there would be no objections in light of policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF.

Ecology:

Policy 31 of the HDPF states that development will be supported where it demonstrates 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.

Whilst NatureSpace has not objected in this instance, it is considered that the pond within plot 1 would result in poor quality amenity space, which would be subject to development pressure from the occupiers to fill in, to create adequate amenity footprint and quality. Notwithstanding this concern, the Biodiversity net gain assessment makes recommendations to crop trees surrounding the pond and add planting to facilitate its existing biodiversity value. NatureSpace comment that they have no objection subject to a precautionary working method statement being submitted and to ensure that if Great Crested Newts are encountered in their breeding season that potential harm is avoided.

Place Services have commented that they have no objections to the proposal subject to the inclusion of relevant conditions. In the case that the application was otherwise acceptable, the applicant would have the option to seek a District Newt license prior to determination to mitigate against harm. In any case, there are no objections in light of policy 31 of the HDPF.

Water Neutrality:

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality.

On 31st October 2025 Natural England formally withdrew the 2021 Position Statement, citing a package of measures that they were satisfied would safeguard the Arun Valley sites. Principal amongst these measures is a reduction in the Southern Water abstraction licence 'by March 2026'. However, given the licence change has not yet taken place Horsham District Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, cannot yet be certain that new development will not result in adverse impacts on the Arun Valley sites.

To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000 litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching. Natural England standing advice dated 10 November 2025 raises no objection to using these savings to enable development to come forward. The standing advice clarifies that it functions as Natural England's formal response pursuant to Regulation 63(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to all relevant planning applications which seek to achieve water neutrality using the above Southern Water savings.

Officers have undertaken an Appropriate Assessment which demonstrates that the anticipated increase in mains water consumption from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day.

Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby complying with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The applicant has submitted Biodiversity net gain metric and demonstrated that on site mitigation would be sufficient to result in a 12.57% increase in biodiversity. This can be secured by condition, with the habitat units being less than 0.5 such that the enhancements are not ‘significant’ and would not require a legal agreement to secure the mitigations.

Conclusions and Planning Balance:

The site is not allocated for development with the HDPF or a made neighbourhood plan, owing to the site’s location outside of the built-up area boundary, the principle of the development is resisted under Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

The Council recently published an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) outlining a deliverable supply of housing sites of 1.7 years. Therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development at paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged in this instance.

NPPF paragraph 11(d)(i) states that where there are no relevant development plan policies in place, the policies that are considered most important for the determination of applications (in this case, Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF, owing to the lack of a five-year housing land supply) permission should be granted unless there is a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

As per the preceding sections of this report, the granting of this permission would conflict with Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF and is not allocated in the neighbourhood plan. This conflict with the development plan is afforded significant weight, as it would undermine the strategic process of allocating housing sites for development in appropriate locations, and the democratic process of selecting sites within Neighbourhood Plans. This harm is tapered by the Council’s inability to currently

demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (a *significant benefit* in favour of the proposal in its own right), therefore attributing *moderate weight* in the overall planning balance.

Furthermore, the development would be out of character with the prevailing development and this would result in conflict afforded *significant weight.* In this instance, this represents a clear reason for refusal.

With the above in mind, the benefits of the proposal (the provision of 4x dwellings towards the Council's five-year housing land supply) would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the harm that would arise should planning permission be granted (core policy conflict and resultant landscape harm). The application is therefore recommended for refusal on this basis.

Recommendation: Application Refused

Reasons for Refusal:

1. The proposed development would be sited within an unsustainable location in the countryside, outside of a defined built-up area boundary, and on a site not allocated for housing development within the Horsham District Planning Framework, or a made Neighbourhood Plan. Furthermore, the proposed development is not essential to its countryside location. Notwithstanding the absence of a five-year land housing supply, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) at paragraph 11(d), it is not considered that there are any material considerations in this instance which would outweigh harm arising from conflict with Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policy 1 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2021).

2. The proposal would entail a scale, design and form of development which fails to reflect the rural character of the site and surrounding area, appearing unduly suburban and representing an incongruous form of development which would fail to preserve the character and appearance of this relatively open rural location. The proposal therefore represents an inappropriate form of development that would be contrary to policies 25, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policy 12 of the Henfield Neighbouhood Plan (2021).

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT
Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/24/1164
Schedule of plans/documents **not approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Supporting Statement	BNG Metric - pdf	none	23.08.2024
Supporting Statement	HMMP	none	27.08.2024
Location plan		2308SW_R1_000	30.07.2024
Block plan	Existing	2308SW_R1_001	30.07.2024
Block plan	Proposed	2308SW_R1_002	30.07.2024
Floor plan	Existing Ground	2308SW_R1_100	30.07.2024
Elevation plan	Existing North and South	2308SW_R1_102	30.07.2024

Elevation plan	Existing East and West	2308SW_R1_103	30.07.2024
Floor plan	Proposed Ground - Building A	2308SW_R1_104	30.07.2024
Elevation plan	Approved - Building A	2308SW_R1_105	30.07.2024
Elevation & Floor plan	Proposed - Plot 1	2308SW_R1_200	30.07.2024
Elevation plan	Proposed - Plot 2	2308SW_R1_201	30.07.2024
Floor plan	Proposed - Plot 2	2308SW_R1_202	30.07.2024
Elevation plan	Proposed - Plot 3	2308SW_R1_203	30.07.2024
Floor plan	Proposed - Plot 3	2308SW_R1_204	30.07.2024
Details plan	Materials	2308SW_R1_900	30.07.2024
Design & Access Statement		none	30.07.2024
Site plan	Proposed	2308SW_R1_003	30.07.2024
Site plan	Proposed	2308SW_R1_004	30.07.2024
Supporting Statement	EDNA Assessment	none	30.07.2024
Supporting Statement	BNG Assessment	GS319	30.07.2024
Supporting Docs	Conditions Assessment	none	12.08.2024
Supporting Docs	BNG Metric	none	12.08.2024
Supporting Statement	Ecological Impact Assessment	GS282	30.07.2024
Supporting Statement	Noise Impact Assessment	none	30.07.2024
Supporting Statement	Baseline Water Usage	none	30.07.2024
Supporting Statement	Rainwater Harvesting	none	30.07.2024
Supporting Statement	Water Neutrality	none	30.07.2024
Supporting Statement	EDNA	none	30.07.2024

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Hannah Darley Date: 27.02.2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 08.04.2026