Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/25/1009
Land To The South East of, Spring Gardens, Washington, West Sussex,

DESCRIPTION:

Retention of existing entrance and stable block together with reduced area of hardstanding (permeable). (Retrospective).

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/22/1023	Erection of a stable & kennel building and laying of hardstanding.	Application Refused on 19.06.2024
DC/24/1327	Retention of existing entrance and stable block together with reduced area of hardstanding (permeable) and parking for a single works van / trailer.	Application Refused on 28.10.2024
DC/25/0183	Retention of existing entrance and stable block together with reduced area of hardstanding (permeable) and parking for a single works van / trailer (Retrospective)	Application Refused on 02.04.2025

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site comprises approximately 0.35 hectares of land located to the south-east of Spring Gardens, Washington, situated between the A24 trunk road and a cluster of five residential properties (The Orchard, Sumar, Russets, Woodfold, and Birchdown). The site is currently in use as a paddock, historically used for the grazing of livestock for several decades. The applicant resides at The Orchard, immediately to the south-east of the site.

The site is bounded to the east and south by a public footpath linking Spring Gardens to Rock Road. The northern boundary fronts onto Spring Gardens, a cul-de-sac serving 21 dwellings and Spring Garden Nursery, which operates a farm shop, and café. To the north-west, beyond the A24, lies a large cluster of commercial premises including Hughes Pumps, Thermco Systems, Sussex Car & Motorhome Centre, and Toovey's Auctioneers.

The site is not located within a Conservation Area, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or National Park, and there are no Tree Preservation Orders affecting it. The land lies within Flood Zone 1, indicating a low probability of flooding.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The application seeks retrospective planning permission for the retention of an existing vehicular entrance, a stable block, and a reduced area of permeable hardstanding. The stable block provides accommodation for two horses and has a gross external floor area of 25.5m², with a maximum ridge height of 3.25m, timber clad elevations, and a pitched roof.

The hardstanding area at the northern end of the site has been reduced from approximately 500m² to 185m², equating to 5.3% of the overall site area. The gravel surface is permeable. The reduced hard standing allows space for the parking of a single horsebox trailer and vehicle turning within the site, avoiding the need to reverse onto the public highway.

No commercial equestrian activity is proposed; the stable block is for the private use of the applicant's horses. No new mains water connections are proposed, and the paddock will continue to be served by the existing water tap.

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 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 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking

Neighbourhood Plan:
Storrington Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan has been Made.
Policy 1- A Spatial Plan for the Parishes
Policy 14- Design

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):
Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 10: Flooding
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Policy 33: Equestrian Development

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

Parish Design Statement:

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: No Objection - Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes.

WSCC Highways: No Objection - From a highways perspective the current use has been in existence for some time. As stated above we are not aware of any adverse comments that may have been made by the LHA, or of any other highway related concerns with this site and the current use. Therefore, we would not foresee there being any significant highway issues to this use continuing through this retrospective application.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

None Received

Parish Comments:

Washington Parish Council: No Objection - to the stable being used solely for stabling and not storage, and for the parking of one horsebox. The Committee also agreed to express its concern at the number of applications being submitted for this site without overall effective de-termination and, if appropriate, enforcement.

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:

Policy 29 of the HDPF supports equestrian development where it is appropriate in scale and character to its location, does not harm the landscape character, and is well-related to existing buildings and land uses. In addition, Policy 26 seeks to protect the countryside against inappropriate development while allowing for uses that support rural enterprises and land-based activities.

The site has an established planning history relating to its use for equestrian purposes and the formation of an access. In March 2022, permission was granted under DC/22/0219 for the creation of a new paddock entrance following removal of the existing entrance. A subsequent application (DC/22/1023) seeking retrospective permission for a stable and kennel building with associated hardstanding was refused in June 2024. In October 2024, a revised application (DC/24/1327) for the

retention of the entrance and stable block, reduced hardstanding, and parking for a single works van/trailer was refused. A further resubmission (DC/25/0183) with similar provisions was refused in April 2025. The current application seeks to address the previous refusal reasons by removing any commercial parking element and further reducing the extent of hard standing.

The proposal relates to the retention of a modest stable block and ancillary works within an established paddock. The development supports an existing rural land use without introducing new built form beyond what is functionally required for the keeping of horses. No change of use is proposed, and the paddock will remain in agricultural/equestrian use. The reduction in hardstanding from previous schemes further minimises visual and environmental impact.

Given the modest scale, established use, and alignment with the objectives of Policies 26 and 29, the principle of the development is acceptable in policy terms, subject to detailed considerations relating to character, amenity, highways, and environmental constraints. It is however considered reasonable and necessary to impose a condition limiting the use of the site for private equestrian purposes only.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) require development to demonstrate high-quality design that respects the character of the surrounding area. Policy 32 highlights that design is a core component of sustainable development and must respond to the site context, while Policy 33 requires proposals to make efficient use of land, ensure appropriate scale, massing and layout, and integrate positively with the character of the site and surroundings.

The stable block is modest in scale at 25.5m², with a ridge height of 3.25m, and is constructed with timber-clad walls and a pitched roof. These materials are typical of rural equestrian buildings and help the structure integrate with the paddock setting. The reduced hardstanding area, finished in permeable gravel, lessens the visual impact from Spring Gardens and allows for reinstatement of grassland, improving the rural and verdant character of the site.

The surrounding area is varied, with residential properties to the west, a cluster of commercial buildings beyond the A24 to the north, and open paddock land adjoining the site. Against this backdrop, the scale and form of the stable are proportionate and do not appear intrusive in long or short-range views. The use of natural materials and the retention of open grassland ensures the site maintains a rural appearance despite its proximity to mixed-use surroundings.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with HDPF Policies 25, 26, 29, 32, and 33, as well as Neighbourhood Plan Policy 14, by respecting local character, minimising visual intrusion, and ensuring that new development is sympathetic to its setting.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33(2) of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states that planning permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers or users of nearby properties and land. This includes considerations of privacy, outlook, light, noise, and general disturbance. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024), particularly paragraph 198, also requires that development is appropriate for its location and avoids significant adverse effects on health, living conditions, and the natural environment.

The nearest dwellings are located to the west of the site across Spring Gardens, with the applicant's own dwelling immediately to the south-east. Given the separation distances and the low-level nature of the stable block, there is no impact on outlook, daylight, or privacy.

The proposal will not intensify the equestrian use beyond the existing two horses, meaning there is no increase in noise or disturbance beyond what is expected in a rural location. Background traffic noise from the adjacent A24 already forms the dominant sound environment. The 'Supporting Statement' has stated that the manure will be stored temporarily on-site to allow composting and will then be removed for use as fertiliser at nearby gardens, with storage positioned away from sensitive receptors.

Overall, the proposal is not considered to cause any unacceptable impact on the amenity of nearby occupiers, in accordance with HDPF Policy 33 and the NPPF.

Highways Impacts:

Policies 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) require that development provides safe and suitable access for all users, does not result in adverse highway impacts, and includes adequate parking provision. These are supported by paragraphs 115–118 of the NPPF (2024), which state that development should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe and should prioritise sustainable modes of travel where possible.

West Sussex County Council has reviewed the retrospective application and raised no objections. The current access, stable building, and hardstanding have been in place for some time, and there is no evidence of adverse highway impacts associated with the existing use. The LHA also previously raised no concerns under earlier applications (DC/24/1327 and DC/25/183), and the Local Planning Authority's earlier refusal was on non-highway grounds. Therefore, the LHA considers the continued use of the site to pose no significant highway safety or capacity issues. The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with the above policies.

Water Neutrality:

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

The Water Neutrality Statement identifies that the development would result in no greater water demand than the existing horses grazed on the land. There is therefore no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development would result in a more intensive us necessitating an increased consumption of water that would result in a significant impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The grant of planning permission would not therefore adversely affect the integrity of these sites or otherwise conflict with policy 31 of the HDPF, NPPF paragraph 194 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

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 application is retrospective made under Section 73(A) of the Town and Country Planning Act.

Conclusions:

The proposal seeks retrospective consent for a modest and functional stable block and reduced permeable hardstanding within an established paddock. The development is of appropriate scale, design, and materials for its rural context, and the reduction in hardstanding from previous schemes lessens visual impact and enhances the green character of the site.

The scheme would not result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity or highway safety and has demonstrated compliance with water neutrality requirements. The proposal is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the HDPF, the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan, and the NPPF.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2 **Regulatory Condition**: No external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed other than with the permission of the Local Planning Authority by way of formal application.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

3 **Regulatory Condition**: The approved landscaping as shown on plan reference 676-04 B shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first planting season following the permission hereby granted. Unless otherwise agreed as part of the approved landscaping, no trees or hedges on the site shall be wilfully damaged or uprooted, felled/removed, topped or lopped without the previous written consent of the Local Planning Authority until 5 years after completion of the development. Any proposed or retained planting, which within a period of 5 years, dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development that is sympathetic to the landscape and townscape character and built form of the surroundings, and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Regulatory Condition**: The stable building hereby permitted shall be for private use only. The facilities shall not be used by visiting members of the public or for the staging of equestrian competitions, the provision of equestrian livery services for financial reward, or for a riding school providing horse riding lessons to the general public.

Reason: In the interests of amenity, to enable the Local Planning Authority to regulate and control the development and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

5 **Regulatory Condition**: The resultant waste and manure shall not be stored or burnt within 30m of nearby residential properties.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

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/25/1009
(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Plans	Proposed	676-04 REV B	18.06.2025
Elevation & Floor plan	Proposed	676-05 REV B	18.06.2025
Plans	Proposed Site Entrance	676-06 REV B	18.06.2025
Plans	Visibility Splays	676-07 REV B	18.06.2025
Supporting Statement		NONE	18.06.2025
Supporting Docs	Water Neutrality Strategy	ENV24392 REV 00	18.06.2025
Location plan		676-01	18.06.2025
Site plan		676-02	18.06.2025
Plans	Existing	676-03	18.06.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Shazia Penne Date: 11.08.2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial Tamara Dale Date: 13.08.2025