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Planning Statement

Stonehouse Farm, Handcross Road

March 2025



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Project Name: Stonehouse Farm

Location Stonehouse Farm, Handcross Road,
Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 6NZ

Client: Lake Investments Ltd

File Reference: P2197

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been produced by ECE Planning on behalf of the Applicant, **Lake Investments Ltd**, in support of a Full Planning Application at Stonehouse Farm ('the Site'). The description of development reads,

Full Planning Application to form a comprehensive masterplan including:

- 1. Rationalisation and enhancement of existing commercial facilities (Use Classes E(g) B2 and B8 at Stonehouse Business Park including demolition of two buildings and their replacement with new Class E(g), B2 and B8 facilities. Extension of existing building to form a new office and wardens' accommodation. Existing mobile home removed.*
- 2. Decommissioning of the Anaerobic Digester and re-use of the existing 2no buildings for storage and office uses (Class E (g) and B8) and the diversion of a public footpath.*
- 3. Residential redevelopment of the Jacksons Farm site including the demolition of existing barns to provide 3no. dwellings with access, parking, and landscaping.*

- 1.2. As outlined in the development description above, this Planning Application proposes a comprehensive masterplan for the redevelopment of Stonehouse Farm, specifically addressing three distinct lots:

Lot 2 – Stonehouse Business Park - Rationalisation and improvement of existing commercial facilities (Class E (g) and B2 and B8 uses, including the demolition of two buildings to be replaced with a new Class E (g) and B8 building. An existing building will be extended to accommodate office space and wardens' accommodation. The existing mobile home on site will be removed.

Lot 8 - Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Main Livestock Building - Decommissioning of Anaerobic Digester and re-use of buildings for commercial, storage and office uses. Diversion of public footpath off Handcross Road.

Lot 9 - Jacksons Farm - Residential redevelopment of Jacksons Farm Site for 3no. Dwellings.

- 1.3. The Applicant is also seeking to register 52 acres of the farm as part of a wider Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) scheme, as referenced in the accompanying reports.
- 1.4. Full details of the proposals and drone footage can be found in the following link: <https://vimeo.com/1054450536?share=copy#t=0>
- 1.5. The Applicant has previously undertaken Pre-Application discussions with Horsham District Council which has cumulated in a response dated 7 November (reference PE/24/0158).
- 1.6. The proposals have been developed in close consultation with the Parish Councils and neighbouring residents, who have expressed support for the scheme. The applicant has actively engaged with these stakeholders throughout the process and has presented plans at formal and informal meetings. Full details of engagement can be found in **Appendix A** which details the Statement of Community Involvement in full.
- 1.7. This Statement sets out the relevant background for the determination of the planning application, including a description of the site and its surroundings, the relevant planning history, planning policy, key details of the proposed development and assessment of the relevant planning considerations.

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- 1.8. In support of this application, the Statement will examine relevant planning policy and guidance. The proposals have been informed by the Development Plan comprising the National Planning Policy Framework, the Planning Practice Guidance and the Horsham District Planning Framework.
- 1.9. This Planning Application should be considered with full regard to the following suite of supporting documents, drawings, and plans:
- **Planning Application, CIL and Notice Forms**
 - **Overall Location Plan**
 - **Architectural Drawings including Site Location and Block Plan, Proposed Site Layout, Floorplans and Elevations (for all three parcels of land)**
 - **Planning and Design and Access Statement**
 - **Visuals**
 - **Acoustic Reporting**
 - **Transport Reporting**
 - **Ecology Design Stage Report, EclA, Site Wide Masterplan and BNG Metrics**
 - **Arboricultural Impact Assessment**
 - **Energy and Sustainability Statement**
 - **Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy**
 - **Foul Drainage Report**
 - **Preliminary Ground Contamination Risk Assessment Report**
 - **Water Neutrality Statement**
 - **Statement of Community Involvement**

2. The Site

- 2.1. The Site is located outside of any defined Built-up Area Boundary and is located within the countryside. The northern boundary of the High Weald AONB is located immediately south and adjacent to the site.
- 2.2. The Site, now known as Stonehouse Farm, covers approximately 41 hectares (outlined in red within Figure 1). It was historically used as an agricultural holding, initially for dairy farming and later for cattle and sheep breeding as well as anaerobic digestion of slurry and the exportation of generated electricity. It contains several agricultural buildings, some of which have remained unused, while others have received planning permission for either temporary or permanent commercial use.
- 2.3. The Site was originally purchased in 2002 and comprises the original farm dwelling and land associated with Stonehouse Farm, which fronts onto Handcross Road (the southern part of the holding), plus the land previously known as Jacksons Farm fronting onto Hammerpond Road (the northern part of the holding).
- 2.4. The site comprises a number of vacant, former farm buildings, a mobile home, a milking barn, cow shed, and a feed / storage barn and a new livestock building, located close to the existing anaerobic digestion plant. The part of the farm adjacent to Handcross Road is used almost entirely for commercial purposes.



Figure 1- Site Wide Plan

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- 2.5. The surrounding area comprises open countryside, with scattered agricultural and residential buildings, and fields bordered by trees.
- 2.6. A public footpath (FP1708) crosses the farm between Handcross Road and Hammerpond Road north to south, close to the eastern boundary of the site.
- 2.7. The Site is identified as being a 'high potential' site in terms of Biodiversity Net Gain and as being within the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (The St Leonards Watershed BOA 34). The Site is identified as being low risk area for great crested newts or as unsuitable for great crested newts.
- 2.8. The site is identified as being Brick Clay (weald Formation) by the West Sussex Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Guidance. There is an area to the north of the site that is identified as being an Archaeological Site.
- 2.9. In terms of flood risk, the site is located in Flood Zone 1 which means that the site has low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. Surface water maps have shown some areas of the site have surface water risk.

3. Planning History

3.1. Introduction

- 3.1.1. A review of Horsham District Council's online planning register has identified a significant planning history for the wider site. This section outlines the relevant planning history for each of the three lots, organised by area as follows:

3.2. Lot 2 – Stonehouse Business Park

Building 1

- 3.2.1. **Reference DC/23/0545.** Change of use of agricultural store and dairy processing plant to Use Class B2 and part B8 for the maintenance and repair of HGV motor vehicles (as previously granted under a limited period of three years under DC/19/1046). Application Withdrawn.
- 3.2.2. **Reference DC/23/1326.** Change of use to permanent use for Class B2 / B8 parking of HGV vehicles (Retrospective). Application Withdrawn.
- 3.2.3. **Reference DC/19/1046.** Temporary change of use for a further three-year period of an agricultural store and dairy processing plant to Use Class B1 and part B8 (Renewal of DC/16/0702). Application Permitted 03/03/20.
- 3.2.4. **Reference DC/19/1035.** Temporary change of use for a period of three years of existing hardstanding from Use Class B1 to Use Class B1/B8 for the storage of full and empty skips and for overnight parking of vehicles in connection with the use (Renewal of DC/18/0109). Application Permitted 30/03/20.
- 3.2.5. **Reference DC/18/0109.** Proposed change of use of existing hardstanding from Class B1 to Class B1 /B8 for the storage of full and empty skips and for overnight parking of vehicles in connection with the use. Application Permitted 08/06/18
- 3.2.6. **Reference DC/11/2010.** Erection of an agricultural store and dairy processing unit - revised design to earlier planning approval under ref DC/06/1106 (which has been partially implemented) with the addition of solar panels to be mounted on the south-western part of the roof. Application Permitted 25/11/11.

Building 2

- 3.2.7. **Reference DC/22/0829** - Retrospective application for the replacement of an Agricultural Building. Application Refused 20/10/2022 and Dismissed at Appeal under reference APP/Z3825/W/22/3311244 on water neutrality grounds alone.

Building 3

- 3.2.8. **Reference DC/21/0725** - Application to confirm the continuous stationing of a mobile home for residential purposes (Class C3) for a period in excess of ten years (Lawful Development Certificate Existing). Application Permitted 15/06/22.
- 3.2.9. **Reference DC/15/1270** – Prior Approval of proposed change of use of an agricultural building (Milking Parlour) to one dwellinghouses (Use Class C3). Application Refused 20/07/15 & Subsequent Appeal Withdrawn.

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- 3.2.10. **Reference DC/15/0409** - Prior Approval of Proposed Change of Use of an Agricultural Building (Milking Parlour) to one dwellinghouses (Use Class C3). Application Refused 23/04/23.

Building 4

- 3.2.11. **Reference DC/16/0454** – Change of Use from slab making (Sui Generis) to B1 offices, with retention of existing parking. Application Permitted 05/05/16.
- 3.2.12. **Reference DC/16/0381** – Retrospective change of use on agricultural barn to B1 light industry in a residential area. Application Permitted 05/05/16.
- 3.2.13. **Reference DC/15/0208** - Change of use of lean-to attached to dutch barn and associated yard from agriculture to paving slab manufacturing and sales. Application Permitted 02/04/15.

Building 5

- 3.2.14. **Reference DC/15/1295** - Prior approval of proposed change of use of an agricultural building (Grain Store) to one dwellinghouses (Use class C3). Prior Approval Required and Refused 30/07/15, Subsequent Appeal Withdrawn.
- 3.2.15. **Reference DC/15/0408** - Prior Approval of proposed change of use of an agricultural building (grain store) to one dwellinghouses (Use Class C3). Prior Approval Required and Refused 13/04/15.

Office Building

- 3.2.16. **Reference DC/16/1224** - Prior Notification for Change of Use of Agricultural Building to a Dwelling House. Prior Approval Required and Application Permitted 27/07/16.
- 3.2.17. **Reference DC/15/1271** - Prior Approval of proposed change of use of an agricultural building (Farm Office) to one dwellinghouses (Use Class C3). Prior Approval Required and Application Refused 30/06/15, Subsequent Appeal Withdrawn.
- 3.2.18. **Reference DC/15/0410** - Prior Approval of Proposed Change of Use of an Agricultural Building (Farm Office) to one dwellinghouses (Use Class C3). Prior Approval Required and Application Refused 13/04/15.

3.3. Lot 8 - Main Livestock Building and Anaerobic Digester

Main Livestock Building

- 3.3.1. **Reference DC/19/1122** – Amendments to dairy livestock building approval of full application DC/15/1831 to include an additional 384 sq. m of gross floor area and additional concrete yard area, creation of tracks as well as increasing the height of the building. Application Permitted 30/03/20.
- 3.3.2. **Reference DC/15/1831** – Construction of dairy parlour to be served by farm track (to include resurfacing and widening) to be accessed from Handcross Road. Application Permitted 02/06/17.
- 3.3.3. **Reference DC/14/2286** – Portal frame Livestock Building. Application Permitted 19/03/15.

Anaerobic Digester

- 3.3.4. **Reference DC/14/0729** – Creation of agricultural building for Anaerobic Digestion (re-siting of building permitted under DC/13/0259) Application Permitted 10/07/14.

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- 3.3.5. **Reference DC/13/0259** - Prior notification for new agricultural building Application Permitted. Prior Approval not Required. 10 April 2013.
- 3.3.6. APP/Z3825/C/22/3290669 and APP/Z3825/C/22/3290670 Linked cases - PLANNING APPEAL AGAINST ENFORCEMENT NOTICE EN/21/0534 ISSUED Mobile home for security at AD plant. HDC reference EN/21/0534. Full development description is 'Without planning permission, the material change of use of the Land from agricultural to the stationing of a caravan for residential occupation the approximate location of which is shown edged in blue on the attached plan'. (APP/Z3825/C/22/3290669 & APP/Z3825/C/22/3290670 (caravan – Stonehouse Farm))' Case closed.
- 3.3.7. **Reference DC/12/2086** – Prior notification for new agricultural building [NO PLAN, DISPUTE BETWEEN LOCATION AND NO RESOLUTION/ DECISION DOCUMENTS]. Prior Approval Required 03/12/12.

3.4. Lot 9 – Jacksons, Hammerpond Road

2no. Barns and Surrounding Buildings

- 3.4.1. **Reference DC/22/0842** - Notification of Change of Use of part of an Agricultural Building, not exceeding 150sqm, to storage and distribution use (Class B8). No Objection to Notification 07/06/2.
- 3.4.2. **Reference DC/14/2276** - Retention of mobile home for a further period of three years whilst the dwelling approved under application DC/13/0134 is constructed (for use by herdsman). Application Permitted 08/01/15 and Enforcement Appeal Hearing 3 October 2023. Case Closed.
- 3.4.3. APP/Z3825/C/22/3290675 and APP/Z3825/C/22/3290676 Linked cases - PLANNING APPEAL AGAINST ENFORCEMENT NOTICE EN/21/0544 ISSUED For agricultural workers mobile home. HDC reference EN/21/0544. Full development description is 'Without planning permission, the material change of use of the land from agriculture to the stationing of a caravan for residential occupation the approximate location of which is shown edged blue on the attached plan'. (APP/Z3825/C/22/3290675 & APP/Z3825/C/22/3290676 (caravans Jacksons Farm))' Case Closed.
- 3.4.4. **Reference DC/14/1405** - Creation of a farm workers dwelling (Approval of Reserved Matters). Application Permitted 27/08/14.
- 3.4.5. **Reference DC/13/0134** - Erection of a farm workers dwelling (Outline planning). Application Permitted 30/04/13.
- 3.4.6. **Reference DC/12/2090** - Erection of a farm workers dwelling. Withdrawn Application 09/05/13, Subsequent Appeal Withdrawn.
- 3.4.7. **Reference DC/11/1313** - Retrospective permission for a milking parlour (Resubmission of DC/09/1620). Application Refused 14/09/11.
- 3.4.8. **Reference DC/11/0296** - Internal fitting out of livestock shed to facilitate robotic milking, at Jacksons Farm, Hammerpond Road (Lawful Development Certificate - Proposed). Application Permitted 20/06/11.
- 3.4.9. **Reference DC/10/2030** - Retrospective permission for a pole barn for agricultural use - tractor store [DOESN'T RELATE TO HAMMERPOND SITE]. Application Permitted 23/12/10.

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- 3.4.10. **Reference DC/10/1018** - Change of Use of land for siting of mobile home for agricultural stock persons for a temporary period of one year. Application Permitted 10/12/13.
- 3.4.11. **Reference DC/09/1779** - Retrospective application for installation of underground slurry storage tank, maintenance track and access ramps to fields for cows and machinery. Application Refused 07/10/10.
- 3.4.12. **Reference DC/09/1620** - Proposed new milking parlour and retrospective consent for access road and additional close boarded fence 1.8 metre high adjacent to highway. Application Refused 07/10/10.
- 3.4.13. **Reference DC/09/0819** - Retrospective application for location of 2 feed silos within 25 metres of a highway. Application Permitted 07/10/10.
- 3.4.14. **Reference DC/09/0804** - Re-positioning of entrance door and concrete apron to southern elevation of cattle feed store (approved under DC/06/0408) retention of extended yard and landscaping area with improvements. Application Refused 07/10/10.

3.5. Pre-Application - Reference PE/24/0158

Pre-Application Site Visit 21 August 2024. Advice received 7 November 2024.

- 3.5.1. Full details of the Pre-Application Advice can be found under reference PE/24/0158.

4. The Proposal

4.1. Introduction

4.1.1. This application seeks planning permission for,

Full Planning Application to form a comprehensive masterplan including:

1. *Rationalisation and enhancement of existing commercial facilities (Use Classes E(g) B2 and B8 at Stonehouse Business Park including demolition of two buildings and their replacement with new Class E(g), B2 and B8 facilities. Extension of existing building to form a new office and wardens' accommodation. Existing mobile home removed.*
2. *Decommissioning of the Anaerobic Digester and re-use of the existing 2no buildings for storage and office uses (Class E (g) and B8) and the diversion of a public footpath.*
3. *Residential redevelopment of the Jacksons Farm site including the demolition of existing barns to provide 3no. dwellings with access, parking, and landscaping.*

4.1.2. Each of these individual proposals should be considered as part of the wider site masterplan but must be able to proceed separately in relation to any proposed conditions/obligations pursuant to each proposal.

4.1.3. The redevelopment proposals for Stonehouse Farm are visually represented in Figure 2, within the site wide masterplan prepared by CSA. This masterplan illustrates the individual plots in isolation while also presenting the broader vision for the overall redevelopment sought through this application, or subsequent applications.



Figure 2- Site Wide Masterplan

4.2. For an enlarged version of the site wide masterplan please refer to **Appendix B** of this Planning Statement. Each individual site will be explained in further detail throughout the relevant sections.

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4.3. Lot 2 – Stonehouse Business Park

4.3.1. The proposals for Stonehouse Business Park are visually detailed in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3- Proposed Site Plan – Stonehouse Business Park

- 4.3.2. **Commercial Building 1** - The proposals seek to regularise Commercial Building 1 for Class B2, B8 and Class E (g) light industrial uses. The building will remain as existing with the yard to the rear of the site.
- 4.3.3. **Commercial Building 2** – The proposals will be regularised for Class B2, B8, and E(g) (light industrial) uses. The building will remain as existing.
- 4.3.4. **Commercial Building 3** – The existing building and mobile home on-site are proposed to be demolished and replaced with a new building for Class B2, B8, and Class E (g) (light distribution) uses. The replacement building will be situated on a similar footprint to the existing structure.
- 4.3.5. **Commercial Building 4** – The proposals seek to regularise Commercial Building 4 for Class B2, B8, and E (g) (light industrial) uses. While the building itself will remain, the structure to the north will be demolished.
- 4.3.6. **Commercial Building 5** – The building will be demolished to allow for further parking on site.
- 4.3.7. **Office** – The existing office building will remain but will be extended to include additional office space and wardens' residential accommodation which is critical for site security (to replace the lawful mobile home on site) as existing. The proposals seek to regularise the use.
- 4.3.8. The existing hedge and tree lines to the north and east boundaries of the site adjoining the lakes will be supplemented with additional native ever green tree and hedging planting as well as natural willow screening to provide an instant screen whilst new and existing planting matures.

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4.4. Lot 8 - Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Livestock Building

- 4.4.1. The proposal aims to decommission the existing AD Plant and repurpose both the AD Plant and the adjacent agricultural (former livestock) building for Class B8 and Class E (g) use. The details of these proposals are illustrated in Figure 4.

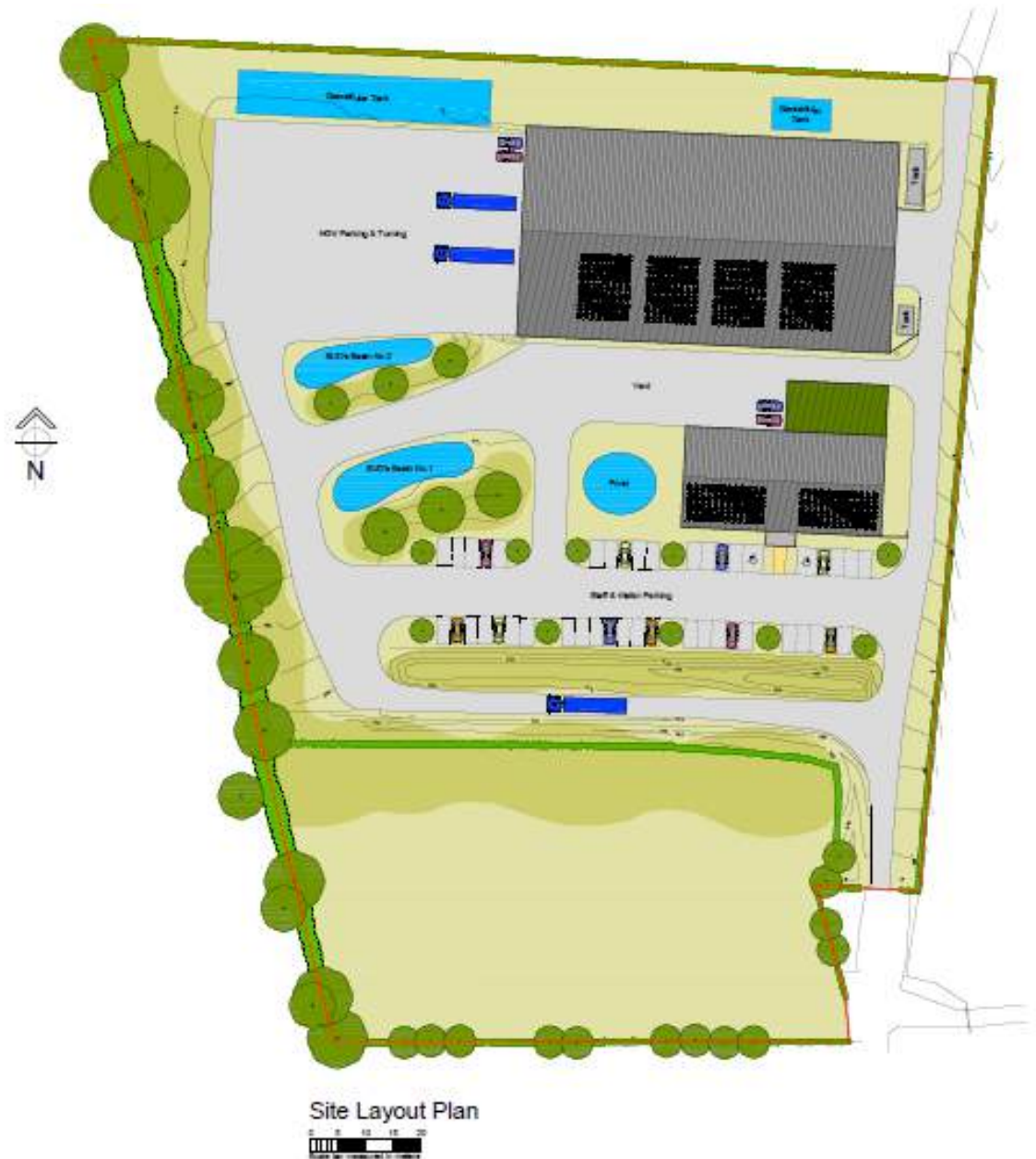


Figure 4 - Proposed Site Plan – Lot 8

- 4.4.2. The proposals focus solely on converting the existing buildings to meet the requirements of potential future occupants. The buildings are expected to be adapted for uses such as office spaces, light commercial and storage facilities.
- 4.4.3. The buildings will be used by a local business for offices and storage of aerospace parts for distribution. The company are currently operating from a site near Steyning and are in need larger premises.

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- 4.4.4. The scheme does not propose any extensions to the buildings. Modifications are limited to reconfiguring the internal layout and installing additional windows and doors to improve natural light and outlook for the proposed office uses. The external appearance of the buildings will also be amended to retain the rural aesthetic of the buildings, whilst allowing for the future re use.
- 4.4.5. The site includes designated areas for HGV parking and turning, which are essential for logistics and distribution operations under Use Class B8. Staff and visitor parking is also allocated to support the operational needs of both Use Class E (g) and B8.
- 4.4.6. As part of these proposals the scheme seeks to redirect the existing public right of way (PRoW) which runs alongside the buildings. The PRoW redirection can be found detailed in drawing (TS19302-GA-013).
- 4.4.7. Further drainage features and landscaping is proposed, which will be detailed further within the Appraisal section of this Statement.

4.5. Lot 9 – Jacksons Farm

- 4.5.1. The proposals seek to demolish the existing agricultural buildings present on site and replace these with 3no. detached dwellings with associated parking and landscaping. The proposals for the Jacksons Farm can be found detailed visually in Figure 5 below.

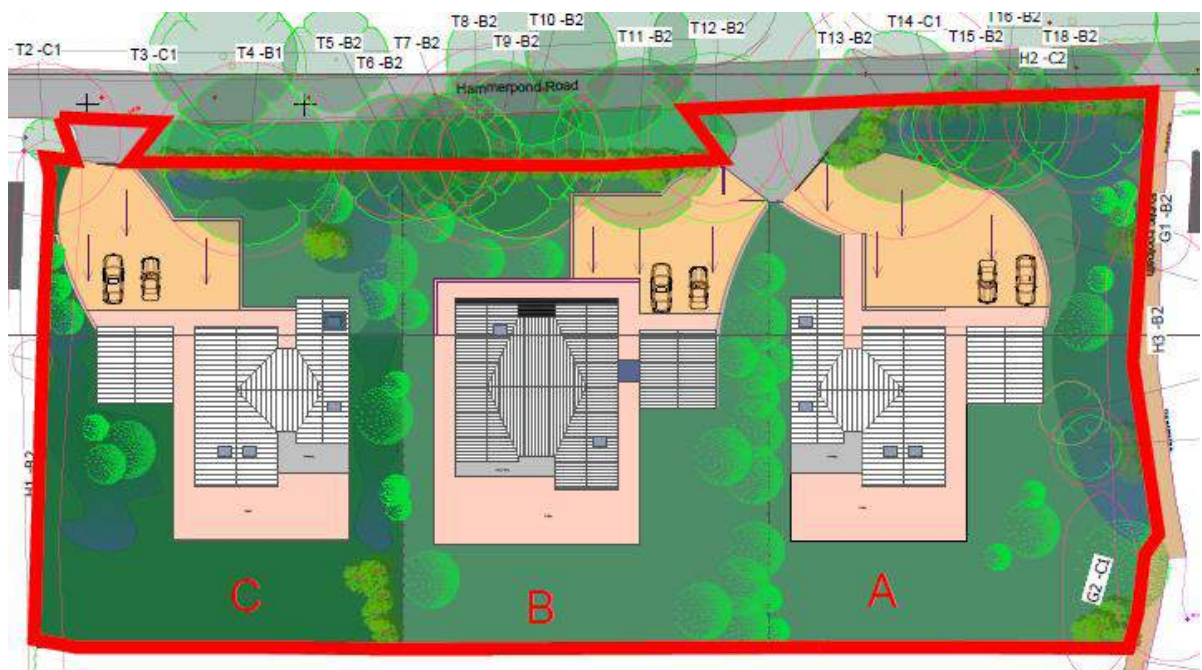


Figure 5- Proposed Site Plan - Jacksons Residential

- 4.5.2. The development site will be accessed via upgraded existing access points, with Plot C utilising the western access and Plots A and B using the eastern access onto Hammerpond Road. The proposal also seeks to retain the Public Right of Way along the eastern boundary.
- 4.5.3. A total of 14 parking spaces have been allocated across the development, with four spaces per dwelling. Cycle parking will be provided within the garages.
- 4.5.4. All dwellings will have private landscaped gardens to the rear, with additional landscaping integrated within the site and along its boundaries.

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- 4.5.5. The proposed material palette consists of cedar cladding, black timber cladding, zinc cladding, black brick, and black-framed windows, ensuring a high-quality, traditional and farmstead design.
- 4.5.6. For further details on the scheme, please refer to the submitted architectural drawings and design and access statement.

5. Policy Overview

5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires, that where the Development Plan contains relevant policies, an application for planning permission shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations otherwise. In this case the Development Plan comprises:

- **Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)**
- **Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan**

- 5.1.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework), the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and Supplementary Planning Guidance are material considerations, together with local guidance documents.

- 5.1.3. It should be noted that the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework is currently out of date by reason of it being over 5 years old. The Government require all Local Authorities to review the Local Plan every five years and therefore the Council are currently in the midst of preparing a new Local Plan for the District.

5.2. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.2.1. The NPPF, most recently amended in December 2024, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
- 5.2.2. The following extracts of the NPPF are considered most relevant in the determination of this application. The below are not explored in detail within this Statement but have been fully reviewed in preparation of this application.

Chapter 2 (Achieving Sustainable Development)

Chapter 5 (Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes)

Chapter 9 (Promoting Sustainable Transport)

Chapter 11 (Making Effective use of Land)

Chapter 12 (Achieving well-designed places)

Chapter 14 (Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change)

Chapter 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)

5.3. Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 5.3.1. The PPG supplements the overarching objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework. The guidance provided by the PPG has been fully considered in the creation of the application and the proposed plans are seen to be fully compliant with it.

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5.4. Strategic Planning Policy – Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

- 5.4.1. The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) was adopted in November 2015 and is the overarching planning document for Horsham District outside the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and replaces the Core Strategy and General Development Control Policies documents which were adopted in 2007.
- 5.4.2. Although the HDPF is out of date by reason of it being over 5 years old, the following policies are considered to be relevant to the application and have been given full consideration in the preparation of this application.

Policy 1 Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development

Policy 2 Strategic Development

Policy 3 Development Hierarchy

Policy 7 Economic Growth

Policy 9 Employment Development

Policy 10 Rural Economic Development

Policy 11 Tourism and Cultural Facilities

Policy 15 Housing Provision

Policy 24 Environmental Protection

Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Policy 26 Countryside Protection

Policy 28 Replacement Dwellings

Policy 31 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Policy 32 The Quality of New Development

Policy 33 Development Principles

Policy 34 Environment

Policy 37 Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy 38 Flooding

Policy 39 Infrastructure Provision

Policy 40 Sustainable Transport

Policy 41 Parking

5.5. Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan (Post examination, not made yet)

Policy 1: Biodiversity

Policy 2: Landscape Character

Policy 3: Green Infrastructure

Policy 4: Sustainability

Policy 5: Energy Efficiency

Policy 10: Windfall Development

Policy 11: Housing Mix

Policy 12: Design

Policy 13: Density

Policy 14: Recreation Areas

Policy 16: Broadband and Telecommunications

Policy 17: Existing Employment Sites

Policy 18: Economic Growth

5.6. Other Relevant Guidance and Policies

5.6.1. The following summaries the relevant guidance for this application:

- Revised County Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology (2020)
- Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)
- WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (September 2020)
- Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Guidance for Sussex (2021)
- Natural England Position Statement September (2021)
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Planning Advice Note (2022)

5.7. Draft Regulation 19 Horsham District Local Plan

5.7.1. It is advised that the policies within the submission Horsham District Local Plan carry limited weight, however the weight afforded to the draft policies will likely increase the closer the HDLP gets to formal adoption. The relevant policies within the draft local plan at the time of writing are:

Strategic Policy 1 Sustainable Development

Strategic Policy 2 Development Hierarchy

Strategic Policy 3 Settlement Expansion

Strategic Policy 7 Appropriate Energy Use

Policy 8 Rural Economic Development

Strategic Policy 8 Sustainable Design and Construction

Strategic Policy 9 Water Neutrality

Strategic Policy 10 Flooding

Strategic Policy 11 Environmental Protection

Strategic Policy 13 The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Strategic Policy 14 Countryside Protection

Strategic Policy 16 Protected Landscapes

Strategic Policy 17 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Strategic Policy 20 Development Principles

Policy 21 Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment

Strategic Policy 24 Sustainable Transport

Policy 25 Parking; Policy 28 Community Facilities and Uses

Policy 32 Conversion of Agricultural and Rural Buildings to Commercial, Community & Residential Uses

Policy 34 Tourism Facilities and Visitor Accommodation

Policy 37 Housing Provision

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Policy 38 Meeting Local Housing Needs

Policy 39 Affordable Housing (on sites greater than 0.5 hectares)

Policy 40 Improving Housing Standards in the District

Policy 45 Replacement dwellings

6. Planning Appraisal

6.1. Introduction

- 6.1.1. This section of the Statement details how the proposed development complies with the policies set out within the Development Plan. The Planning Appraisal will be divided into separate proposals, with each appraised individually on its merits.

7. Lot 2 – Stonehouse Business Park

7.1. Principle of Development

- 7.1.1. The application site consists of several existing commercial buildings of varying sizes and functions, including a singular agricultural storage building as well as commercial, light industrial and office spaces.
- 7.1.2. Although the site is located outside the defined built-up area boundary, it is important to note that the site is a brownfield site which currently hosts a range of existing commercial and industrial activities, both consented for temporary and permanent uses. It is considered that these ongoing "business enterprise" activities contribute to the sites current function and should be considered a material factor and weight in evaluating future proposals for business use on the site.
- 7.1.3. The proposals seek to rationalise, replace and improve existing buildings within the site. Proposals include the demolition of two dilapidated buildings (Building 3 and 5) on site, sought to be replaced by a new commercial and industrial building. The building to the front will be extended to provide further office space and residential accommodation for an onsite warden. The existing mobile home on site is sought to be removed.
- 7.1.4. **Policy 10** of the HDPF states that,

Sustainable rural economic development and enterprise within the district will be encouraged in order to generate local employment opportunities and economic, social and environmental benefits for local communities.

In the countryside, development which maintains the quality and character of the area, whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity will be supported in principle. Any development should be appropriate to the countryside location and must:

1. *Contribute to the diverse and sustainable farming enterprises within the district or, in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, contribute to the wider rural economy and/or promote recreation in, and the enjoyment of, the countryside; and either*
 - (a) *Be contained wherever possible within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion or, in the case of an established rural industrial estate, within the existing boundaries of the estate; or*
 - (b) *Result in substantial environmental improvement and reduce the impact on the countryside particularly if there are exceptional cases where new or replacement buildings are involved. New buildings or development in the rural area will be acceptable provided that it supports sustainable economic growth towards balanced living and working communities and criteria a) has been considered first*

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2. *Demonstrate that car parking requirements can be accommodated satisfactorily within the immediate surrounds of the buildings, or an alternative, logical solution is proposed.*

- 7.1.5. The proposed scheme aligns with Policy 10 of the HDPF, which promotes sustainable rural economic development by enhancing local employment opportunities and delivering economic, social, and environmental benefits to rural communities.
- 7.1.6. The development contributes to the wider rural economy by strengthening the existing business use within an existing and established commercial and industrial site.
- 7.1.7. The rationalisation, replacement, and improvement of existing buildings will enhance the sites functionality by replacing dilapidated structures with modern, fit-for-purpose commercial space, ensuring its continued economic growth. Additionally, the proposals will promote sustainable economic growth by upgrading the sites infrastructure while retaining its established business use.
- 7.1.8. The proposed development ensures that the quality and character of the site remain similar by retaining its established commercial and industrial use, maintaining a comparable scale and built form, and using materials that respect the existing setting. The replacement of dilapidated buildings, alongside a rationalised layout, enhances the sites appearance while minimising landscape impact, ensuring a cohesive and appropriate development within its rural context.
- 7.1.9. Any parking and access requirements will be addressed within the immediate surroundings of the buildings as demonstrated on the submitted site plans.
- 7.1.10. The proposed development fully complies with Policy 10 of the HDPF by enhancing rural business operations while preserving the site's character. It optimises the use of brownfield land, preventing unnecessary expansion into the countryside, and delivers environmental improvements through the removal of dilapidated structures and the rationalisation of the built form.
- 7.1.11. In addition, **Policy 7** of the HDPF states that,

Sustainable employment development in Horsham district for the period up to 2031 will be achieved by,

- 1. *Allocating land for a high-quality business park at Land North of Horsham.*
- 2. *Redevelopment, regeneration, intensification and smart growth of existing employment sites.*
- 3. *The formation and development of small, start-up and move-on businesses, as well as home working and home-based businesses, by encouraging provision of small units through development proposals.*
- 4. *Encouraging appropriate workspace and ICT infrastructure, such as high speed broadband, as an integral part of development, including residential development to support flexible working, home working and businesses with the flexibility to operate anywhere.*
- 5. *Retention of Key Employment Areas, for employment uses.*
- 6. *Promotion of the district as an attractive place to stay and visit to increase the value of the tourism economy.*
- 7. *Encouraging sustainable local employment growth through Neighbourhood Development Plans.*

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8. *Encouraging the expansion of higher education facilities related to research and development and employment training activity.*

9. *Identifying additional employment areas to meet the need for appropriate new business activity.*

7.1.12. The proposed development aligns with Policy 7 of the HDPF and supports several key objectives for sustainable employment growth within the district. As noted in earlier sections, the site is currently utilised for commercial and storage purposes, and therefore these activities in this location are deemed acceptable in principle.

7.1.13. The proposals aim to rationalise and improve the existing commercial facilities on-site, including the demolition of two buildings and replacing them with a new one. This redevelopment maximises the potential of the existing employment site by upgrading the infrastructure and improving its functionality. The proposal aligns with Point 2 of the Policy, which emphasises the growth and development of existing employment areas.

7.1.14. Despite the site being outside the defined built-up area boundary, the site is a brownfield site with established commercial uses. The proposal seeks to continue using the site for business purposes, which aligns with Point 5 of the Policy which emphasis the retention of key employment areas for commercial and industrial uses. The development will not only retain the employment function but will enhance it, ensuring the area remains viable for future business activities.

7.1.15. The existing buildings on this site will be described in more detail below, including their current use and planning status.

Existing Building on Plot 2 (temporary permission for B1c and B8 use expired) – referred as Commercial Building 1 on submitted Plans

7.1.16. Further to the proposed development, the application seeks to regularise the ongoing commercial use of the former agricultural store and dairy processing plant building, along with the associated hardstanding area adjacent to Handcross Road.

7.1.17. In 2016, under planning application reference DC/16/0702 the landowner sought *‘temporary change of use for a three-year period of an agricultural store and dairy processing plant to B1 use’*. This approval was renewed in 2020 again under planning application DC/19/1046, allowing a temporary change of use for three years to accommodate the agricultural store and dairy processing plant under Use Classes B1 and B8 (office and storage/distribution).

7.1.18. Currently, the former agricultural dairy plant building is occupied by Stepney Commercials, a commercial vehicle engineering and repair company specializing in HGV vehicle repairs. The company has been occupying the site since approximately 2020 and is operating under Use Class B2 (general industrial use), which includes HGV vehicle repair services.

7.1.19. The original agricultural use of the site is no longer viable, and therefore, the proposal seeks to demonstrate how the continued use of the buildings for commercial purposes aligns with the Development Plan, specifically Policy 10 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF).

7.1.20. Policy 10 of the HDPF 2015 sets out that application will be supported if it can be demonstrated that they *‘contribute to the diverse and sustainable farming enterprises within the district or, in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, contribute to the wider rural economy and/or promote recreation in, and the enjoyment of, the countryside; and are either,*

- a. *contained wherever possible within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion or, in the case of an established rural industrial estate, within the existing boundaries of the estate; or*
- b. *would result in substantial environmental improvement and reduce the impact on the countryside particularly if there are exceptional cases where new or replacement buildings are involved. New buildings or development in the rural area will be acceptable provided that it supports sustainable, economic growth towards balanced living and working communities and criteria a) has been considered first.*

7.1.21. Within the Officer Report of the most recent consent reference DC/16/0702, it should be noted that,

'Policy 10 says that proposals for the conversion of rural buildings to business and commercial uses will be considered favourably over residential in the first instance. The application seeks the temporary change of use of the building from agricultural storage/dairy to B1 use for a period of three years.

Information submitted with the application details that there is a decreasing revenue from milk sales due to an unsustainable low milk price and that alternative income streams are needed to support the dairy enterprise at Stonehouse Farm. Advice from Savills suggests that in order to maximise alternative revenue streams to maintain the viability of the core dairy enterprise, short term consent for B1 use of the dairy processing building is applied for to provide an income from the investment in the building to date. It would appear from the information submitted that this would be a reasonable approach to be taken in the short term'

It is therefore concluded that the proposed use of the building for a B1 use would not result in an increase in the level of activity on the site which would be detrimental to the rural character of the area and that the proposed uses would support the rural economic development of the district in accordance with Policy 10 of the HDPF'.

7.1.22. It should be noted in the Pre-Application advice received that,

'It is broadly considered that the Council may be able to support the permanent conversion of this agricultural building to commercial use under Policy 10 (a) provided that all other matters such as impacts of noise, traffic and landscape impacts can be demonstrated as being acceptable'.

7.1.23. It is therefore considered that the proposed development is fully consistent with Policy 10 of the HDPF 2015. The proposal makes use of existing buildings on a site that has already evolved into an established rural industrial estate contributing to the local economy.

7.1.24. By supporting the continued commercial use of the site, the proposal not only sustains the current business uses but also demonstrates that the buildings are appropriate for the proposed use. This approach aligns with Policy 10s objective of reusing existing structures within established industrial area to support the wider rural economy.

7.1.25. It is therefore considered that the building would be acceptable for commercial, and storage uses.

Existing Building on Plot 2 (subject to current Enforcement Notice) – referred as Commercial Building 2 on submitted Plans

- 7.1.26. This application seeks permission to retain the barn that has been erected without the benefit of planning permission. A retrospective application was submitted under planning application reference DC/22/0829 and was subsequently dismissed at appeal (APP/Z3825/W/22/3311244) on the 27 March 2024) for the following reasons,

'In summary, though, no water neutrality statement nor any details of such have been provided in respect of the replacement agricultural building and, in the absence of this, no appropriate assessment has been carried out by the competent authority. Consequently, no mitigation measures can be formulated.

Whilst I have found the proposal would not result in any significant harm on the first two main issues, the failure of the appellants to address the matter of water neutrality and the potential impacts of such, outweigh the planning benefits arising'.

- 7.1.27. Further to the reasons of dismissal, above, it is important to note that the inspector highlighted the following,

'Overall, the findings were put to the Council with the conclusion that the replacement agricultural storage building and workshop is reasonably required for the purposes of agriculture on the holding.

I must agree with this assessment, and I find no conflict with the aims and objectives of LP policy 10, which supports rural economic development and LP policy 26, which serves to protect the countryside.

I accept that the building is substantial in size, but form follows function and function follows form. Besides, the building is situated amongst a cluster of other large farm related buildings, and it is not an isolated entity.

I must conclude that it a high-quality building, specifically designed for its intended purposes and, when fully functional, would be beneficial to the rural economy. This is consistent with relevant advice within the Framework.

Accordingly, I find no material conflict with LP policies 25, 32 and 33 close and I am satisfied that, in physical terms, it represents an appropriate form of development'.

- 7.1.28. While the Inspector found an agricultural need for the building in November 2023, it should be acknowledged that the use of the land has evolved since then. The retention of the building should not only be viewed for the original agricultural purpose but should be viewed in the sense that the existing building could support the sustainable rural development for other commercial / storages uses present in the neighbouring buildings and on site.
- 7.1.29. Policy 10 encourages the development and retention of buildings in rural areas that support economic growth, even where the primary use has changed. The proposal for commercial use of the building should be assessed in the context of these broader policy goals, particularly if the building is considered part of an evolving industrial area. The surrounding area has developed over time, and maintaining the building would complement the existing uses on site.
- 7.1.30. In addition to this, while it is acknowledged that the building does not meet the Class R criteria for conversion due to its recent construction and unauthorised status, this should not preclude other potential uses to be justified for this existing building.

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- 7.1.31. In conclusion, the retention of the building should be viewed as an opportunity to support growth of the Stonehouse Commercial site. Its location within an established cluster of commercial and industrial buildings makes it a logical extension to the site, offering potential for new commercial or light industrial uses that complement the existing uses in the area.
- 7.1.32. Given the surrounding commercial environment, the continued presence of an agricultural building would actually be an anomaly and would be out of sync with the broader land use context. Repurposing the building to align with the commercial and industrial character of the area would contribute positively and align with Policy 10 of the Local Plan. It is therefore considered in principle.

Office space and Wardens Accommodation

- 7.1.33. As part of this application, the proposal includes an extension to the existing office building at the entrance of the site to provide further office space and warden sleeping accommodation. The warden's accommodation is specifically included to ensure the security of the site. It will also provide supervision in case of accidents, fires, or medical issues, as well as offering general oversight and support for the day-to-day operations.
- 7.1.34. The inclusion of the warden's sleeping accommodation is vital for maintaining the security and safety of the site at the entrance. It aligns with local policy and is consistent with previous applications in the District (DC/09/0579 and DC/24/0203 at Sumners Pond), where similar proposals were deemed acceptable. This approach demonstrates a responsible and considered approach to site management, ensuring both safety and daily oversight of the site.
- 7.1.35. Additionally, as part of the application, the proposal seeks to remove the mobile home on-site, which was granted a lawful development certificate in June 2022 (reference DC/21/0725) for residential use. This certificate confirmed the continuous stationing of the mobile home for residential purposes (Class C3) for a period exceeding ten years. As such, it is acknowledged that a residential use is already established on the site and could continue based on the recent decision.
- 7.1.36. However, we believe that a more functional building would be better suited to the site than a mobile home. As a result, we are willing to remove the mobile home and replace the residential use with the proposed extended building at the front of the site which provides a more practical solution. The warden's accommodation would therefore provide reprovision of the existing residential use present on site.
- 7.1.37. In principle, there is no change to the amount of residential accommodation on the site, and therefore we believe that this use would be acceptable, subject to any other relevant material conditions.

Conclusion to the Principle of Development

- 7.1.38. In conclusion, the proposed development aligns with the objectives outlined in Policy 7 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, supporting sustainable employment growth, the regeneration of existing commercial sites, and the retention of key employment areas.
- 7.1.39. The proposal seeks to enhance the functionality of the Stonehouse Commercial site by improving infrastructure, removing outdated structures, and providing more efficient spaces for business operations, including the inclusion of warden accommodation to ensure site security.
- 7.1.40. By replacing the mobile home with a more functional office extension, the proposal maintains the existing residential accommodation without increasing the overall residential use.

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- 7.1.41. The proposals development would contribute positively to the local economy, support existing businesses and help to preserve the sites commercial and industrial character, making it a sustainable and appropriate proposal for the area.

7.2. Design and Appearance

- 7.2.1. Policy 32 of the HDPF seeks high quality and inclusive design, with proposals expected to provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environments which complement local distinctive characters and contribute to a sense of place.
- 7.2.2. As mentioned in previous sections, the design and appearance of the commercial park will largely remain as existing given the existing buildings present on site.
- 7.2.3. The redevelopment plans for the site focus on enhancing the existing commercial structures by improving the layout and design. The proposals seek to replace outdated buildings with a new building and extending an existing building to provide office space and accommodation. All the existing buildings will be upgraded in materiality. The proposals aim to create a more cohesive and functional commercial environment that supports local businesses.
- 7.2.4. The removal of the mobile home and the demolition of two buildings will contribute to improving the sites visual appeal but will also integrate with the existing buildings on site. The design of the buildings and the layout of the scheme ensures that suitable space is available for parking, turning larger vehicles and sufficient landscaping.
- 7.2.5. The proposals align with the aims of Policy 32, offering a functional, adaptable environment that enhances the site's contribution to the local area while respecting its character.
- 7.2.6. Please refer to the submitted drawing set for further information about the scheme.

7.3. Residential Amenity

- 7.3.1. Policy 33 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that development avoids an unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property, for example through overlooking or noise, whilst having regard to the sensitivities of surrounding development.
- 7.3.2. The proposals are mindful of the surrounding areas character and sensitivities. While the site is outside the defined built-up area boundary, it is a brownfield site with existing commercial activities currently present.
- 7.3.3. The proposed changes, including the demolition and replacement of buildings and the replacement of structures are designed with careful consideration of the sites relationship to surrounding properties. The new proposals will ensure the overlooking of nearby residential and commercial spaces are restricted maintaining privacy on site.
- 7.3.4. There is a degree of disturbance on site given the proposed uses and exiting commercial operations. The proposed improvements aim to rationalise existing commercial activities and potentially reduce the noise generated on site. By replacing older structures with purpose-built facilities, the development could minimise noise disruptions further protecting nearby users from noise disturbance.
- 7.3.5. Given the sites existing commercial nature, the proposals are unlikely to introduce new or significantly harmful impacts to the amenity of nearby occupiers. The careful planning and design of the development, along with the proposed improvements to infrastructure will ensure that the impact on surrounding properties remains minimal.

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7.3.6. Within the Pre-Application advice received it is acknowledged by the Case Officer that,

'Any additional commercial units proposed would be within the context of existing commercial employment site located within the countryside. There is an existing residential dwelling along the boundaries of Stonehouse Farm (north and west of the site) as such it is likely that there is already a degree of disturbance to private amenity in the form existing commercial operations.

Notwithstanding this, further details should be provided regarding the proposed use of any new buildings, proposed hours of operation, and details of potential occupiers to enable future potential impacts to be considered'.

7.3.7. Overall, the proposals are in keeping with Policy 33 by minimising negative impacts on the amenity of nearby properties. Additionally, further details, such as hours of operation, can be secured through an appropriately worded condition attached to the application, providing assurance that any potential impacts on the amenity of nearby occupiers will be controlled. In our opinion a sensible period would be between the hours of 7:00 and 19:00 (Monday – Saturday excluding Bank Holidays) in accordance with the surrounding commercial uses.

7.4. Noise

7.4.1. As part of the application, a Noise Assessment was prepared by Acoustic South East in February 2024 to support the proposals and allow for the retention of temporary planning consents.

7.4.2. The assessment confirms that the measured noise levels demonstrate ongoing compliance with the previously issued planning conditions.

7.4.3. The daytime soundscape shows a reduction in noise levels in line with the stated operating hours and historic, albeit lapsed, conditions. During the early morning period (06:00-07:00 hours), some noise-generating activities were recorded, particularly from 06:45 onwards, likely linked to the use of vehicle workshops and hardstanding areas.

7.4.4. There is limited direct line of sight between nearby residential properties and the commercial buildings and hardstanding areas. Based on the findings of the assessment, there is no reason to withhold planning permission on noise grounds.

7.4.5. A further note from Acoustic South East, dated February 2025 has been submitted confirming that the commercial site layout will remain largely unchanged, except for the demolition of two buildings to be replaced with one new building and an extension to an office building.

7.4.6. At this stage, the future occupants or tenants of the site have not been confirmed. Any external plant required by future tenants will be their responsibility and can be controlled through planning conditions set by the local authority.

7.4.7. Given the proposed changes, the assessment concludes that there should be no material noise impact on the nearest residential properties.

7.5. Highways and Parking

7.5.1. Policy 41 of the HDPF states that adequate parking and facilities must be provided within development to meet the needs of anticipated users. Consideration should be given to the needs of cycle parking, motorcycle parking, charging plug in or other low emission vehicles and the mobility impaired.

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- 7.5.2. Chapter 9 of the NPPF sets out the Government's aspirations for the promotion of sustainable transport, and details how transport and highways implications arising from development proposals should be considered in planning terms.
- 7.5.3. Paragraph 114 requires that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes should be considered, and that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. In addition, it requires that any significant impacts from the development on the transport network or on highway safety can be effectively mitigated.
- 7.5.4. As part of the application, a Transport Technical Note has been prepared by i-Transport to support the proposals. In summary the report states the following,
- 7.5.5. To appropriately reflect the trip generation of the existing site and the proposed increase, vehicular trip rates have been obtained from the TRICS database for office and commercial units with trip rates per 100sqm for the typical network peak of 08:00 – 09:00 and 17:00 – 18:00. The full TRICS outputs are contained within the submitted report.
- 7.5.6. The existing site generates a total two-way movement of 29 and 15 vehicles in the morning and evening peak periods respectively. The proposed site will generate a total two-way movement of 30 and 15 vehicles in the morning and evening peak periods respectively.
- 7.5.7. The proposed development will result in a de minimis impact on trip generation compared to the extant use on site. The site is expected to generate an additional two-way movement during the morning peak period.
- 7.5.8. In respect of the WSCC Road Safety Audit Policy, a Road Safety Audit is required where vehicular movements intensify by 100 or more two-way movements per day; the proposed increase in floorspace will not result in such an increase. A review of the collision database identifies does not identify any adverse safety history.
- 7.5.9. The proposal is therefore considered to have no adverse effects on the surrounding area, complies with policy 115 of the NPPF.

7.6. Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 7.6.1. Policy 31 of the HDPF states *'development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained'*.
- 7.6.2. Policy 1 of the Lower Beeding Local Plan states *'Development proposals which protect and where possible provide net gains in biodiversity and enhance the ecological network in the Parish will be supported'*.
- 7.6.3. As such, an Ecological Impact Assessment has been submitted in support of the application which details the extent of ecology on site and appropriate mitigation measures to ensure on site ecology is appropriately managed. Please refer to the supporting Ecological Impact Assessment for further details

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- 7.6.4. In addition, a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment supports the application which details that the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain can be appropriately achieved on site as required by the Environment Act. Each individual element of this application (3 distinct proposals) will require a suitably worded condition/obligation in accordance with each parcel of land.
- 7.6.5. On this basis, the proposed development is in accordance with required policy in terms of ecology and biodiversity. Please refer to the supporting Ecological Impact Assessment for further information.

7.7. Arboriculture

- 7.7.1. Policy 33 of the HDPF states that developments should include the retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. Development must relate sympathetically to the local landscape and justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development.
- 7.7.2. Policy 3 of the Lower Beeding Local Plan states that,
- 'Development proposals which seek to conserve, maintain or enhance existing green infrastructure networks will be supported.'*
- Development proposals which incorporate landscaping and provide additional trees and hedging consistent with the rural nature of the Parish will be supported.'*
- Proposals which would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the development proposals bring new opportunities which mitigates or compensates any loss, whilst ensuring the protection of the existing ecosystem'.*
- 7.7.3. As such, an Arboriculture Impact Statement has been submitted in support of the application which assesses the proposals in full.
- 7.7.4. It is concluded that the development proposals for the three application areas are feasible, and the potential impacts on retained trees and hedgerows can be kept at a negligible to low level by further arboricultural input into the drainage and utility connection schemes, and through the protective measures and precautions set out in an Arboricultural Method Statement.
- 7.7.5. At the Stonehouse Business Park application area, the existing accesses and hard-surfaced areas mean that there would be no impacts on the trees and hedges. Any resurfacing of hard surfacing within the existing hard-surfaced areas would have no impact on the trees and hedges because there would be no increase in its extent.
- 7.7.6. The separate Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy includes drainage schemes for each area of the site. A SuDS basin is required at Stonehouse Business Park and would be constructed in the northwestern part of the site. The existing built-up levels and compacted track to the north of T21/G3 means that the connecting pipe can be installed without further damage to these trees.
- 7.7.7. In addition, Policy 2 of the Lower Beeding Local Plan states that 'Development proposals which conserve and enhance the natural environment and landscape character of the Parish will be supported subject to compliance with other policies in the LBNP'.
- 7.7.8. As previously mentioned, the proposals aim to rationalise, replace, and enhance existing buildings within the site. As a result, the overall landscape and visual impact of the site is considered to be negligible.

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- 7.7.9. It is important to note that all dilapidated buildings, while currently having some impact on the landscape, will be removed and replaced with sensitively designed new buildings that mitigate any potential visual effects. Additionally, the majority of the existing buildings will remain unchanged, ensuring that there is no significant impact on the wider landscape.
- 7.7.10. On the basis of the above, the proposals are not considered to detrimentally impact on the landscape of the surrounding area.

7.8. Drainage

- 7.8.1. Policy 38 of the HDPF states that development proposals will follow a sequential approach to flood risk management, giving priority to development sites with the lowest risk of flooding and making required development safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 7.8.2. As such, a Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy has been produced by Motion in support of this application.
- 7.8.3. In summary, the area of the Stonehouse Business Park site that is to be developed includes a new commercial unit to replace the existing Unit 3 and the demolition of Unit 5, which will be replaced by a staff and visitor parking area. The existing small office unit near the Stonehouse Business Park site entrance is also to be extended.
- 7.8.4. This development requires the provision of a formal access for commercial vehicles around the new Unit 3. With this in mind, permeable surfaces such as porous asphalt and permeable pavements are not appropriate due to the detrimental effect that commercial vehicles (with standard axles of 7.5 tonnes or more) turning from lock to lock would have on them. The accesses and parking areas will therefore be surfaced with tarmac and positively drained to a SuDS basin located in the northwest of the Stonehouse Business Park site.
- 7.8.5. The drainage strategy plan for Stonehouse Business Park in Appendix O shows that the SuDS basin is located in the field to the northwest of the Stonehouse Business Park site. This SuDS basin will be 250m² in area, 1.2m deep and will have side slopes of 1 in 4. This SuDS basin provides 182m³ of attenuation, which allows surface water generated from the developed area in the 1 in 100-year + 45% rainfall event to be attenuated, without flooding.
- 7.8.6. The SuDS basin will discharge by gravity to the northeast and will join the existing discharge from the Stonehouse Business Park site to the watercourse.
- 7.8.7. For further information, please refer to the submitted report which details the strategy in full.

7.9. Water Neutrality

- 7.9.1. The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England and which includes supplies from groundwater abstraction which cannot, with certainty, demonstrate no adverse impacts upon the defined Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.
- 7.9.2. A recently received advice note from 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.

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- 7.9.3. On this basis, a Water Neutrality Statement has been submitted in support of this application which details that the total demand post development across all three areas of development, including allowing for potential Holiday Lodges on the wider Stonehouse Farm site which do not form part of this Application, is calculated to fall by just over 456,00 litres per annum.
- 7.9.4. Furthermore, the Applicant is seeking agreement with Horsham and Natural England to 'reserve' this overage, for development within the water neutrality zone that will be coming forward.
- 7.9.5. Take as a whole, the proposals should be considered as fully compliant with the requirements of water neutrality within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

7.10. Sustainability

- 7.10.1. Policy 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) requires proposals to improve the sustainability of development. To achieve this, developments should incorporate appropriate measures based on their type and location.
- 7.10.2. An Energy and Sustainability Statement, prepared by AES Sustainability, outlines the proposed approach to sustainable construction at Stonehouse Farm.
- 7.10.3. All non-domestic spaces within the development will be designed to meet the minimum requirements of Part L2 (2021), achieving a >27% reduction in energy demand compared to previous regulatory standards.
- 7.10.4. The strategy follows a 'Fabric First' approach, which prioritises enhancing the thermal performance of the buildings to reduce energy demand and CO₂ emissions, ensuring a more sustainable and energy-efficient development.
- 7.10.5. A range of low and zero-carbon energy systems have been assessed for suitability and feasibility in delivering further carbon reductions. Based on indicative SAP calculations, incorporating the proposed fabric measures and renewable energy systems, the development is expected to reduce CO₂ emissions by approximately 1,085 kgCO₂/year beyond Part L 2021 Regulatory Standards.
- 7.10.6. Given these measures, the proposals are considered to be in full compliance with Policy 37 of the HDPF, supporting sustainable design and minimising environmental impact.

7.11. Contamination

- 7.11.1. A Preliminary Ground Contamination Risk Assessment Report, prepared by Ashdown Site Investigation, outlines the proposed approach to sustainable construction at Stonehouse Farm.
- 7.11.2. The risk assessment considers the potential sources of contamination identified, the receptors that may be present in view of the development proposals and the contaminant pathways by which these may be linked. A complete pollutant linkage is only deemed to exist where all three are present and a site is considered suitable for use where no complete pollutant linkages are identified.
- 7.11.3. Where a complete pollutant linkage is deemed to be present, an assessment of the level of risk associated with the pollutant linkage has been carried out in line with current guidance.
- 7.11.4. The following potential sources of contamination have been identified by the preliminary contamination risk assessment:
- Historical and ongoing use of the site for agricultural and light industrial purposes.

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- Made ground in the vicinity of Commercial Buildings 3 and 5 from historical redevelopment works.

- 7.11.5. The potential contaminants associated with these sources are set out in the conceptual model.
- 7.11.6. It is noted that the asbestos survey provided to us has identified asbestos materials to be present within the two buildings earmarked for demolition. The risk assessment assumes that any asbestos identified within any buildings or infrastructure will be managed in accordance with current legislation and guidance, including its appropriate removal and disposal prior to demolition works taking place, in order to ensure that this does not represent an ongoing risk to end users and, specifically, to ensure that asbestos materials are not introduced into the underlying soils.
- 7.11.7. Whilst the site is expected to be underlain by the Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand which is classed as a Secondary A/Unproductive Stratum (depending on the stratum variation), no potable drinking water abstraction points are noted within 2km of the site and the site is not located within a SPZ. As such, there are not considered to be viable pathways linking potential contamination on the site with sensitive groundwater.
- 7.11.8. A potential pollutant linkage has been identified, but this would be limited to the small areas of proposed soft landscaping that will be created around building 4. Given the limited size of these areas and the ongoing use of the site for commercial/light industrial purposes, the overall level of risk posed is considered to be very low.
- 7.11.9. As such, an intrusive investigation and quantitative risk assessment is not considered to be warranted, though attention is drawn to the discovery strategy presented below.
- 7.11.10. Please refer to the submitted Preliminary Ground Contamination Risk Assessment Report for further information.

7.12. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 7.12.1. Each application is anticipated to be phased, and therefore, a separate CIL Form has been submitted for each parcel of land.

8. Lot 8 - Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and Livestock Building

8.1. Principle of Development

- 8.1.1. The application site forms a couple of agricultural buildings units at Stonehouse Farm, referred hereon as the Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant and former Livestock Building.
- 8.1.2. Although the site is outside the defined built-up area boundary, it should be recognised that the site itself is in part, a brownfield site, which has a number of existing commercial 'business enterprise' uses arising from the existing (temporary and permanent) commercial activities on the site.
- 8.1.3. As such, this would in part, be a material consideration in the determination of any future proposals for the development for business uses on the site, the acceptability of the details would be subject to a thorough assessment of all other relevant policies within the Local Development Policy Framework.
- 8.1.4. The proposals seek to decommission the AD Plant and reuse both agricultural buildings for commercial, light industrial and office (Use Classes E (g) and B8 uses while also diverting the former public footpath (FP1708) which runs within the site to along the building line towards Jacksons Farm.
- 8.1.5. It is important to note that the client has actively engaged with the local community by presenting the proposals at the village hall and inviting feedback prior to submitting the application. A key outcome from these meetings was strong local support for the decommissioning of the AD Plant and its conversion into storage and distribution uses. Please refer to **Appendix A**.
- 8.1.6. **Policy 10** of the HDPF states that,
- 8.1.7. *'Sustainable rural economic development and enterprise within the district will be encouraged in order to generate local employment opportunities and economic, social and environmental benefits for local communities. Any development should be appropriate to the countryside location and must:*
- 1. Contribute to the diverse and sustainable farming enterprises within the district or, in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, contribute to the wider rural economy and/or promote recreation in, and the enjoyment of, the countryside; and either*
 - a. Be contained wherever possible within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion or, in the case of an established rural industrial estate, within the existing boundaries of the estate; or*
 - b. Result in substantial environmental improvement and reduce the impact on the countryside particularly if there are exceptional cases where new or replacement buildings are involved. New buildings or development in the rural area will be acceptable provided that it supports sustainable economic growth towards balanced living and working communities and criteria a) has been considered first.*
 - 2. Demonstrate that car parking requirements can be accommodated satisfactorily within the immediate surrounds of the buildings, or an alternative, logical solution is proposed'.*
- 8.1.8. Policy 10 encourages the promotion of sustainable rural economic development, supporting both farming and non-farming enterprises. This proposal aligns with this policy by reusing existing agricultural buildings for storage, distribution and office purposes, which contributes to the wider rural economy.

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- 8.1.9. By bringing these buildings back into productive use, the proposal helps generate local employment opportunities in an area outside of urban centres, benefiting both the local and wider community.
- 8.1.10. The proposals support the expansion of operations of a local business who will be relocating from premises near Steyning. The new facilities will create significant opportunities for new job creation.
- 8.1.11. In addition, the policy states that development in the countryside should be sensitive to its environment and appropriate to its location. The site is already a brownfield location with established quasi commercial and agricultural uses which makes it suitable for commercial, light industrial and office uses. The existing commercial nature and character of the site reduce concerns of environmental impact, as the proposals simply seek to convert the existing building already on the site and therefore the character and design of the building will remain as existing.
- 8.1.12. By repurposing these buildings, the proposal not only supports rural business development but also reduces the environmental impact compared to building new structures in the area. The policy encourages the use of buildings that are suitable for conversion, which this proposal satisfies.
- 8.1.13. Policy 10 also requires that any development demonstrates it can satisfactorily accommodate car parking requirements. The site is large enough to accommodate the parking needs of the proposed commercial uses without overburdening the surrounding area or the local road network. The sites existing infrastructure, including access roads, will support these parking needs, and any potential issues can be addressed through appropriate planning conditions.
- 8.1.14. The proposed redevelopment of the site at Stonehouse Farm meets the requirements set out in Policy 10 by supporting the local economy, reusing existing buildings, and ensuring the development is sensitive to the rural location. The proposal will contribute to sustainable economic growth, align with the objectives of rural diversification and reduce environmental impact.
- 8.1.15. In addition, **Policy 11** of the Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan states that,
- ‘Development proposals for employment uses will be supported where:*
- 1) Development proposed is on previously developed land;*
 - 2) Is in keeping with the rural character of the local area;*
 - 3) Proposals have no significant detrimental impact on residential amenity; and*
 - 4) Would not have unacceptable impact on the local road network’.*
- 8.1.16. Policy 11 encourages development proposals for employment uses on previously developed land, which the application site clearly satisfies. The site at Stonehouse Farm is a brownfield site, having previously been used for agricultural purposes.
- 8.1.17. The proposal respects and maintains the rural character of the area, which is a key requirement of Policy 11. The redevelopment involves the reuse of existing buildings, ensuring that the new commercial uses will not introduce excessive visual or environmental changes. The site already contains agricultural and commercial buildings, and the planned redevelopment involves minimal alterations to the existing structure, preserving the rural character of the area.
- 8.1.18. The proposed development does not have significant detrimental impacts on residential amenity. Given that the site is located away from residential properties and is surrounded by agricultural land and commercial activity, the proposal will not negatively affect the amenity of nearby residents.

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- 8.1.19. The re-use of the existing buildings for storage, distribution and office purposes is unlikely to cause significant noise, traffic, or other disturbances. The proposed diversion of the public footpath (FP1708) also improves access while maintaining safety and usability, without affecting nearby residents. The removal of the AD plant will also remove issues associated with odour and storage of slurry.
- 8.1.20. It is therefore considered that the proposed redevelopment of the site at Stonehouse Farm meets the requirements set out in Policy 11 of the Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8.1.21. Furthermore, it is considered material that the proposals in part would in our view fall within the scope of the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO) where prior approval under Class R can be sought for the conversion of the AD Plant to commercial uses.
- 8.1.22. Recent changes to Class R have provided greater flexibility for converting agricultural buildings, allowing for a wider range of uses including general industrial purposes (with limitations), storage and distribution, hotels, commercial or service uses, and facilities for outdoor sports or recreation, as well as agricultural training, with a maximum permitted floor area of 1,000sqm.
- 8.1.23. There are no restrictions in the description of development or in the planning conditions attached to these permissions that would legally prevent the change of use under the prior approval provisions of Class R, provided that the application meets the required criteria. It is therefore considered that the AD Plant building at 790sqm (as existing) could be converted under Class R provided it meets requirements like highways and parking which have been accepted in principle in the appraisal section below.
- 8.1.24. Significant weight should therefore be given to the fact that the principle of changing the use of the AD plant building aligns with the conditions for Class R. As a result, it could be used for a range of unrestricted commercial uses.
- 8.1.25. In addition to such matters, it should be noted that this full planning application provides the council with an opportunity to place restrictions on the use of the buildings, ensuring they align with the desired land-use objectives and protect amenity where necessary.
- 8.1.26. The principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable as it complies with both national and local planning policies, which support rural diversification and the reuse of agricultural buildings for alternative business and industrial purposes. Given the wider sites existing commercial use, the conversion of these buildings represents an efficient use of existing, underutilised buildings. Therefore, the principle of development is deemed acceptable.

8.2. Design and Appearance

- 8.2.1. Policy 32 of the HDPF seeks high quality and inclusive design, with proposals expected to provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environments, complement local distinctive characters and contribute to a sense of place.
- 8.2.2. As mentioned previously, the design and appearance of the building will largely remain as existing due to the nature of the application. The proposal seeks only minor external changes, including the installation of windows and rooflights, and recladding which are necessary to facilitate the proposed use of the building. These changes have been carefully considered to ensure they align with the character of the existing structure and the surrounding area, maintaining the overall visual appearance of the site. As shown on the aerial image below, the character of the locality is dominated by commercial uses at Howards Nursery, Stonehouse Farm (part of this application) and Winterpick Farm.

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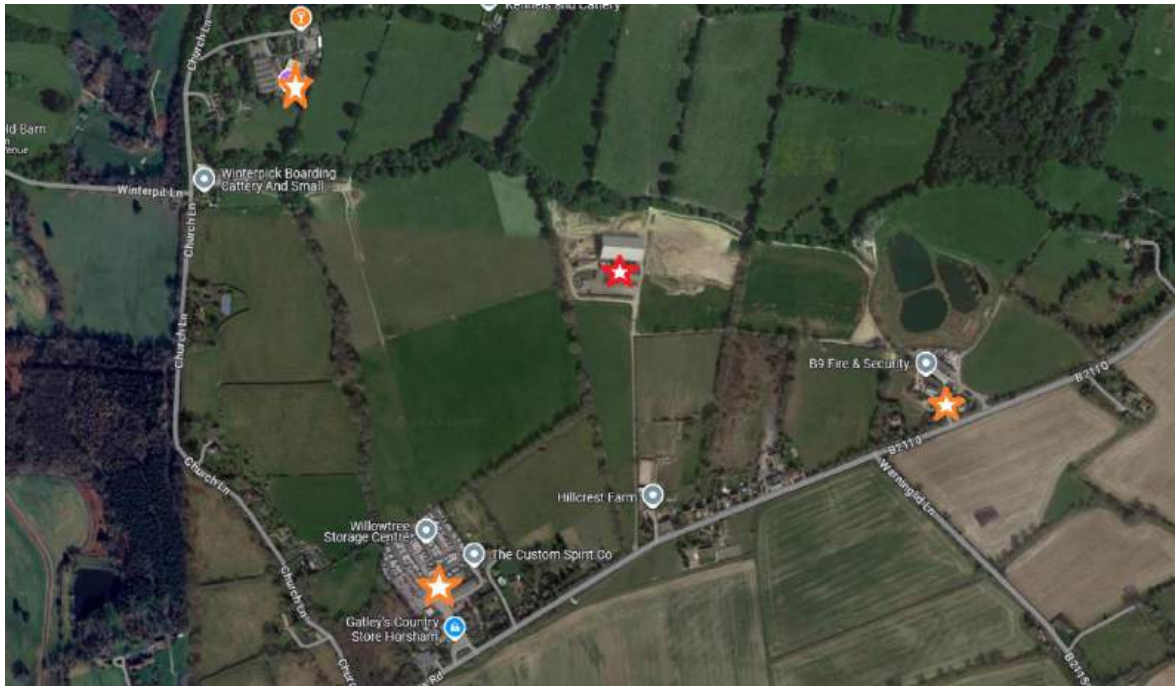


Figure 6 Existing commercial sites (orange) in context of application site (red)

- 8.2.3. The proposal seeks to retain the existing buildings overall character, ensuring that it complements the local distinctiveness and sense of place. The modest external alterations do not significantly alter the appearance of the building, ensuring that the development does not disrupt the existing architectural context of the area. Instead, the changes serve to make the building more functional while respecting the surrounding environment and its character.
- 8.2.4. The external servicing/parking areas utilise the hard surfacing areas as previously approved under DC19/1122 (see figure 6 below) have been rationalised and improved to facilitate improved access for larger vehicles to the northern building, however, the visual impacts of the changes will be difficult to discern in public viewpoints.
- 8.2.5. New planting as proposed to the southern and eastern boundaries will also seek to provide some screening to the buildings in the wider landscape which will improve the visual impacts from the existing condition in our view.

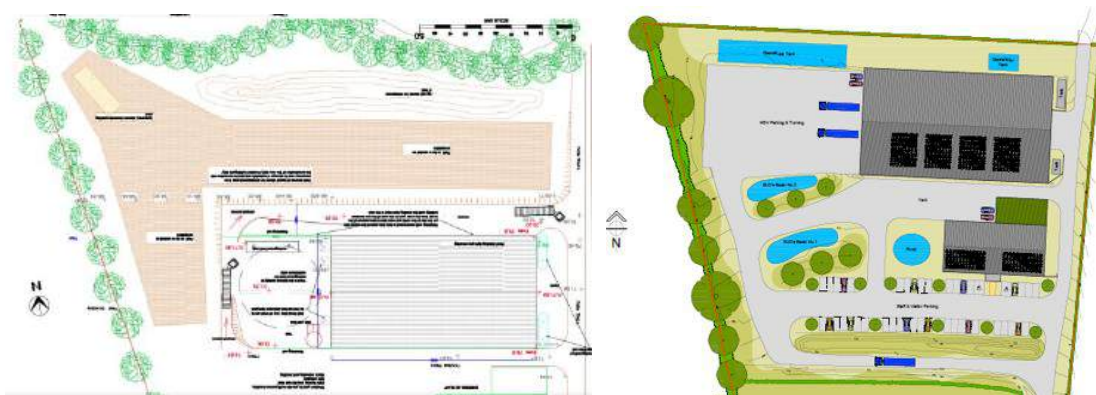


Figure 7 Consented (left) and Proposed (right) site layout

- 8.2.6. For further information please refer to the submitted drawing set for further detail.

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8.3. Residential Amenity

- 8.3.1. Policy 32 of the HDPF states that new development will be expected to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environment that contributes to a sense of place both in buildings and spaces themselves.
- 8.3.2. Policy 33 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that development avoids an unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property, for example through overlooking or noise, whilst having regard to the sensitivities of surrounding development.
- 8.3.3. The existing buildings on site are already situated in a way that minimises any impacts to neighbouring residential properties with the nearest located approximately 400 metres away.
- 8.3.4. The diversion of the footpath along the building line, while slightly altering its course, will not significantly impact the privacy of nearby residential areas. The new route is not expected to lead to direct overlooking of private spaces or gardens of nearby dwellings.
- 8.3.5. The conversion of the AD Plant and Livestock Building storage, distribution and office uses has the potential to introduce altered noise sources or activity. However, these uses are generally low intensity compared to existing industrial and agricultural activities already present on site. The buildings already have consent for these activities in which the proposal seeks to maintain this commercial character, rather than introducing new, more disruptive operations.
- 8.3.6. In addition, operational hours for the proposed uses will likely be set to avoid conflicts with typical residential hours, and any equipment or machinery used within the buildings will be designed or mitigated to ensure that noise levels do not exceed acceptable limits.
- 8.3.7. Operationally we seek consent to operate principally between the hours of 7:00 and 19:00 (Monday – Saturday excluding Bank Holidays), however require flexibility to allow staff on-site outside of these hours. We therefore request an allowance for no more than five staff members outside of these hours, at any given time.
- 8.3.8. The proposal for commercial and light industrial reuse of the existing buildings at Stonehouse Farm will not result in significant harm to residential amenity. The nature of the development maintains similar activity level to the site's current and lawful uses, with no significant increase in noise, overlooking, or disturbance to neighbouring properties and removes the operations of the AD Plant, which presents significant concerns to local residents through its operational impacts.
- 8.3.9. Overall, the development maintains the existing context of the site without diminishing the amenity of surrounding residential areas.

8.4. Noise

- 8.4.1. As part of the application, a Noise Assessment has been prepared by Acoustic South East to support the proposals. In summary the report states the following,
- 8.4.2. A Class 1 sound level meter was used to assess the site soundscape between 29th November to 5th December 2024.
- 8.4.3. IMMI noise modelling software was used to create the existing two agricultural buildings located to the North of the application site. Area sound sources were used to construct an office with an internal sound pressure level of 65dB LAeq,T and for the larger B2/B8 building, an internal soundscape of 85dB LAeq,T which would represent a noisy worst case workshop use with employees wearing hearing protection.

- 8.4.4. The noise break out from the two change of use buildings would generate a Rating Level or L_{Ar,Tr} of 24dB at the nearest residential property. This is 22dB below the measured background and will not be audible.
- 8.4.5. A worst case hour of vehicle movements using the shared access track was also considered and this generates a L_{Ar,Tr} of 47dB (which includes a 3dB character correction) at the nearest residential receptor. This is 1dB above the measured background sound pressure level and must be considered in line with the contextual factors.
- 8.4.6. With the vehicle movements considered against the measured ambient soundscape, these are also comfortably below the 59-60dB L_{Aeq,07:00-19:00} hours measured dataset.
- 8.4.7. Based on the information presented, the change of use for the two agricultural buildings to offices and B8 should not have any adverse impact. Planning permission should therefore not be withheld on noise grounds.

8.5. Highways and Parking

- 8.5.1. Policy 41 of the HDPF states that adequate parking and facilities must be provided within development to meet the needs of anticipated users. Consideration should be given to the needs of cycle parking, motorcycle parking, charging plug in or other low emission vehicles and the mobility impaired.
- 8.5.2. Chapter 9 of the NPPF sets out the Government's aspirations for the promotion of sustainable transport, and details how transport and highways implications arising from development proposals should be considered in planning terms.
- 8.5.3. Paragraph 114 requires that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes should be considered, and that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. In addition, it requires that any significant impacts from the development on the transport network or on highway safety can be effectively mitigated.
- 8.5.4. As part of the application, a Transport Technical Note has been prepared by i-Transport to support the proposals. In summary the report states the following,
- 8.5.5. The existing and proposed accommodation schedule for the site is outlined in Table 2.1 of the submitted report. The fundamental aspects of the proposal remain consistent with earlier consents and current configuration of the site. The roadways within the site and concrete apron for turning are to remain at their current locations, albeit the internal access and manoeuvring space within the car park has been supplemented to improve its functionality.
- 8.5.6. The access will remain in its existing location; however, the opportunity is being taken to improve the junction where possible. This includes the following amendments to geometric parameters:
- The access will remain in its existing location; however, the opportunity is being taken to improve the junction where possible. This includes the following amendments to geometric parameters:
 - 2m x 2m pedestrian to vehicle visibility splay.
 - 4.0m junction kerb radii.
 - Widening of the access to facilitate vehicles passing at the access.

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- 8.5.7. In addition to the geometric improvements, the following measures will also be introduced:
- Provision of passing bays on the internal access road.
 - The diversion of public footpath 1708 from the road to a path adjacent to the access Stage 1 Road Safety Audit
- 8.5.8. An independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) was undertaken by Grange Transport Consulting on the 22 January 2025 to review the proposed access arrangements. A GG119 compliant Designer's Response has been prepared (Document Ref: ITS19302-009 GG119 RSA Response) to address comments raised in the RSA which summarised in Table 3.1 of the submitted report.
- 8.5.9. All matters identified through the Stage 1 Road Safety Audit have been addressed in accordance with the recommendations of the Auditor. While an established access to a comparable use, the proposal incorporates modification of the access to enhance its performance. Consistent with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposal provides for safe and suitable access.
- 8.5.10. A trip generation assessment has been undertaken using the TRICS database which has identified a minor increase in traffic generation, representing less than one additional vehicle every minute onto the local highway network. The site is expected to generate a small number of HGV movements. The movements are tidal in nature, reducing the incidence of vehicles meeting a vehicle travelling in the opposing direction – however, passing places have been proposed along the site access road.
- 8.5.11. As such, the proposed development satisfies the requirements of paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in so far that the proposal provides for safe and suitable access and does not have an unacceptable impact on network performance.

8.6. Diversion of Public Right of Way

- 8.6.1. The Public Right of Way Footpath 1708 runs north to south through the site, providing a link between the B2110 and Hammerpond Road.
- 8.6.2. The footpath currently shares the access road to the site, as well as the road through the site along the eastern extent of the building line.
- 8.6.3. As part of the proposed development, a small diversion of the route is identified – this will relocate the FP from the site access road to a route that routes immediately adjacent to it, before crossing the access road and then continuing north.
- 8.6.4. This adjustment will enhance security of the site as well as providing a route for users of the PROW that does not directly interface with vehicles, with the exception of the crossing point. The existing route is shown in orange, and the proposed route show in blue, shown in Figure 6 below.



Figure 8- Public Right of Way Diversion

- 8.6.5. Additional PROW wayfinding will be provided to sign the route, and the proposed diversion will be progressed under Section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act (2015) should planning permission be granted.

8.7. Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 8.7.1. Policy 31 of the HDPF states *'development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained'*.

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8.7.2. Policy 1 of the Lower Beeding Local Plan states

'Development proposals which protect and where possible provide net gains in biodiversity and enhance the ecological network in the Parish will be supported'.

8.7.3. As such, an Ecological Impact Assessment has been submitted in support of the application which details the extent of ecology on site and appropriate mitigation measures to ensure on site ecology is appropriately managed. Please refer to the supporting Ecological Impact Assessment for further details

8.7.4. In addition, a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment supports the application which details that the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain can be appropriately achieved on site as required by the Environment Act. Each application will require a suitably worded condition/obligation in accordance with each parcel of land.

8.7.5. On this basis, the proposed development is in accordance with required policy in terms of ecology and biodiversity. Please refer to the supporting Ecological Impact Assessment and BNG Assessment for further information.

8.8. Arboriculture

8.8.1. Policy 33 of the HDPF states that developments should include the retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. Development must relate sympathetically to the local landscape and justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development.

8.8.2. Policy 3 of the Lower Beeding Local Plan states that,

"Development proposals which seek to conserve, maintain or enhance existing green infrastructure networks will be supported.

Development proposals which incorporate landscaping and provide additional trees and hedging consistent with the rural nature of the Parish will be supported.

Proposals which would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the development proposals bring new opportunities which mitigates or compensates any loss, whilst ensuring the protection of the existing ecosystem'.

8.8.3. As such, an Arboriculture Impact Statement has been submitted in support of the application which assesses the proposals in full.

8.8.4. It is concluded that the development proposals for the three application areas are feasible, and the potential impacts on retained trees and hedgerows can be kept at a negligible to low level by further arboricultural input into the drainage and utility connection schemes, and through the protective measures and precautions set out in an Arboricultural Method Statement.

8.8.5. At the AD and Livestock application area, the proposed development and access sits within the area of existing activity and ground disturbance so there would be no further impact on nearby trees than has occurred through the site's existing permitted use, and a reduction of future impacts with an overall improvement in the soil rooting environment.

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8.8.6. The new drainage system is largely routed well away from trees and utilises small SuDS basins, Geocellular tanks and an existing surface water gravity pipe that discharges to the watercourse to the north. The pipes in the western part of the site have been located at a good distance from the western boundary trees and is within land that has existing disturbance and compaction, so would not significantly impact them.

8.8.7. Please refer to the submitted information for further information on the scheme.

8.9. Landscape Visual Impact

8.9.1. Policy 2 of the Lower Beeding Local Plan states that *'Development proposals which conserve and enhance the natural environment and landscape character of the Parish will be supported subject to compliance with other policies in the LBNP'*.

8.9.2. As previously outlined, the proposals seek to convert the existing building on-site for alternative uses. Given that the development works with the existing built form rather than introducing significant new structures, the overall landscape and visual impact is considered to be negligible and can be mitigated through additional planting as proposed as part of the overall landscaping and ecological mitigation strategies.

8.9.3. In light of the above, the proposals will not have any detrimental impact on the surrounding landscape, ensuring that the existing character and visual integrity of the area are preserved.

8.10. Drainage

8.10.1. Policy 38 of the HDPF states that development proposals will follow a sequential approach to flood risk management, giving priority to development sites with the lowest risk of flooding and making required development safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

8.10.2. As such, a Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy has been produced by Motion in support of this application.

8.10.3. The development at Lot 8 is for access and aprons that will be used for commercial vehicles. This requires a robust surface that can withstand being used and manoeuvred upon by commercial vehicles with minimal maintenance or damage. This means that, like the Stonehouse Business Park site, the hardstanding areas on Lot 8 must be surfaced with tarmac to ensure an appropriate running surface and its longevity.

8.10.4. The new tarmacadam hardstanding areas on Lot 8 will be positively drained and attenuated in a number of drainage features across the site. Two SuDS basins will be located in the greenspaces created within the access/parking areas, and geocellular attenuation tanks will be located in the corridor to the north of the hardstanding and the existing larger warehouse. Swales were considered in this space, but they are unable to provide the requisite attenuation once design depth, side slope requirements, and maintenance easements were built into the design.

8.10.5. For further information, please refer to the submitted report which details the strategy in full.

8.11. Water Neutrality

8.11.1. The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England and which includes supplies from groundwater abstraction which cannot, with certainty, demonstrate no adverse impacts upon the defined Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

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- 8.11.2. A recently received advice note from 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.
- 8.11.3. On this basis, a Water Neutrality Statement has been submitted in support of this application which details that the total demand post development across all three areas of development, including allowing for potential Holiday Lodges on the wider Stonehouse Farm site which do not form part of this Application, is calculated to fall by just over 456,00 litres per annum.
- 8.11.4. Furthermore, the Applicant is seeking agreement with Horsham and Natural England to 'reserve' this overage, for development within the water neutrality zone that will be coming forward.
- 8.11.5. Take as a whole, the proposals should be considered as fully compliant with the requirements of water neutrality within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

8.12. Sustainability

- 8.12.1. Policy 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) requires proposals to improve the sustainability of development. To achieve this, developments should incorporate appropriate measures based on their type and location.
- 8.12.2. An Energy and Sustainability Statement, prepared by AES Sustainability, outlines the proposed approach to sustainable construction at Stonehouse Farm.
- 8.12.3. All non-domestic spaces within the development will be designed to meet the minimum requirements of Part L2 (2021), achieving a >27% reduction in energy demand compared to previous regulatory standards.
- 8.12.4. The strategy follows a 'Fabric First' approach, which prioritises enhancing the thermal performance of the buildings to reduce energy demand and CO₂ emissions, ensuring a more sustainable and energy-efficient development.
- 8.12.5. A range of low and zero-carbon energy systems have been assessed for suitability and feasibility in delivering further carbon reductions. Based on indicative SAP calculations, incorporating the proposed fabric measures and renewable energy systems, the development is expected to reduce CO₂ emissions by approximately 1,085 kgCO₂/year beyond Part L 2021 Regulatory Standards.
- 8.12.6. Given these measures, the proposals are considered to be in full compliance with Policy 37 of the HDPF, supporting sustainable design and minimising environmental impact.

8.13. Contamination

- 8.13.1. A Preliminary Ground Contamination Risk Assessment Report, prepared by Ashdown Site Investigation, outlines the proposed approach to sustainable construction at Stonehouse Farm.
- 8.13.2. The risk assessment considers the potential sources of contamination identified, the receptors that may be present in view of the development proposals and the contaminant pathways by which these may be linked. A complete pollutant linkage is only deemed to exist where all three are present and a site is considered suitable for use where no complete pollutant linkages are identified.
- 8.13.3. Where a complete pollutant linkage is deemed to be present, an assessment of the level of risk associated with the pollutant linkage has been carried out in line with current guidance.

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- 8.13.4. The site is expected to be underlain by the Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation which is classed as a Secondary A Aquifer. Although the site is not located within a SPZ, and is located within a rural area, pathways relating to controlled waters may be reasonably considered to be present.
- 8.13.5. The only potential source identified by the risk assessment is the presence of made ground beneath various parts of the site from its recent development, which has evidently included the placement of granular fill material to quite significant depths in places.
- 8.13.6. However, several phases of investigation works were carried out in 2024 to assess the made ground, and these have found that the made ground does not contain concentrations of contaminants that would pose an unacceptable risk to end users of a commercial/light industrial development, or to controlled waters.
- 8.13.7. As such, no potential sources of contamination are considered to be present at the site.
- 8.13.8. Please refer to the submitted Preliminary Ground Contamination Risk Assessment Report for further information.
- 8.14. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**
 - 8.14.1. Each application is anticipated to be phased, and therefore, a separate CIL Form has been submitted for each parcel of land.

9. Lot 9 – Jacksons Farm

9.1. Principle of Development

- 9.1.1. The application site is situated in a rural countryside setting, surrounded by a small cluster of large residential dwellings on large plots along Hammerpond Road.
- 9.1.2. The proposal involves demolishing all existing agricultural buildings on the site and replacing them with three detached dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping.
- 9.1.3. While the site lies outside any defined settlement boundaries and is not allocated for development within the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) or the Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan, resulting in a conflict with these policies, there are material considerations that weigh in favour of the proposed development.
- 9.1.4. A Prior Approval Application under Class Q of the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO) presents a viable opportunity to convert the existing agricultural buildings into up to 10 residential units in our view. Please refer to Figure 8 and **Appendix C** which details the drawing set in full.



Figure 9 Class Q Conversion Plans

- 9.1.5. The Prior Approval option allows for a combined total floor area of up to 1,000 sqm, with each individual dwelling restricted to a maximum of 150 sqm. To maximise the potential of 10 units under Class Q, each dwelling would need to be approximately 100 sqm. Should the current application for three dwellings be unsuccessful, this fallback option offers a highly practical and entirely feasible alternative which has no reasons why it would be resisted.
- 9.1.6. The Prior Approval option represents a significant material consideration that, in this instance, outweighs any conflicts with the HDPF, particularly policies 1, 3, and 4. Consequently, the principle of residential development on this site is considered acceptable, provided it meets the necessary detailed planning considerations which are explored later in this statement.
- 9.1.7. This approach is consistent with the Court of Appeal's ruling in *Mansell v Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council* [2017] EWCA Civ 1314, which established that the fallback position under Class Q is a valid consideration when evaluating subsequent planning applications. Similar decisions by Planning Inspectors and Planning Officers in neighbouring authorities, and within Horsham District itself, such as DC/18/0327 at Hermongers Farm, Rudgwick which further reinforce this interpretation.

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9.1.8. It is important to note in Horsham Planning Committee Report (DC/18/0327) that the Officer stated,

'The prior approval therefore represents a realistic fallback position which would most likely be implemented were the current application refused. The prior approval is therefore a material consideration which is considered, in this particular instance, to outweigh the conflict with the adopted HDPF.'

This view is consistent with a recent Court of Appeal decision for a similar case relating to a Class Q prior approval and a subsequent planning application for residential development (see Mansell v Tonbridge And Malling Borough Council [2017] EWCA Civ 1314), and is noted that appeal decisions within neighbouring authorities have taken a similar approach to that set out above (for example, APP/D3830/W/16/3156030 - Mid-Sussex District Council).'

9.1.9. In our view, the proposed three dwellings offer a more balanced and appropriate response in terms of scale, type, and visual impact, particularly in light of the surrounding area, which is characterised by large, detached homes on spacious plots. As such, the prior approval represents a realistic fallback option. Consequently, this fallback position is a significant material consideration that, in this case, is deemed to outweigh any conflict with the adopted HDPF, especially with respect to Policies 1, 3, and 4.

9.1.10. Paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local authorities to identify a supply of specific deliverable sites to meet a minimum of 5 years' worth of housing against their requirement as outlined in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are over 5 years old.

9.1.11. As highlighted in Horsham District Council's most recent Annual Monitoring Report, published on 18 January 2024, the Council is currently able to demonstrate only a 2.9-year supply of housing, falling significantly short of the required housing land supply target.

9.1.12. The shortfall in housing delivery is a key material consideration that strongly supports the proposed development. Therefore, the principle of residential development on this site is considered not only acceptable but also in alignment with the urgent need to address the housing supply deficit.

9.1.13. The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable in light of the reasons presented above.

9.2. Design and Appearance

9.2.1. Policy 32 of the HDPF seeks high quality and inclusive design, with proposals expected to provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environments, complement local distinctive characters and contribute to a sense of place.

9.2.2. The proposals seek to demolish the existing agricultural buildings and replace them with three detached dwellings, which are designed to complement the surrounding rural setting. The design of the dwellings has been tailored to fit in with the local character, which includes large residential properties along Hammerpond Road. The careful selection of materials, landscaping, and overall layout will ensure that the development is visually appealing and appropriate for the countryside location.

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- 9.2.3. Architectural features to the dwellings include feature inset balconies, vaulted glazing to maximise light and views, architecturally designed cladding, architectural timber slats and a striking agricultural appearance. The elevational solutions create a simple but high-quality elevations appropriate for the site setting and respectful of the architecture of the surrounding housing, with the use of a limited palette of materials creating individuality for the dwelling without being unnecessarily busy.
- 9.2.4. The scale and massing of the dwellings is considered entirely appropriate for the area and the size of the proposed site. The carefully considered proposed ridge heights ensures that the dwellings will sit successfully within the street setting and the introduction of high-quality materials and detailing will ensure a complementary relationship to surrounding built form.
- 9.2.5. The dwellings are designed to make use of a simple contextual material palette, referencing the existing buildings and the local area more generally. These include a mix of natural timber, stone and zinc.
- 9.2.6. Replacing the old agricultural buildings with new dwellings will help shape the character of the area. The development will blend in well with the existing homes along Hammerpond Road while still respecting the rural surroundings, creating a well-designed and considered addition, replacing the current eyesore.
- 9.2.7. Please refer to the submitted Design and Access Statement, drawings and visuals for further information.

9.3. Residential Amenity

- 9.3.1. Policy 33 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that development does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers and users of nearby properties, particularly in terms of overlooking, noise, or other disturbances. It also stresses the need to have regard for the sensitivities of surrounding developments.
- 9.3.2. The proposed three detached dwellings have been carefully designed to avoid overlooking of neighbouring properties. The placement of the windows on the dwelling seek to minimise any potential loss of privacy for nearby residents.
- 9.3.3. In addition, the schemes outlook is predominantly south facing looking over Stonehouse Farm and maintaining the existing viewpoints. By ensuring adequate spacing between the new dwellings and existing properties, the proposal will maintain a good level of privacy for both current and future occupants.
- 9.3.4. The sites existing use as an agricultural use and the proposed replacement with residential dwellings are expected to result in in minimal noise disturbance to surrounding properties. Furthermore, the inclusion of appropriate landscaping and boundary treatments will provide a buffer that can help reduce noise impact and provide privacy for neighbouring properties.
- 9.3.5. The proposal has been designed with sensitivity to the existing residential properties along Hammerpond Road. The development's scale, layout, and massing has been designed to ensure that it integrates well with the existing area respecting the surrounding rural and residential character.

9.4. Highways and Parking

- 9.4.1. Policy 41 of the HDPF states that adequate parking and facilities must be provided within development to meet the needs of anticipated users. Consideration should be given to the needs of cycle parking, motorcycle parking, charging plug in or other low emission vehicles and the mobility impaired.

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- 9.4.2. Chapter 9 of the NPPF sets out the Government's aspirations for the promotion of sustainable transport, and details how transport and highways implications arising from development proposals should be considered in planning terms.
- 9.4.3. Paragraph 114 requires that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes should be considered, and that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. In addition, it requires that any significant impacts from the development on the transport network or on highway safety can be effectively mitigated.
- 9.4.4. As mentioned in previous sections, the proposals seek to utilise the existing access points along Hammerpond Road, which are already used by heavy machinery for both commercial and agricultural purposes. Therefore, these access points are considered suitable for the proposed three residential dwellings and will, in turn, reduce vehicle movements compared to the existing agricultural and commercial uses. Furthermore, this proposed use is not expected to impact the highway network, and visibility splays have already been achieved, ensuring that future users can safely exit the driveway onto Hammerpond Road.
- 9.4.5. Policy 41 and West Sussex County Council (WSCC) guidance requires new development to provide for an appropriate level of car parking in accordance with parking guidance. The proposed development seeks to provide a total of 12no spaces (4no parking spaces per dwelling). The proposals include a single dedicated electric vehicle charging point (EVCP) for each of the dwelling in accordance with standards.
- 9.4.6. In accordance with the WSCC guidance the development is required to provide 2no. cycle spaces per dwelling to meet standards. The proposals seek to provide these within the garages which are locked and secured.
- 9.4.7. To conclude the proposals are considered to be acceptable in highway terms and would provide a sufficient level of car parking spaces and cycle parking provision. The proposals would be compliant with local and national planning policy, in particular Policy 41.

9.5. Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 9.5.1. Policy 31 of the HDPF states *'development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained'*.
- 9.5.2. Policy 1 of the Lower Beeding Local Plan states *'Development proposals which protect and where possible provide net gains in biodiversity and enhance the ecological network in the Parish will be supported'*.
- 9.5.3. As such, an Ecological Impact Assessment has been submitted in support of the application which details the extent of ecology on site and appropriate mitigation measures to ensure on site ecology is appropriately managed. Please refer to the supporting Ecological Impact Assessment for further details
- 9.5.4. In addition, a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment supports the application which details that the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain can be appropriately achieved on site as required by the Environment Act. Each application will require a suitably worded condition in accordance with each parcel of land.

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- 9.5.5. On this basis, the proposed development is in accordance with required policy in terms of ecology and biodiversity. Please refer to the supporting Ecological Impact Assessment and BNG Assessment for further information.

9.6. Arboriculture

- 9.6.1. Policy 33 of the HDPF states that developments should include the retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. Development must relate sympathetically to the local landscape and justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development.

- 9.6.2. Policy 3 of the Lower Beeding Local Plan states that,

'Development proposals which seek to conserve, maintain or enhance existing green infrastructure networks will be supported.'

Development proposals which incorporate landscaping and provide additional trees and hedging consistent with the rural nature of the Parish will be supported.

Proposals which would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the development proposals bring new opportunities which mitigates or compensates any loss, whilst ensuring the protection of the existing ecosystem'.

- 9.6.3. As such, an Arboriculture Impact Statement has been submitted in support of the application which assesses the proposals in full.

- 9.6.4. It is concluded that the development proposals for the three application areas are feasible, and the potential impacts on retained trees and hedgerows can be kept at a negligible to low level by further arboricultural input into the drainage and utility connection schemes, and through the protective measures and precautions set out in an Arboricultural Method Statement.

- 9.6.5. At the Jacksons site, the removal of the existing hard surfacing and structures within the RPAs of the roadside trees will provide a significant improvement in the soil rooting environment. Subject to an assessment of proposed levels, a cellular confinement system construction of the driveway for Plot A would reduce the impact on trees T13 and T16 to an acceptable level.

- 9.6.6. The new drainage system is well away from retained trees and flows southwards from the driveways and dwellings to eventually discharge to the watercourse at the bottom of the valley to the south. The final location for discharge to the watercourse is not yet known but can be chosen to minimise impact on trees along the watercourse

- 9.6.7. Please refer to the submitted information for further information on the scheme.

9.7. Landscape Visual Impact

- 9.7.1. Policy 2 of the Lower Beeding Local Plan states that *'Development proposals which conserve and enhance the natural environment and landscape character of the Parish will be supported subject to compliance with other policies in the LBNP'.*

- 9.7.2. As previously outlined, the proposals seek to demolish the existing buildings on site and replace these with 3no. detached buildings on site.

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- 9.7.3. Although it is noted that the introduction of buildings will change the landscape character, this is considered positive and reflects the surrounding vernacular on Hammerpond Road and replaces the existing and unattractive agricultural units on site.
- 9.7.4. A review of key viewpoints, including the Public Right of Way access from Lot 8, has been undertaken as part of the submission. The proposals, like the existing buildings at Jacksons, are largely screened by dense vegetation buffers and have minimal visibility.
- 9.7.5. Given the sensitive design approach, the introduction of three detached dwellings is not expected to have a significant impact on the surrounding landscape.

9.8. Drainage

- 9.8.1. Policy 38 of the HDPF states that development proposals will follow a sequential approach to flood risk management, giving priority to development sites with the lowest risk of flooding and making required development safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 9.8.2. As such, a Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy has been produced by Motion in support of this application.
- 9.8.3. Water butts are recommended for the three residential properties. These will reduce the reliance on potable water supplies during activities such as gardening and car washing. Water butts can also provide small amounts of storage for surface water and can often assist in achieving zero discharge for rainfall depths up to 5mm, which covers 50% of annual rainfall events (according to the EA's Rainfall Runoff Management for Developments report – SC030219).
- 9.8.4. It has been described that Jacksons Ridge lies on an elevated and topographically level platform to the south of Hammerpond Road. This allows permeable pavements to be specified for the driveway and accesses to the three units, which provides useful attenuation and pollution mitigation opportunities for the drainage system.
- 9.8.5. The driveway areas are constrained by Root Protection Areas (RPA's) associated with the trees that line the southern side of Hammerpond Road.
- 9.8.6. Because of the limited extent of permeable pavements on each property, further attenuation is required. The areas to the south of each property and within the red line boundary are gardens and because of this it would not be suitable to locate surface level SuDS features in these privately-owned spaces.
- 9.8.7. It has been decided to place geocellular tanks below each of the patio areas, which provide the residual attenuation requirements for each property following the permeable pavements.
- 9.8.8. The Jacksons Ridge development will discharge directly to the south and to the watercourse at the bottom of the valley.
- 9.8.9. For further information, please refer to the submitted report which details the strategy in full.

9.9. Water Neutrality

- 9.9.1. The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England and which includes supplies from groundwater abstraction which cannot, with certainty, demonstrate no adverse impacts upon the defined Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

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- 9.9.2. A recently received advice note from 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.
- 9.9.3. On this basis, a Water Neutrality Statement has been submitted in support of this application which details that the total demand post development across all three areas of development, including allowing for potential Holiday Lodges on the wider Stonehouse Farm site which do not form part of this Application, is calculated to fall by just over 456,00 litres per annum.
- 9.9.4. Furthermore, the Applicant is seeking agreement with Horsham and Natural England to 'reserve' this overage, for development within the water neutrality zone that will be coming forward.
- 9.9.5. Take as a whole, the proposals should be considered as fully compliant with the requirements of water neutrality within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

9.10. Sustainability

- 9.10.1. Policy 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) requires proposals to improve the sustainability of development. To achieve this, developments should incorporate appropriate measures based on their type and location.
- 9.10.2. An Energy and Sustainability Statement, prepared by AES Sustainability, outlines the proposed approach to sustainable construction at Stonehouse Farm.
- 9.10.3. All non-domestic spaces within the development will be designed to meet the minimum requirements of Part L2 (2021), achieving a >27% reduction in energy demand compared to previous regulatory standards.
- 9.10.4. This strategy focuses on a 'Fabric First' approach which prioritises improvements to the fabric of the dwellings to avoid unnecessary energy demand and consequent COC emissions. Improvements in insulation specification, efficient building services, a reduction in thermal bridging and unwanted air leakage paths and further passive design measures will enable the relevant standards to be met, whilst building in low energy design and future climate resilience to the design and construction of the dwellings.
- 9.10.5. A range of low and zero-carbon energy systems have been assessed for suitability and feasibility in delivering further carbon reductions. Based on indicative SAP calculations, incorporating the proposed fabric measures and renewable energy systems, the development is expected to reduce CO₂ emissions by approximately 1,085 kgCO₂/year beyond Part L 2021 Regulatory Standards.
- 9.10.6. The statement additionally details the proposed approach to addressing overheating risk and climate resilience, sustainable and responsible materials usage and water consumption of the dwellings.
- 9.10.7. Given these measures, the proposals are considered to be in full compliance with Policy 37 of the HDPF, supporting sustainable design and minimising environmental impact.

9.11. Contamination

- 9.11.1. A Preliminary Ground Contamination Risk Assessment Report, prepared by Ashdown Site Investigation, outlines the proposed approach to sustainable construction at Stonehouse Farm.

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- 9.11.2. The risk assessment considers the potential sources of contamination identified, the receptors that may be present in view of the development proposals and the contaminant pathways by which these may be linked. A complete pollutant linkage is only deemed to exist where all three are present and a site is considered suitable for use where no complete pollutant linkages are identified.
- 9.11.3. It is noted that the asbestos survey provided to us has identified asbestos materials to be present within the dairy barn. Our risk assessment assumes that any asbestos identified within any buildings or infrastructure will be managed in accordance with current legislation and guidance, including its appropriate removal and disposal prior to demolition works taking place, in order to ensure that this does not represent an ongoing risk to end users and, specifically, to ensure that asbestos materials are not introduced into the underlying soils.
- 9.11.4. The site is expected to be underlain by the Upper Tunbridge Wells which is classed as a Secondary A and Unproductive Stratum, associated with the sandstone and mudstone variants, respectively. Whilst a Secondary A aquifer may theoretically be a potential pathway to groundwater receptors, no potable drinking water abstraction points are noted within 2km of the site and the site is not located within a SPZ.
- 9.11.5. In addition, the sandstone and mudstone variants are likely to be highly interbedded and overall likely to yield a very low to negligible infiltration within the shallow soils with any leachable contaminants unlikely to migrate. It is therefore considered that no viable pathways link potential contamination on the site with sensitive groundwater.
- 9.11.6. The following potential sources of contamination have been identified by the preliminary contamination risk assessment:
- Historical and ongoing use of the site for agricultural and light industrial purposes.
 - Potential leakages from the slurry lagoon with the potential for deep made ground in the immediate vicinity.
 - Made ground and waste materials visible in parts of the site.
- 9.11.7. The potential contaminants associated with these sources are set out in the conceptual model.
- 9.11.8. Potential pollutant linkages have been identified by the preliminary risk assessment. It is recommended that an intrusive ground investigation should be undertaken to allow a quantitative assessment to be made of the risks posed to end users.
- 9.11.9. Please refer to the submitted Preliminary Ground Contamination Risk Assessment Report for further information.

9.12. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 9.12.1. Each application is anticipated to be phased, and therefore, a separate CIL Form has been submitted for each parcel of land.

10. Conclusions

- 10.1. This Planning Statement has been produced by ECE Planning on behalf of the Applicant, Lake Investments Ltd, in support of a Full Planning Application at Stonehouse Farm. The description of development reads,

Full Planning Application to form a comprehensive masterplan including:

- 1) Rationalisation and enhancement of existing commercial facilities (Use Classes E(g) B2 and B8 at Stonehouse Business Park including demolition of two buildings and their replacement with new Class E(g), B2 and B8 facilities. Extension of existing building to form a new office and wardens' accommodation. Existing mobile home removed.*
- 2) Decommissioning of the Anaerobic Digester and re-use of the existing 2no buildings for storage and office uses (Class E (g) and B8) and the diversion of a public footpath.*
- 3) Residential redevelopment of the Jacksons Farm site including the demolition of existing barns to provide 3no. dwellings with access, parking, and landscaping.*

- 10.2. The scheme has been designed to rationalise and enhance existing commercial facilities, repurpose agricultural buildings for viable commercial use, and introduce sensitively designed residential development.
- 10.3. As set out within this Statement, the Applicant Team has undertaken pre-application discussions with the Council. In addition, extensive public consultation has informed the proposals, with strong engagement and support from local stakeholders and neighbours.
- 10.4. The principle of each part of the development proposals have been found to be entirely acceptable, and the proposed redevelopment will make efficient use of brownfield sites which are largely vacant as agricultural uses are now no longer feasible or viable for the site. As, such, the proposed redevelopment of the land should be fully supported.
- 10.4.1. The proposals respect and enhance the landscape character, integrating sensitively with the surrounding area. A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment confirms that the scheme meets the Environment Act's requirement for a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on site.
- 10.4.2. The application is accompanied by detailed drainage with conclude that the proposals are acceptable. The scheme is also better than water neutral, with a 476,000-litre annual reduction in water use, fully meeting Natural England's requirements.
- 10.5. The application is supported by detailed transport and highways assessments, which confirm that the road access, internal layout, and parking provisions comply with all necessary standards. The diversion of Public Footpath 1708 has been carefully planned to improve pedestrian safety while maintaining connectivity across the site.
- 10.6. All other material considerations have been considered within this Statement and accompanying reports which demonstrate that the proposed development would not result in any significant harm to amenity or environment which cannot otherwise be mitigated by appropriate conditions.
- 10.7. To conclude, the application is compliant with the Horsham District Planning Framework and the NPPF. It is strongly contended that all the relevant issues have been satisfactorily addressed, such that there would not be any demonstrable harm as a result of the development proposed and planning permission should be granted without delay.

Appendix A – Statement of Community Involvement

Lake Investments Ltd - Stonehouse and Jackson Farms Development: Community Engagement Overview

Background:

Lake Investments Ltd purchased Stonehouse and Jackson Farm on 7th December 2023. The property has a complex history and has attracted significant local interest due to ongoing activities and potential future developments.

Community and Parish Council Engagement:

At the time of our offer to purchase, we contacted Mr. Peter Knox, the parish council clerk, via email to introduce ourselves and outline our intentions, along with an associated timeline (see *Document A*). Upon completing the purchase, we sent a letter to all neighbouring properties introducing ourselves as the point of contact and detailing our intentions and timeline for the property (see *Document B*).

Since taking ownership, we have maintained regular communication with the parish council and neighbours, actively encouraging them to reach out with any concerns. We ensure prompt responses and attend all relevant parish council meetings. We have held three public planning presentations, which allowed the parish council and wider community to offer feedback at each stage.

Community Engagement Highlights:

- **Initial Contact with Parish Council and Neighbours:**
 - Initial email and introduction to the parish council clerk, Mr. Peter Knox (Dec 2023)
 - Distribution of a letter to neighbours introducing ourselves and providing information on our intentions (*Document B*)
 - Ongoing open communication and attendance at parish council meetings
- **Public Planning Presentations:** Three open planning presentations have been held to provide an opportunity for feedback and dialogue.

Public Open Day Presentations:

1. Initial Planning Presentation and Site Open Day - 27th April 2024:

- **Location:** Stonehouse Farm
- **Attendees:** 74 (including parish councillors and district member)
- **Advertising:**
 - Advertised via Handcross Village Residents Facebook Group
 - Leaflets distributed to residents on Handcross Road, Hammerpond Road, and Church Lane (see *Document C*)
 - Copies emailed to known neighbours and parish council for wider distribution (see *Document D*)
- **Agenda:**

- **Meeting Duration:** 3 hours
- **Presentation:** Drone and CGI-based video detailing the company's background and intentions (<https://vimeo.com/1058160693?share=copy#t=0>)
- **Site Master Plan:** Hard copies available for attendees (*see Document E*)
- **Discussion Points:**
 - Proposal to adapt the existing AD plant to produce green energy through a joint venture
 - Use of the livestock building for bagging organic fertilizer from anaerobic digestion
 - Feedback: A unanimous request to eliminate the AD plant. We committed to exploring alternative uses and planned a follow-up meeting.

2. Second Open Day Presentation - 9th November 2024:

- **Location:** Lower Beeding Village Hall
- **Attendees:** 68 (including parish councillors and district member)
- **Advertising:**
 - Advertised via Handcross Village Residents Facebook Group (*see Document F*)
 - Leaflets distributed to residents on Handcross Road, Hammerpond Road, and Church Lane (*see Document G*)
 - Copies emailed to known neighbours and parish council for wider distribution (*see Document H*)
- **Agenda:**
 - **Meeting Duration:** 3 hours
 - **Presentation:** Updated drone and CGI-based video, detailing the latest company intentions (*same as above*)
 - **Site Master Plan:** Hard copies available for attendees (*see Document E*)
 - **Discussion Points:**
 - Report on the identified alternative use for the AD plant, which received broad support
 - Neighbour request for individual meetings with those most affected to address their concerns
 - Commitment to hold a further public meeting once detailed proposals for the residential development at Jackson Ridge are available

3. Third Open Day Presentation - 15th February 2025:

- **Location:** Lower Beeding Village Hall

- **Attendees:** 60
- **Advertising:**
 - Advertised via Handcross Village Residents Facebook Group (see *Document I*)
 - Leaflets distributed to residents on Handcross Road, Hammerpond Road, and Church Lane (see *Document J*)
 - Copies emailed to known neighbours and parish council for wider distribution (see *Document K*)
- **Agenda:**
 - **Meeting Duration:** 3 hours
 - **Presentation:** Latest drone and CGI video detailing company background and updated intentions (<https://vimeo.com/1054450536>)
 - **Site Master Plan:** Hard copies available for attendees (see *Document L*)
 - **Discussion Points:**
 - Presentation of final details for residential units
 - Significant majority of attendees expressed support for the revised proposals

Individual Neighbour Meetings:

Between the second and third public planning presentations, Director Lee Goossens held several one-on-one meetings with neighbours who expressed concerns. These discussions allowed us to refine our plans and address individual concerns directly. We understand that support letters from these neighbours, reflecting their concerns and the steps taken to address them, are likely to be submitted as part of the application process.

Ongoing Engagement:

We continue to maintain open lines of communication with all neighbours and the parish council, actively encouraging feedback and addressing any concerns. We also operate an open site policy, inviting community members to visit the property and discuss any issues.

Additionally, the drone and CGI video, which provides a comprehensive overview of the proposal, is publicly available on our website. We actively promote this video to ensure all stakeholders are well-informed.

We have made full copies of the final application available to all neighbours and continue to invite further dialogue and feedback.

Appendix A

best regards

Peter Knox

Clerk to Lower Beeding Parish Council

Email: clerk@lowerbeeding.com

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From: Lee Goossens <lg@thehuntergroup.co.uk>

Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2023 10:21 AM

To: Peter Knox - Lower Beeding Parish Clerk <clerk@lowerbeeding.com>

Cc: Leslie Bamford <leslie.bamford@lowerbeeding.com>; dennis.livingstone@horsham.gov.uk

Subject: Stone House Farm Plummers Plain Update.

Mr Knox,

I wanted to let you know that I represented the receivers yesterday at the planning appeal hearing in relation to:

A: The mobile home at the AD plant

B: The mobile home at Jackson farm

C: The recently erected barn at Stonehouse Farm.

The determination of the appeal is likely to be delivered in January 2024.

Two members of your council attended along with three members of the public.

I believe we made it clear at the hearing that:

A: We would not have approached the planning or the appeal of the decision to refuse in the way the Coopers had.

B: We respected the councils views in respect of the mobile homes and made it clear that these did not form part of our plans.

C: We would like to retain the recently erected barn and made representations to the planning principle of the replacement of prior buildings.

Aside from the appeal matters, understandably your councillors and members of the public voiced wider concerns regarding the historic management of the farm.

I advised all that I had emailed you and that we would, write to all neighbours as soon as we have taken ownership and introduce ourselves by providing direct contact for any concerns. Within three to four months of ownership, we will produce a master plan for the farm which, if acceptable to your councillors, we would like to present to your council prior to submission of a pre-application to HDC so we can take the parish councils views into consideration. We will also write to all neighbours and invite them to an open day for the same purpose in advance of any submission to HDC.

During the planning inspectors site meeting which we agreed your councillors and the members of the public could attend, I referred to what I believe to be a much-improved environment and controlled situation at the property, despite my hands remaining largely tied until we take ownership.

Once we have ownership, we will ensure the entire site is tided and maintained to an acceptable standard and all activities are controlled to ensure these are both legal and reasonable.

A neighbour advised the foot path is not maintained. I will prioritise ensuring good unrestricted public access as a priority.

I'm hopeful we will take ownership by the end of this month and will ensure you are kept informed, in the meantime please provide any concerned party with my contact details in order I can take account and deal with any immediate concerns.

Kind Regards

Lee Goossens

Managing Director

Tel: 07710908088



Hunter Development Holdings Limited - Company registration: 03606898.

Incorporated United Kingdom - Registered address: Amelia House, Crescent Road, Worthing, BN11 1RL

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From: Lee Goossens

Sent: Monday, September 4, 2023 3:11 PM

To: 'clerk@lowerbeeding.com' <clerk@lowerbeeding.com>

Cc: 'dennis.livingstone@horsham.gov.uk' <dennis.livingstone@horsham.gov.uk>;

'leslie.bamford@lowerbeeding.com' <leslie.bamford@lowerbeeding.com>

Subject: Stone House Farm Plummers Plain

Dear Mr Knox,

I'm emailing you with regards to Stonehouse Farm.

I'm sure you will know that the farm has been taken into receivership and marketed for sale. My company (Hunter Development Holdings) offer has been accepted with lawyers instructed. All being well, we will take ownership in October.

I'm aware that the activities at the farm as well as the past approach to planning have caused considerable disturbance and concern locally, hence my reason for reaching out.

For close to three decades, I have progressively specialised in the sympathetic redevelopment of country estates and farms alongside a wide range of rural, commercial, and residential redevelopment. Stonehouse will be the fifteenth farm / country estate within a ten-mile radius we have, as I say, sympathetically redeveloped. We own or have under management 900 acres across three farms in Nutbourne, West Grinstead and Cowfold. We are also party to a joint venture in respect of a mixed-use redevelopment of Sumners Ponds

in Barns Green and, until recently, owned, redeveloped, and operated Wickwoods Country Club, Hotel & Spa in Albourne, a four silver AA Star multi award winning hospitality venue that we also brought out of receivership on the back of chequered past in 2010.

My wife and I are local people from Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint. We now live in Nutbourne.

Our interest in Stonehouse Farm is that of a long-term investment in a mixed-used residential and commercially operated farm around a rewilded landscape registered under the new biodiversity nett gain incentive. We are at the early stages of being considered by Horsham District Council (HDC) as a strategic BNG unit provider for the district. Given our focus, any activity causing an unreasonable disturbance will immediately cease the day we take ownership, and the site will be cleared of all debris and undesirable tenants.

We will write to all neighbours as soon as we have taken ownership and introduce ourselves by providing direct contact for any concerns. Within three to four months of ownership, we will produce a master plan for the farm which, if acceptable to your councillors, we would like to present to your council prior to submission of a pre-application to HDC so we can take the parish councils views into consideration. We will also write to all neighbours and invite them to an open day for the same purpose in advance of any submission to HDC.

I appreciate that there will be concerns and can only reference our past track record of sensitivity redeveloping multiple farms and country estates such as Stone House in the immediate vicinity over the last twenty-six plus years, the first being Furner's Farm Furner's Lane Henfield in 1996. More recently we have undertaken two sensitive rural developments in the parish of Itchingfield , The Heritage Trust Award winning Marlands Park, and the recently approved mixed use development of Sumners Ponds, a designated site within the pending neighbourhood plan. Both were problematic and of concern to the parish council, albeit to a lesser degree than Stonehouse.

Itchingfield Parish Council is chaired by Mrs Penny Simpson, who has kindly confirmed that she can be contacted for reference on 01403 731019 or p.simpson@itchingfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk. Please note that Penny is away from the 7th through to 18th of September. District Councillor Trica Youtan, who followed our approach to both sites with interest, is also prepared to make comment if that was considered of value.

Attached is a district plan showing the farms we are intending to register under the BNG incentive, including Stonehouse, which we will rebrand as Stonehouse Farm & Lakes.

Our website provides a wealth of details regarding past developments and below is a link to a short six-minute video setting out our aspirations in respect of BNG at our home, Nash Manor, providing an indication of our attitude towards the natural environment and our intention for the other farms within our ownership or management.

I hope this all provides some degree of assurance that Stonehouse is ending up in responsible and caring hands. If you would like to discuss any matters or concerns, please do let me know.

<https://thehuntergroup.co.uk/past-work/nash-manor-estate/>

Kind Regards

Lee Goossens

Managing Director

Tel: 07710908088



Hunter Development Holdings Limited - Company registration: 03606898.

Incorporated United Kingdom - Registered address: Amelia House, Crescent Road, Worthing, BN11 1RL

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Appendix B



Dear Neighbour,

Ref: Stonehouse Farm Handcross Road Plummers Plain change of ownership.

I am sure you will know that Stonehouse Farm was taken into receivership earlier this year and marketed for sale. Having brought the farm, I am writing to introduce myself as Managing Director of The Hunter Group.

I am aware that activities at the farm, as well as the past approach to planning, has caused considerable disturbance and concern locally, hence my reason for writing to every immediate neighbour. I have also been in regular contact with the Parish Council in the lead up to the purchase.

For close to three decades, The Hunter Group has progressively specialised in the sympathetic redevelopment of country estates and farms, alongside a wide range of rural, commercial, and residential redevelopment. Stonehouse will be the fifteenth farm / country estate within a ten-mile radius that we have, as I say, sympathetically redeveloped. We own or have under management 900 acres across three farms in Nutbourne, West Grinstead and Cowfold. Until recently, we were party to a joint venture in respect of a mixed-use redevelopment of Sumners Ponds in Barns Green. We also owned, redeveloped, and operated Wickwoods Country Club, Hotel & Spa in Albourne, an AA four Star multi award-winning hospitality venue which we also brought out of receivership in 2010 on the back of chequered past.

My wife and I are local people, from Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint, and we now live in Nutbourne.

Our interest in Stonehouse Farm is as a long-term investment as a mixed-use residential and commercially operated farm around a rewilded landscape registered under the new biodiversity nett gain (BNG) incentive. We are at the early stages of being considered by Horsham District Council (HDC) as a strategic BNG unit provider for the district. Given our focus, any activity causing an unreasonable disturbance will immediately cease the day we take ownership, and the site will be cleared of all debris and any undesirable tenants.

We will shortly begin to tidy up the farm and within three to four months, we will produce a master plan which we intend to present to the Parish Council prior to submitting a pre-application to HDC so that we can take account of local views regarding the future of the farm. We will also hold an open day at the farm to share our vision for the future.





I appreciate that there will be concerns and can only reference our past track record of sensitivity in redeveloping multiple farms and country estates similar to Stonehouse in the immediate vicinity over the last twenty-six plus years, the first being Furners Farm, Furners Lane, Henfield in 1996. More recently we have undertaken two sensitive rural developments in the parish of Itchingfield; The Heritage Trust Award-winning Marlands Park, and the recently approved mixed-use development of Sumners Ponds, a designated site within the pending neighbourhood plan. Both were problematic and of concern to the Parish Council, albeit to a lesser degree than Stonehouse.

Enclosed is a district plan showing the farms we intend to register under the BNG incentive, including Stonehouse, which we will rebrand as Stonehouse Farm & Lakes.

Our website provides a wealth of details regarding past developments and below is a link to a six-minute video setting out our aspirations in respect of BNG at our home, Nash Manor. The video gives an insight into our attitude towards the natural environment and our intentions for the other farms within our ownership or management.

I hope this all provides some degree of reassurance that Stonehouse will be in responsible and caring hands. If you would like to discuss any matters or concerns, please do contact me directly.

<https://thehuntergroup.co.uk/past-work/nash-manor-estate/>

You are welcome to share this letter with any other interested party.

Kind Regards,

Lee Goossens
Managing Director



Appendix C



Stonehouse
FARM AND LAKES

PRESENTATION
OPEN DAY

SATURDAY 27th APRIL
14:00

Main Office, Stonehouse Farm,
Handcross Road, Plummers Plain, RH13 6NZ

Join us for a presentation open day of the
proposed rural redevelopment.

Refreshments and nibbles provided.

Register your interest/attendance by emailing
ph@thehuntergroup.co.uk



Stonehouse Farm fell into receivership in 2023. Later that year, Hunters purchased the site with the intention of creating an award-winning renatured mixed-use development incorporating a select number of homes, appropriate commercial and employment space, including a green energy park, as well as leisure in the form of eco lodges, lakes, and a multifunctional recreational track through the renatured landscape extending to in excess 100 acres.

Appendix D

FW: Stonehouse Open day 27th April 14:00

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Thu 11/04/24 10:30 PM

To: [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2024 8:39 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Stonehouse Open day 27th April 14:00

Lee;

Thanks for the invitation. Linda and I would very much like to attend.

See you then

Owen

Subject: Stonehouse Open day 27th April 14:00

Good evening,

I'm now able to confirm that the Open Day will be held on the Saturday the 27th of April at 14:00 at the farm office located in the main Stonehouse Yard.

There will be plenty of parking and we will be providing refreshments and snacks.

We will be hand posting the attached flyer through doors this weekend and I will be emailing the same to those who have been in direct contact with me.

Please share this email and the attachment.

It would be helpful if those who wish to attend confirmed that intention by emailing PH@thehuntergroup.co.uk so we know how many we are catering for.

If you wish to discuss any matter, please do let me know.

Kind Regards
Lee Goossens
Managing Director

Tel: 07710908088



Hunter Development Holdings Limited - Company registration: 03606898.

Incorporated United Kingdom - Registered address: Amelia House, Crescent Road, Worthing, BN11 1RL

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FW: Stonehouse Open day 27th April 14:00

[REDACTED]

Hi Phillipa

Lee has forwarded the Stonehouse open day leaflet over, and so I'm just writing as requested to let you know that Heidi and I will be joining you on 27 April 2024 – look forward to meeting you then.

Regards
James

[REDACTED]

Subject: Stonehouse Open day 27th April 14:00

Evening Peter and James,

I'm now able to confirm that the Open Day will be held on the Saturday the 27th of April at 14:00 at the farm office located in the main Stonehouse Yard.

There will be plenty of parking and we will be providing refreshments and snacks.

We will be hand posting the attached flyer through doors this weekend and I will be emailing the same to those who have been in direct contact with me.

Please ask people to share.

It would be helpful if those who wish to attend confirmed that intention by emailing PH@thehuntergroup.co.uk so we know how many we are catering for.

If you wish to discuss any matter, please do let me know.

Kind Regards

Lee Goossens

Managing Director

Tel: 07710908088

Hunter Development Holdings Limited - Company registration: 03606898.

Incorporated United Kingdom - Registered address: Amelia House, Crescent Road, Worthing, BN11 1RL

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Appendix E

Jackson's Residence



Located on the site of the former farm yard, Jackson's Residence will deliver three high-quality larger 5-6 bedroom principal homes, set within the verdant character of Hammerpond Road. Set back from the road, the new homes will continue the pattern of development and will create the opportunity for new tree planting.



To the rear of the new homes, the large gardens will follow the topography of the land and will be defined at their extents by a black estate railing and native hedgerow planting. Having this filtered semi-permeable boundary treatment will allow the residence to 'borrow' the landscape, spreading the garden seamlessly into the 'habitat mosaic' to the south. This was an idea originally laid out by Capability Brown of a 'borrowed landscape'. Closeboard fences will create separation and privacy to each individual home and will be softened by native tree and shrub planting.



The new homes could include features such as bee and bat bricks, bird boxes and hedgehog highways to the garden fences.



1 MEADOW HABITAT



Extensive areas of meadow planting and management of existing habitats within these areas will create a space for wildlife to flourish. Opportunities for wildflower to be sown throughout the meadows will attract insects and pollinators, along with other local wildlife. Opportunities for recreational routes through these meadows will bring users of the routes closer to nature. Specific species of meadow mixes will compliment the local landscape.

Green Energy Park

2 WOODLAND CREATION



New woodland will be created across Stonehouse Farm to enhance the surrounding Ancient and Broadleaved woodlands. Continuing woodland along the stream corridor will enhance important wildlife corridors and create spaces for a variety of wildlife, fauna, and flora to establish. New native tree planting will provide immediate impact set against the backdrop of the woodland, as it establishes and matures over time.

A mix of native species to the area, such as English Oak, Beech, birch, buckthorn, Aspen, hazel, and wild cherry will create habitats with seasonal interest. The woodland will be managed over time to ensure a healthy and successful woodland is achieved. Ground cover and thicket planting will create a diverse variety of habitats at different heights. There may be opportunities in the future to extend the recreational routes, to create woodland trails for those using the 'Lakes & Lodges' and the Public Right of Way.

4 SCRUB PLANTING HABITAT

Scrub and thicket planting will create an ecotone in the foreground to the new woodland creation. These areas will be left to grow creating a wild unmanaged character attracting a variety of wildlife. Antive species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, spindle, buckthorn, blackberry and elderflower will be strengthened by native tree planting including maple, wild cherry, rowan, crab apple, and other fruiting species, which will provide feeding opportunities for birds and insects.

Ecological enhancements such as bird and bat boxes, log piles and hibernacula will create areas for nesting and homes for insects and invertebrates. Meadow planting will be sown around the scrub planting to provide additional habitat for wildlife.



Native hedgerow planting will create new field boundaries and will provide ecological corridors for foraging wildlife

Existing stream to be retained and enhanced with new tree and wildflower planting

New circular permissive footway will create recreation benefits and will connect directly into the Public Footpath (1708)

Lakes & Lodges

The existing fishing lakes will be retained as part of the proposals at Stonehouse Farm and will be enhanced by the management of the existing reed planting, and new native tree planting. The areas will be encompassed by new woodland creation and scrub planting and will be the focus for the recreation offering of the proposals. The new circular permissive footway will meander through this area and will offer people the opportunity to experience the lakeland setting and wetland character. The existing SuDS basins which are planting with reed beds are to be retained to form part of this space.

The new lodges will create a backdrop to the lakes with new woodland and meadow planting beyond. These lodges will create a space for people to enjoy the nature, wildlife, and beautiful setting of the lakes. Sympathetically designed to assimilate into the character of the areas, these wood lodges will be enhanced by new native tree, hedgerow, and shrub planting, with each individual lodge having its own private space for rest and relaxation.

Access to the lodges will be via the existing road which serves the fishing lake, with a new route to each individual lodge, to ensure easy and convenient access all year round.



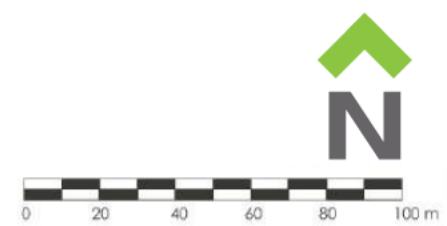
Existing vehicular access to the Business Park and and fishing lakes retained

3 'HABITAT MOSAIC'

These areas of Stonehouse Farm will provide the greatest variety of habitats with a mosaic of rough grassland, scrub, and thicket planting, set against a backdrop of new woodland creation and meadow planting, will create a landscape suitable for barn owls located within the area. Important wildlife corridors will be enhanced with new native tree planting to ensure flight corridors for foraging species are respected.

New native hedgerows will redefine field patterns and will define areas of rough grassland and wildflower planting. Other ecological enhancement could be provided within these areas, including bat and bird boxes (barn owls), hibernacula, and log piles to attract invertebrates and insects.

The existing Public Footpath will be 'screened' by new scrub planting to try and restrict public access, but views will still be afforded along its extent.



- Site Boundary: Aprx. 40.20ha/ 99.33ac
- Existing Vegetation
- Existing On-Site Fishing Ponds
- Reed Bed Planting (Indicative)
- Existing Watercourses
- Public Right of Way (PROW 1708)
- Electricity Lines & Pylons
- LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS
 - Woodland Planting Mix
 - Thicket/ Scrub Planting
 - Extra Heavy Standard Tree Planting
 - Standard Tree Planting
 - Multi-Stem Tree Planting
 - Wildflower Meadow Mix
 - Rough Grassland
 - Native Shrub Planting
 - Proposed Circular Permissive Footway
- BUILT DEVELOPMENT
 - Existing Buildings Retained
 - Proposed Dwellings at 'Jackson's Residence'
 - Proposed Lake Lodges
 - Proposed New Business Units
 - Hard Standing/ Existing Access Routes
 - Black Metal Estate Railings
 - Closeboard Garden Separation Fences

Rev	Date	By	Description
Drawing Status			
FOR PLANNING			
CSA environmental			
Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT			
01462 743647 ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk csaenvironmental.co.uk			
Project Stonehouse Farm, Handcross Road HORSHAM			
Drawing Title Site-Wide Masterplan			
Client The Hunter Group (Lee Goossens)			
Scale @ A1 1:2500		Drawing No. CSA/6476/111	
Date April 2024		Rev -	
Drawn JC		Checked RR	

Appendix F

< Handcross Village Residents Group



Handcross Village Residents Group



Philly Hallett · 30 Oct 2024 ·

Following our initial open day, we are holding a planning presentation on the 9th November at 10:30 at Lower Beeding Village Hall prior to making our final application.

Please register your attendance by emailing ph@thehuntergroup.co.uk



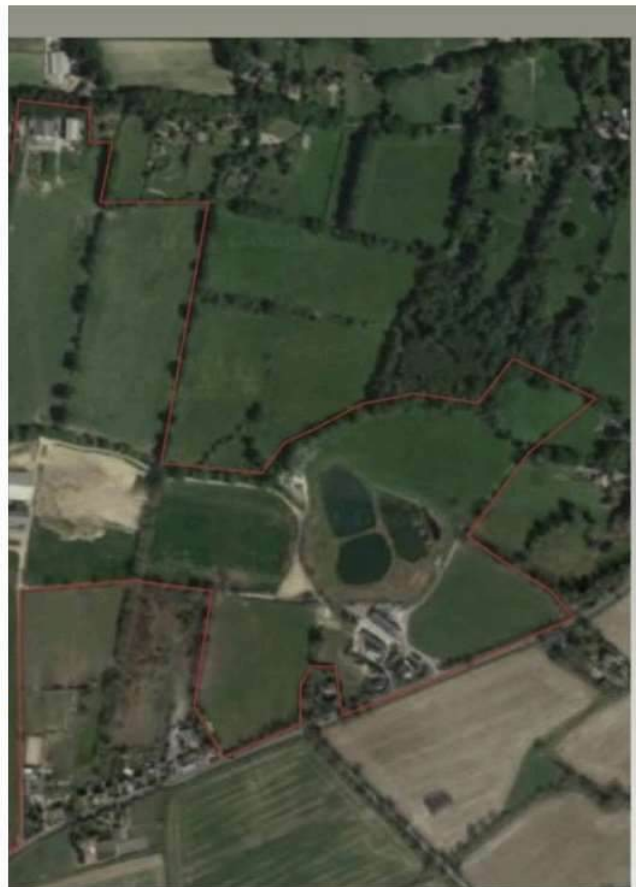
Stonehouse
FARM AND LAKES

PLANNING
PRESENTATION

THURSDAY 9th NOVEMBER
10:30

Lower Beeding Village Hall
Lower Beeding, Horsham, RH13 6NF

for a presentation regarding our proposed
renatured rural mixed-use redevelopment
Refreshments and nibbles provided.



Farm fell into receivership in 2023.
Hunters purchased the site with the
aim of creating an award-winning renatured
rural redevelopment incorporating a
number of homes and appropriate

Appendix G



Stonehouse
FARM AND LAKES

PLANNING
PRESENTATION

SATURDAY 9th NOVEMBER
10:30

Lower Beeding Village Hall
Lower Beeding, Horsham, RH13 6NR

Join us for a presentation regarding our proposal
for a renatured rural mixed-use redevelopment.
Refreshments and nibbles provided.

Register your interest/attendance by emailing
ph@thehuntergroup.co.uk



Stonehouse Farm fell into receivership in 2023. Later that year, Hunters purchased the site with the intention of creating an award-winning renatured mixed-use rural redevelopment incorporating a select number of homes and appropriate commercial, employment, and leisure space set within a renatured and accessible landscape.

Appendix H

Thanks for this. If you're asking about availability on 9 November 2024, then from my side that's a good date. If I've misunderstood the question, please come back at me, with thanks.

Regards
James
+44 7788 25 35 30

Subject: 2nd Open Day Stonehouse Farm ?

Dear James and Dennis, we are in the process of organising our follow up open day in respect of our future plans at Stonehouse Farm, in advance of an application.

We would like to hold this on Saturday 9th 10:30 – 14:30 and wanted to check in advance of the suitability.

Saturday 9th 10:30 – 14:30.

Kind Regards
Lee Goossens
Managing Director
Tel: 07710908088



Hunter Development Holdings Limited - Company registration: 03606898

Lake Investments Limited - Company registration: 03850693

Marlands Park Limited - Company registration: 08635503

Incorporated United Kingdom - Registered address: Amelia House, Crescent Road, Worthing, BN11 1RL

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Appendix I

< Handcross Village Residents Group

Group posts



Handcross Village Residents Group



Philly Hallett · 29 Jan · 

Following our initial open day, we are holding our final planning presentation on the 15th February at 10:30 at Lower Beeding Village Hall.

Please register your attendance by emailing ph@thehuntergroup.co.uk



FINAL PLANNING
PRESENTATION

URDAY 15th FEBRU.

Arrival for 10:30
Presentation to start at 11:00

Lower Beeding Village Hall
Lower Beeding, Horsham, RH13 6N

for a presentation regarding our pro

renatured rural mixed-use redevelopment

Refreshments and nibbles provided.



arm fell into receivership in 2023.
Hunters purchased the site with the
creating an award-winning renatured
al redevelopment incorporating a
ber of homes and appropriate

Appendix J



Stonehouse
FARM AND LAKES

FINAL PLANNING
PRESENTATION

SATURDAY 15th FEBRUARY

Arrival for 10:30

Presentation to start at 11:00

Lower Beeding Village Hall

Lower Beeding, Horsham, RH13 6NR

Join us for a presentation regarding our proposal
for a renatured rural mixed-use redevelopment.

Refreshments and nibbles provided.

Register your interest/attendance by emailing
ph@thehuntergroup.co.uk



Stonehouse Farm fell into receivership in 2023. Later that year, Hunters purchased the site with the intention of creating an award-winning renatured mixed-use rural redevelopment incorporating a select number of homes and appropriate commercial, employment, and leisure space set within a renatured and accessible landscape.

Appendix K

Stonehouse and Jacksons Farm Final Planning Presentation 10:30 15th of February Lower Beeding village hall.

From Lee Goossens <lg@thehuntergroup.co.uk>

Date Wed 22/01/25 7:20 PM

 1 attachment (289 KB)

Leaflet.pdf;

Good afternoon I hope this email finds everyone well and having had a great start to 2025.

We will be presenting our final planning proposals in respect of Stonehouse and Jacksons Farms at 10:30 on the 15th of February at Lower Beeding village hall.

I'm looking forward to sharing our final plans prior to making our planning application.

Refreshments, cake, and pastries will be served from 10:30 with the presentation commencing at 11:00.

We hope you will be able to attend and If so, we would appreciate confirmation of attendance. We need to make sure we have enough seats and pastries !

Please feel free to share the details of the presentation with anyone you feel who might like to attend.

Kind Regards

Lee Goossens

Managing Director

Tel: 07710908088



Hunter Development Holdings Limited - Company registration: 03606898

Lake Investments Limited - Company registration: 03850693

Marlands Park Limited - Company registration: 08635503

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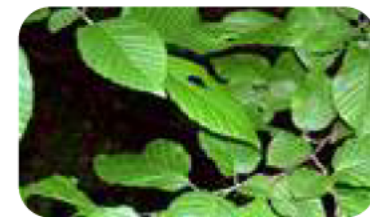
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Appendix L

Jacksons Ridge



Located on the site of the former farm yard, Jacksons Ridge will deliver three high-quality homes, set within the verdant character of Hammerpond Road. Set back from the road, the new homes will continue the pattern of development and will create the opportunity for new tree planting.



To the rear of the new homes, the large gardens will follow the topography of the land and will be defined at their extents by black estate railings and native hedgerow planting. Having this filtered semi-permeable boundary treatment will allow the residents to 'borrow' the landscape, creating a visually seamless transition into the 'habitat mosaic' to the south. This was an idea originally laid out by Capability Brown of a 'borrowed landscape.' Hazel Hurdles (or similar) will create naturalistic separation and privacy to each individual home and will be further softened by native tree and shrub planting.



The new homes could include features such as bee and bat bricks, bird boxes and hedgehog highways to the garden fences.



1 MEADOW HABITAT



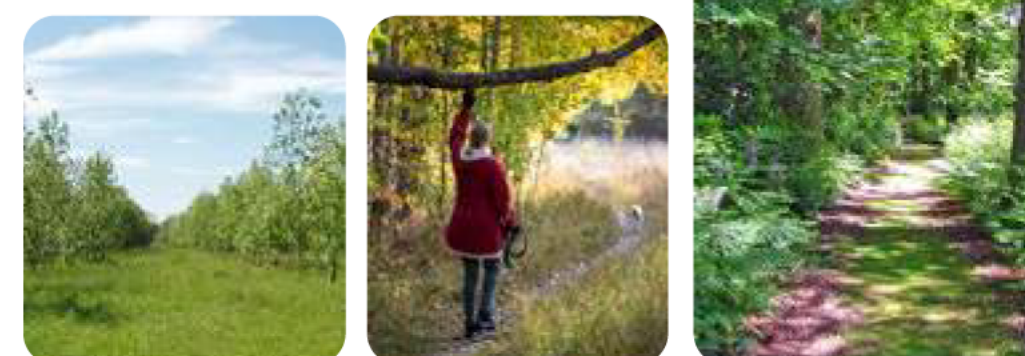
Extensive areas of meadow planting and management of existing habitats within these areas will create a space for wildlife to flourish. Opportunities for wildflower to be sown throughout the meadows will attract insects and pollinators, along with other local wildlife. Opportunities for recreational routes though these meadows will bring users of the routes closer to nature. Specific species of meadow mixes will compliment the local landscape.

Jacksons Business Park

Significant saving in water use as a result of the proposed redevelopment exceeding water neutrality requirements

Existing footpath (1708) is to be retained along the new route as shown and enhanced by the new circular permissive footway

2 WOODLAND CREATION



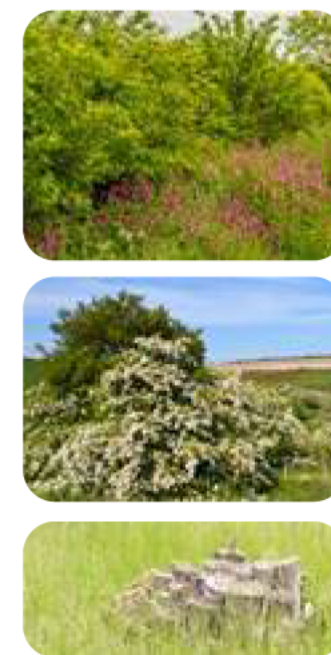
New woodland will be created across Stonehouse Farm to enhance the surrounding Ancient and Broadleaved woodlands. Continuing woodland along the stream corridor will enhance important wildlife corridors and create spaces for a variety of wildlife, fauna, and flora to establish. New native tree planting will provide immediate impact set against the backdrop of the woodland, as it establishes and matures over time.

A mix of native species to the area, such as English Oak, Beech, birch, hazel, and wild cherry will create habitats with seasonal interest. The woodland will be managed over time to ensure a healthy and successful woodland is achieved. Ground cover and thicket planting will create a diverse variety of habitats at different heights. There may be opportunities in the future to extend the recreational routes, to create woodland trails for those using the 'Lakes & Lodges' and the Public Right of Way.

4 SCRUB PLANTING HABITAT

Scrub and thicket planting will create an ecotone in the foreground to the new woodland creation. These areas will be left to grow creating a naturalised character attracting a variety of wildlife. Native species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, spindle, buckthorn, blackberry and elderflower will be strengthened by native tree planting including maple, wild cherry, rowan, crab apple, and other fruiting species, which will provide feeding opportunities for birds and insects.

Ecological enhancements such as bird and bat boxes, log piles and hibernacula will create areas for nesting and homes for insects and invertebrates. Meadow planting will be sown around the scrub planting to provide additional habitat for wildlife.



Native hedgerow planting will create new field boundaries and will provide ecological corridors for foraging wildlife

Existing stream to be retained and enhanced with new tree and wildflower planting

New circular permissive footway will create recreation benefits and will connect directly into the Public Footpath (1708)

Lakes & Lodges

The existing fishing lakes will be retained as part of the proposals at Stonehouse Farm and will be enhanced by the management of the existing reed planting, and new native tree planting. The areas will be encompassed by new woodland creation and scrub planting and will be the focus for the recreation offering of the proposals. The new circular permissive footway will meander through this area and will offer people the opportunity to experience the lakeland setting and wetland character. The existing SuDS basins which are planted with reed beds are to be retained to form part of this space.

The new lodges will create a backdrop to the lakes with new woodland and meadow planting beyond. These lodges will create a space for people to enjoy the nature, wildlife, and beautiful setting of the lakes. Sympathetically designed to assimilate into the character of the areas, these wood lodges will be enhanced by new native tree, hedgerow, and shrub planting, with each individual lodge having its own private space for rest and relaxation.

Access to the lodges will be via the existing track which serves the fishing lake, with a new route to each individual lodge, to ensure easy and convenient access all year round.



To ensure Stonehouse Farm and Lakes are truly sustainable, each commercial building will have solar panels installed to their roofs

Existing farm and commercial yard to be redeveloped to form an energy efficient business park comprising of a number of sensitively designed units directed at small rural based enterprises.

Existing vehicular access to the Business Park and fishing lakes retained

3 'HABITAT MOSAIC'

These areas of Stonehouse Farm & Lakes will provide the greatest variety of habitats with a mosaic of rough grassland, scrub, and thicket planting, set against a backdrop of new woodland creation and meadow planting. will create a landscape suitable for a range of wildlife. Important wildlife corridors will be enhanced with new native tree planting to ensure flight corridors for foraging species are respected.

New native hedgerows will redefine field patterns and will define areas of rough grassland and wildflower planting. Other ecological enhancement could be provided within these areas, including bat and bird boxes (barn owls), hibernacula, and log piles to attract invertebrates and insects.

The existing Public Footpath will be 'screened' by new scrub planting to try and restrict public access, but views will still be afforded along its extent.



Existing vehicular access to Green Energy Park retained

- Site Boundary: Aprx. 37.34ha/ 93.32ac
- Existing Vegetation
- Existing On-Site Fishing Ponds
- Reed Bed Planting (Indicative)
- Existing Watercourses
- Public Right of Way (PROW 1708)
- Electricity Lines & Pylons

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

- Woodland Planting Mix
- Thicket/ Scrub Planting
- Extra Heavy Standard Tree Planting
- Standard Tree Planting
- Multi-Stem Tree Planting
- Wildflower Meadow Mix
- Rough Grassland
- Native Shrub Planting
- Wetland Scrapes
- Proposed Circular Permissive Footway

BUILT DEVELOPMENT

- Existing Buildings Retained
- Proposed Dwellings at 'Jackson's Residence'
- Proposed Lake Lodges
- Proposed New/Extended Business Units
- Solar Panels to Commercial Buildings & Energy Park
- Hard Standing/ Existing Access Routes
- Black Metal Estate Railings
- Hazel Hurdles (or similar) Garden Separation



H	04.02.25	JC	Amended with client comments
G	19.12.24	JC	Amended with client comments
F	16.12.24	JC	Amended with client comments
E	17.04.24	JC	Amended with client comments
D	17.04.24	JC	Amended with client comments
C	10.04.24	JC	Amended with client comments
B	09.04.24	JC	Amended with Ecology inputs
A	05.04.24	JC	Amended with initial client comments

Rev Date By Description

Drawing Status FOR PLANNING

Dixies Barrs, High Street,
Asthwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

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Project Stonehouse Farm, Handcross Road
HORSHAM

Drawing Title Site-Wide Masterplan

Client The Hunter Group
(Lee Goossens)

Scale @ A1 1:2500 Drawing No. CSA/6746/111

Date April 2024 Rev H

Drawn JC Checked RR

Jacksons Ridge



Located on the site of the former farm yard, Jacksons Ridge will deliver three high-quality homes, set within the verdant character of Hammerpond Road. Set back from the road, the new homes will continue the pattern of development and will create the opportunity for new tree planting.



To the rear of the new homes, the large gardens will follow the topography of the land and will be defined at their extents by black estate railings and native hedgerow planting. Having this filtered semi-permeable boundary treatment will allow the residents to 'borrow' the landscape, creating a visually seamless transition into the 'habitat mosaic' to the south. This was an idea originally laid out by Capability Brown of a 'borrowed landscape'. Hazel Hurdles (or similar) will create naturalistic separation and privacy to each individual home and will be further softened by native tree and shrub planting.



The new homes could include features such as bee and bat bricks, bird boxes and hedgehog highways to the garden fences.



1 MEADOW HABITAT



Extensive areas of meadow planting and management of existing habitats within these areas will create a space for wildlife to flourish. Opportunities for wildflower to be sown throughout the meadows will attract insects and pollinators, along with other local wildlife. Opportunities for recreational routes though these meadows will bring users of the routes closer to nature. Specific species of meadow mixes will compliment the local landscape.

Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plant & Main Livestock Building

Significant saving in water use as a result of the proposed redevelopment exceeding water neutrality requirements

2 WOODLAND CREATION



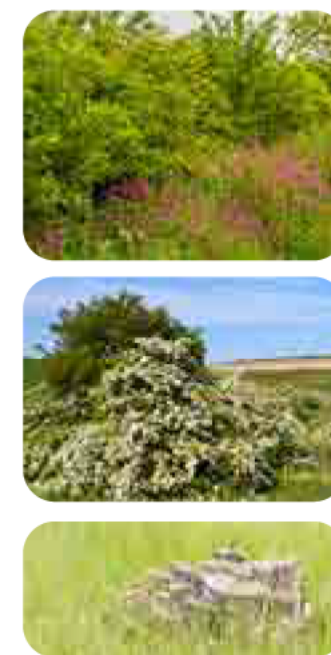
New woodland will be created across Stonehouse Farm to enhance the surrounding Ancient and Broadleaved woodlands. Confining woodland along the stream corridor will enhance important wildlife corridors and create spaces for a variety of wildlife, fauna, and flora to establish. New native tree planting will provide immediate impact set against the backdrop of the woodland, as it establishes and matures over time.

A mix of native species to the area, such as English Oak, Beech, birch, hazel, and wild cherry will create habitats with seasonal interest. The woodland will be managed over time to ensure a healthy and successful woodland is achieved. Ground cover and thick planting will create a diverse variety of habitats at different heights. There may be opportunities in the future to extend the recreational routes, to create woodland trails for those using the 'Lakes & Lodges' and the Public Right of Way.

4 SCRUB PLANTING HABITAT

Scrub and thicket planting will create an ecotone in the foreground to the new woodland creation. These areas will be left to grow creating a naturalised character attracting a variety of wildlife. Native species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, spindle, buckthorn, blackberry and elderflower will be strengthened by native tree planting including maple, wild cherry, rowan, crab apple, and other fruiting species, which will provide feeding opportunities for birds and insects.

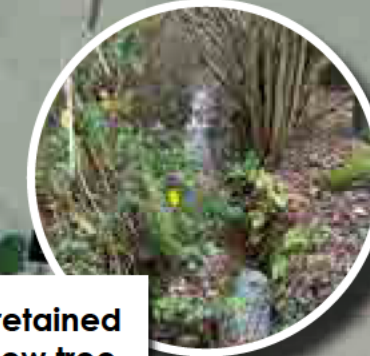
Ecological enhancements such as bird and bat boxes, log piles and hibernacula will create areas for nesting and homes for insects and invertebrates. Meadow planting will be sown around the scrub planting to provide additional habitat for wildlife.



Native hedgerow planting will create new field boundaries and will provide ecological corridors for foraging wildlife

Existing stream to be retained and enhanced with new tree and wildflower planting

New circular permissive footway will create recreation benefits and will connect directly into the Public Footpath (1708)



Lakes & Lodges

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Existing On-Site Fishing Ponds

Reed Bed Planting (Indicative)

Existing Watercourses

Public Right of Way (PROW 1708)

Electricity Lines & Pylons

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

Woodland Planting Mix

Thicket/ Scrub Planting

Extra Heavy Standard Tree Planting

Standard Tree Planting

Multi-Stem Tree Planting

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Proposed Circular Permissive Footway

BUILT DEVELOPMENT

Existing Buildings Retained

Proposed Dwellings at 'Jackson's Residence'

Proposed Lake Lodges

Proposed New/Extended Business Units

Solar Panels to Commercial Buildings & Energy Park

Hard Standing/ Existing Access Routes

Black Metal Estate Railings

Hazel Hurdles (or similar) Garden Separation

Stonehouse
FARM AND LAKES

I	28.02.25	JC	Amended with client comments
H	04.02.25	JC	Amended with client comments
G	19.12.24	JC	Amended with client comments
F	16.12.24	JC	Amended with client comments
E	17.04.24	JC	Amended with client comments
D	17.04.24	JC	Amended with client comments
C	10.04.24	JC	Amended with client comments
B	09.04.24	JC	Amended with Ecology inputs

Rev Date By Description

Drawing Status
FOR PLANNING

CSA
environmental

Dixies Barrs, High Street,
Asthwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

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ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project Stonehouse Farm, Handcross Road
HORSHAM

Drawing Title Site-Wide Masterplan

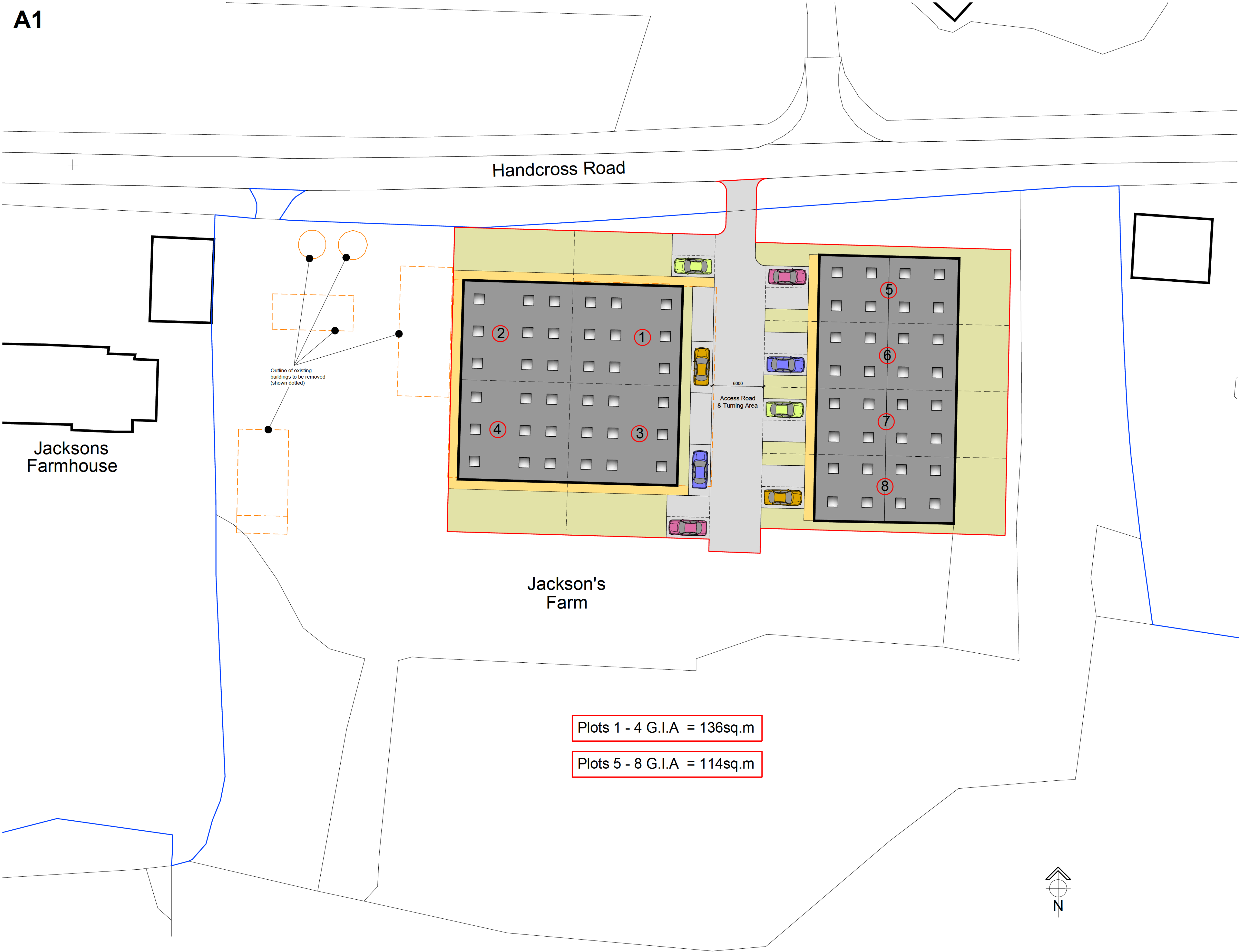
Client The Hunter Group
(Lee Goossens)

Scale @ A1 1:2500 Drawing No. CSA/6746/111

Date April 2024 Rev I

Drawn JC Checked RR

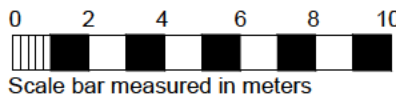
Appendix C – Jacksons Farm Prior Approval Drawing Set



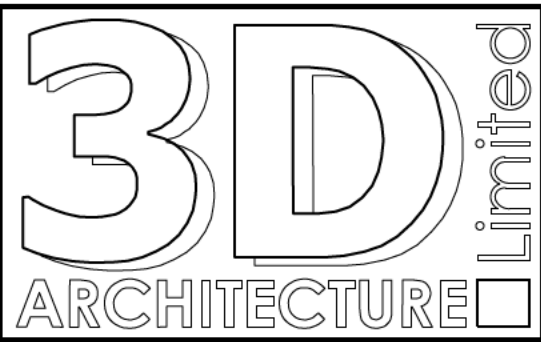
Plots 1 - 4 G.I.A = 136sq.m

Plots 5 - 8 G.I.A = 114sq.m

Proposed Site Layout Plan (1:200)



PLANNING



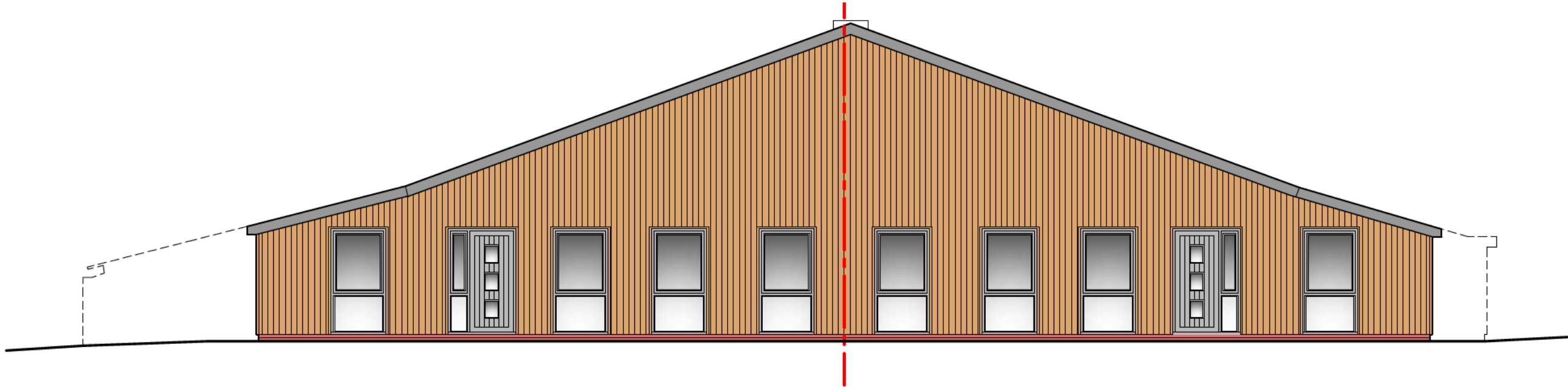
3-D Architecture Limited
15 Horsted Square, Bellbrook Industrial Estate,
Uckfield, East Sussex. TN22 1QG
Tel: 01825 764455 Fax: 01825 764455
Email: info@3d-architecture.co.uk

CLIENT
Lee Goossens

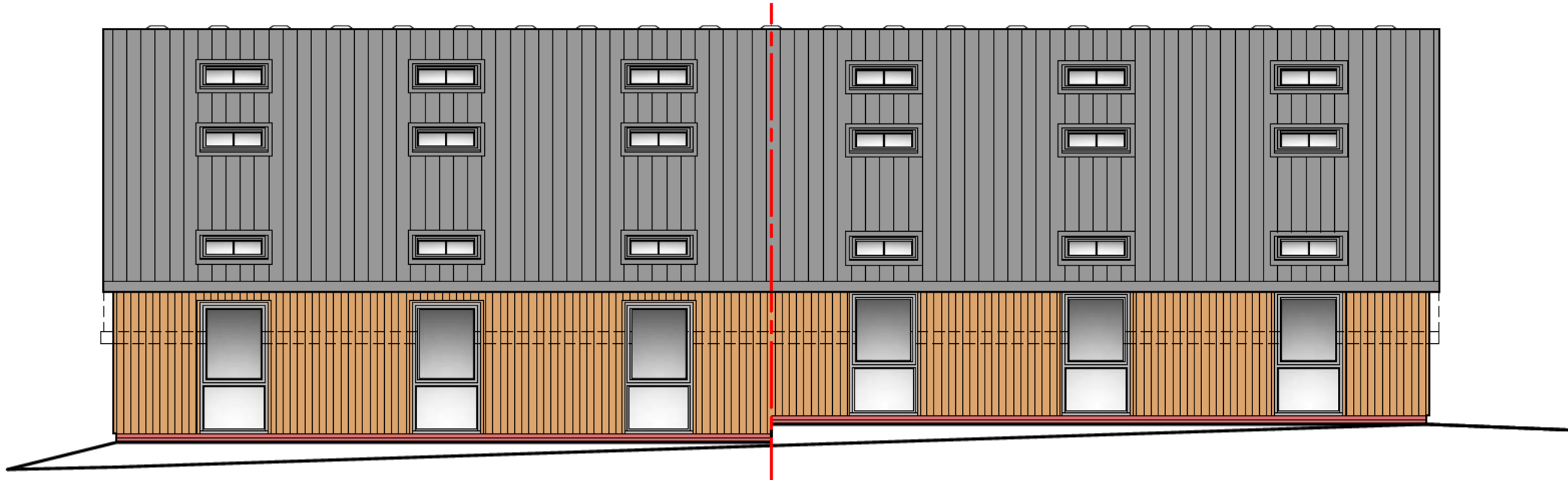
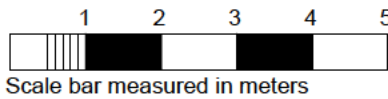
PROJECT
Stonehouse Farm
Handcross Road, Plummers Plain,
Horsham, West Sussex
RH13 6NZ

DRAWING TITLE
Site Layout Plan
As Proposed

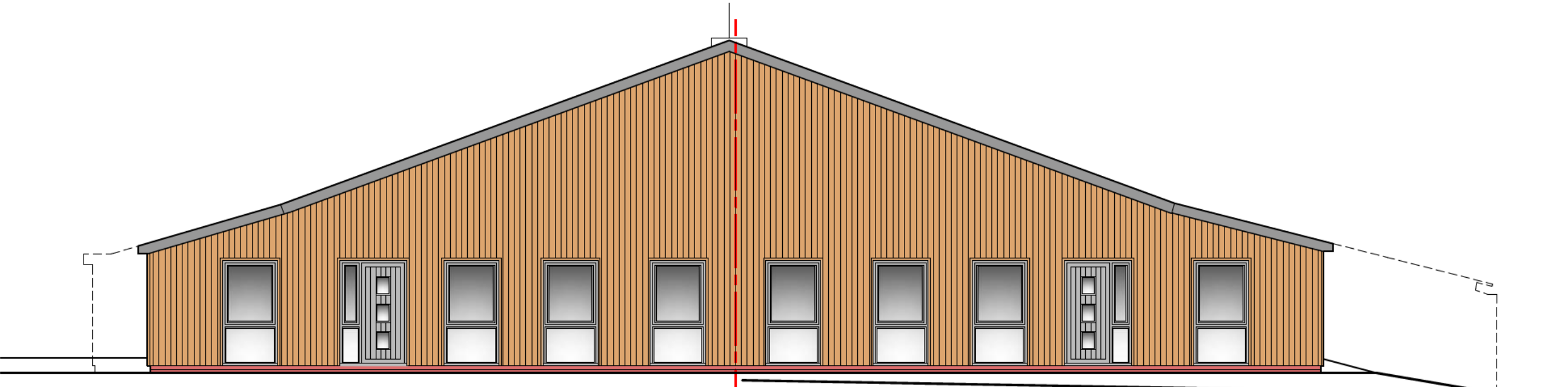
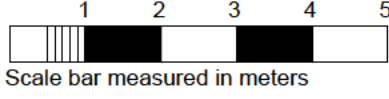
SCALE 1:200	DATE January 2024	DRAWN BY ANH
DRAWING NO. 2024/PL16	REVISION -	



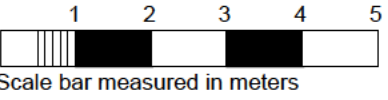
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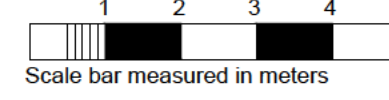
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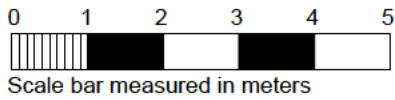
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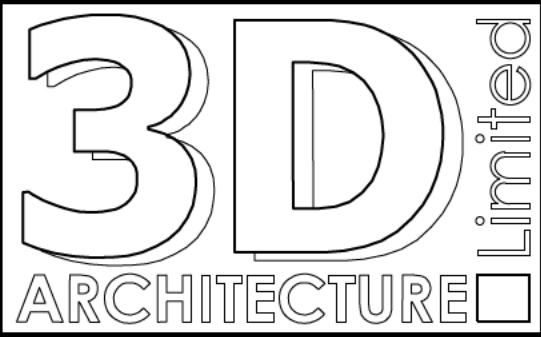
West Elevation



Buildings 1 & 2 - Floor Plans As Proposed



PLANNING



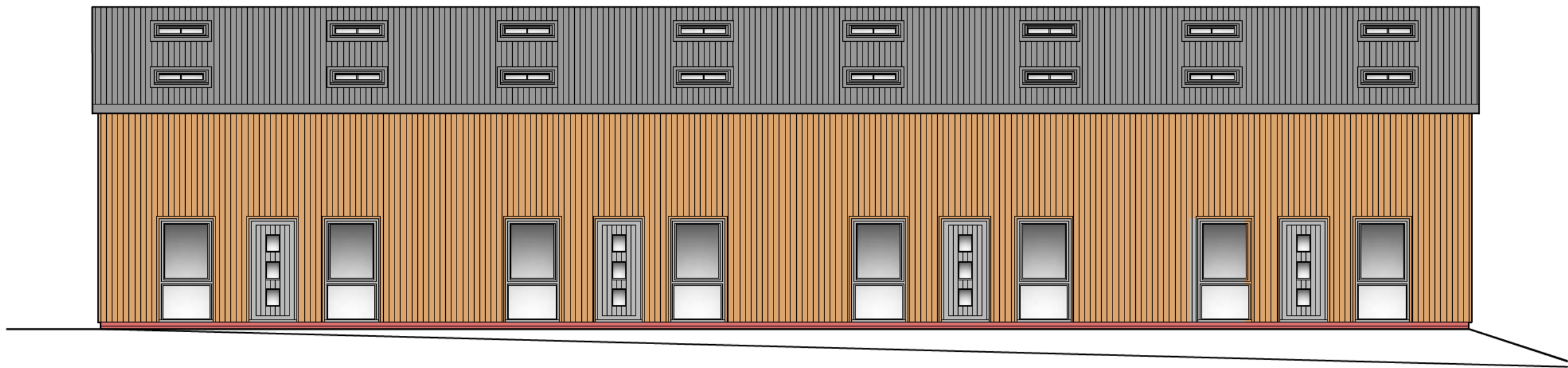
3-D Architecture Limited
15 Horsted Square, Bellbrook Industrial Estate,
Uckfield, East Sussex. TN22 1QG
Tel: 01825 764455 Fax: 01825 764455
Email: info@3d-architecture.co.uk

CLIENT
Lee Goossens

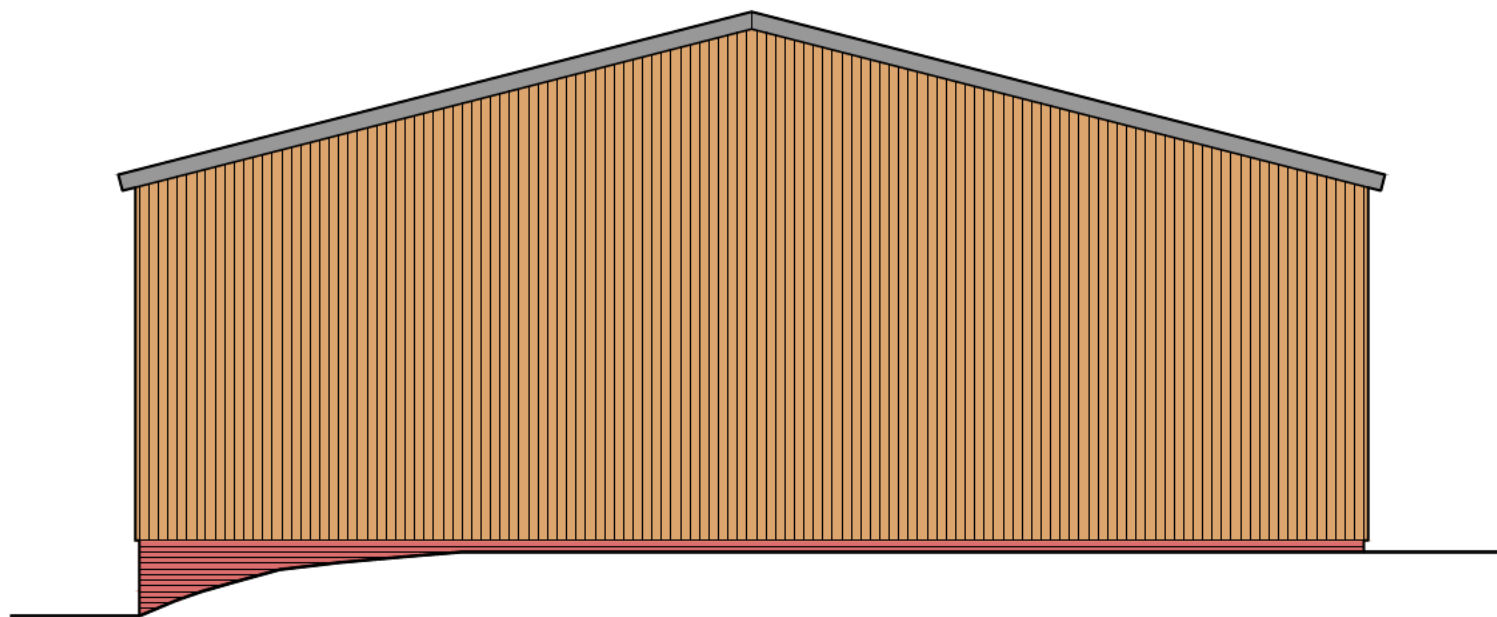
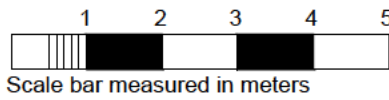
PROJECT
Stonehouse Farm
Handcross Road, Plummers Plain,
Horsham, West Sussex
RH13 6NZ

DRAWING TITLE
Buildings 1 & 2 - Plans
& Elevations As Proposed

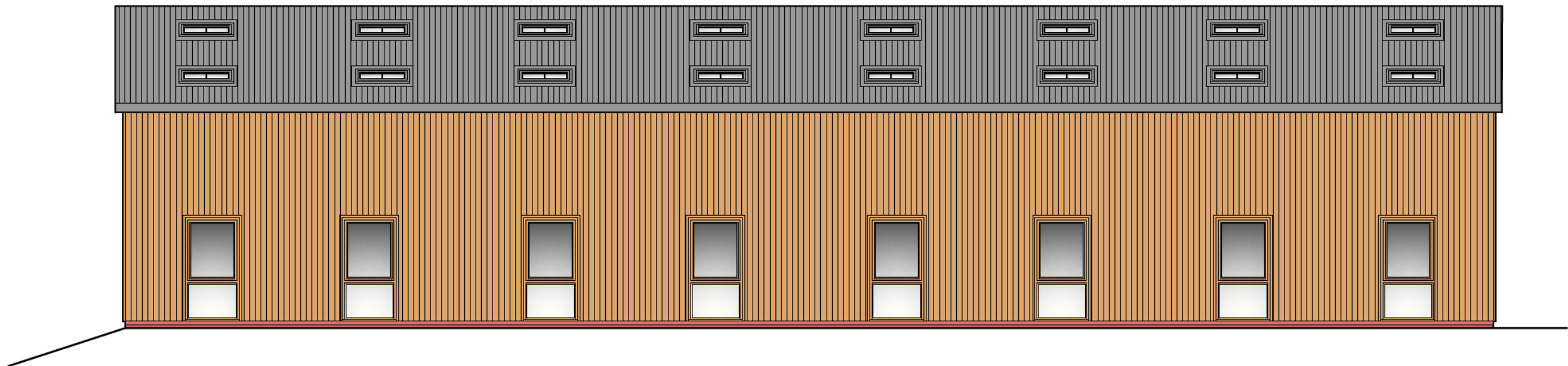
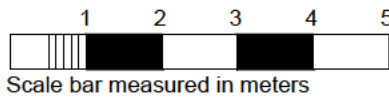
SCALE 1:100	DATE January 2024	DRAWN BY ANH
DRAWING NO. 2024/PL13	REVISION -	



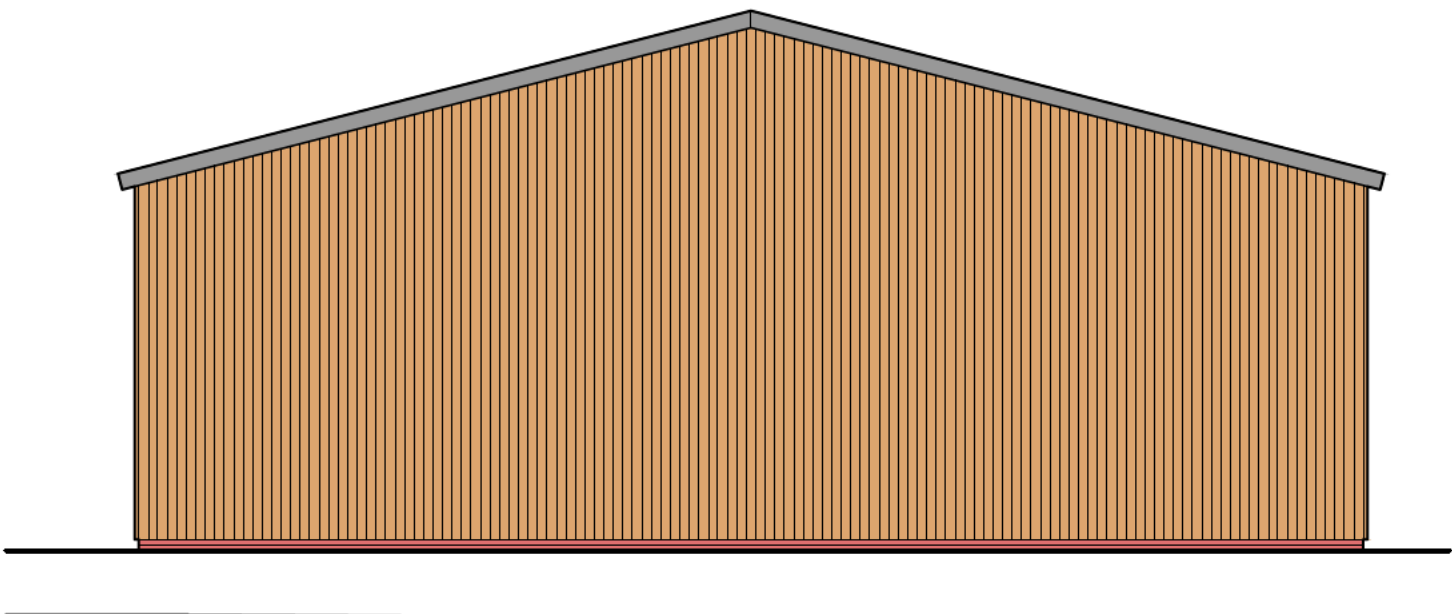
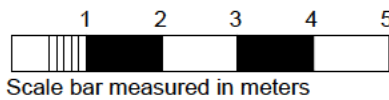
West Elevation



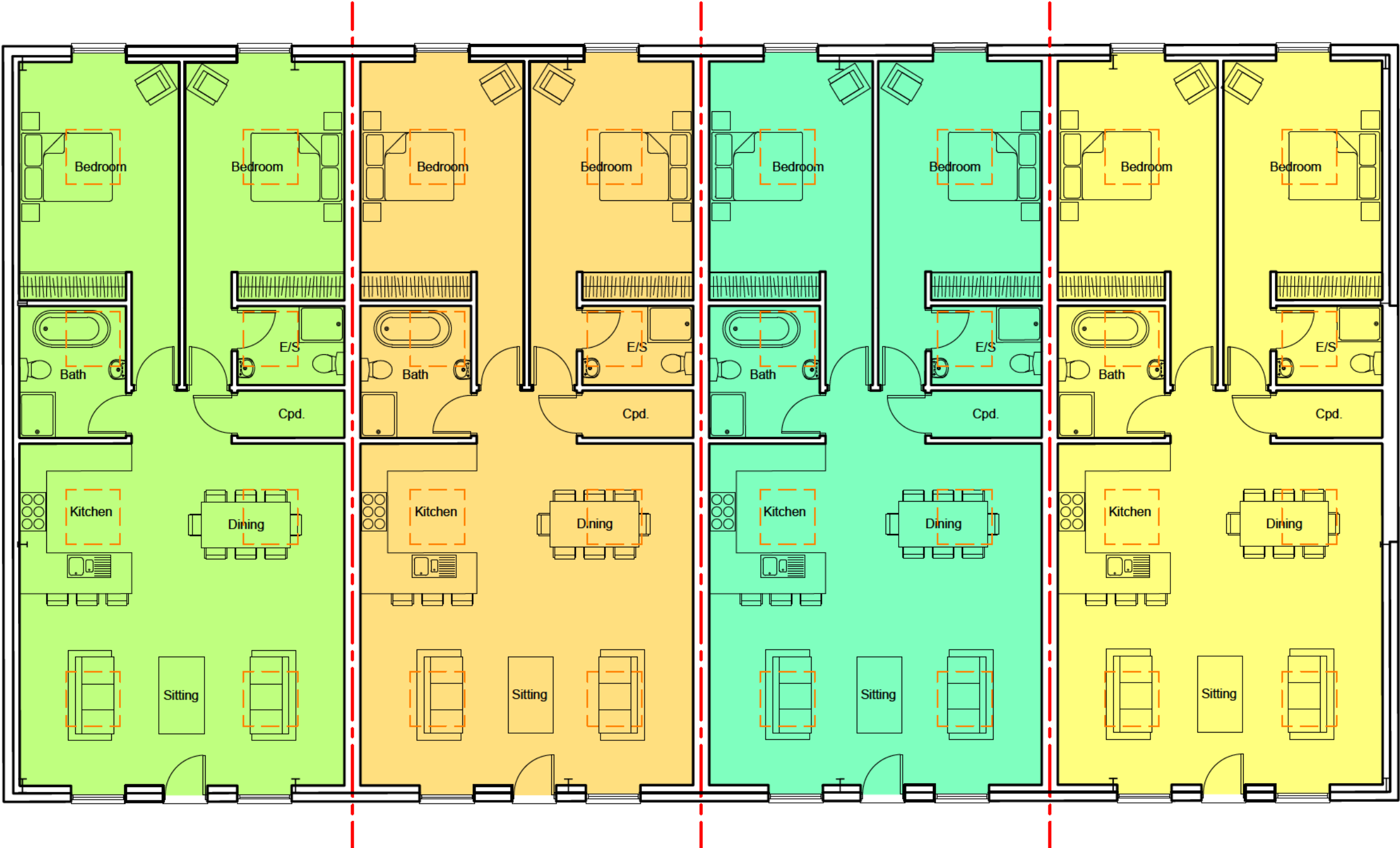
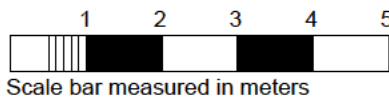
North Elevation



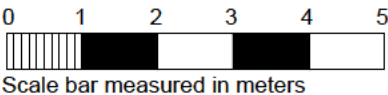
East Elevation



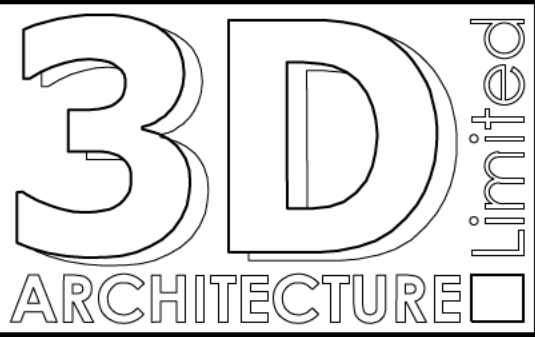
South Elevation



Building 5 - Floor Plan As Proposed



PLANNING



3-D Architecture Limited
15 Horsted Square, Bellbrook Industrial Estate,
Uckfield, East Sussex. TN22 1QG
Tel: 01825 764455 Fax: 01825 764455
Email: info@3d-architecture.co.uk

CLIENT
Lee Goossens

PROJECT
Stonehouse Farm
Handcross Road, Plummers Plain,
Horsham, West Sussex
RH13 6NZ

DRAWING TITLE
**Building 5 - Plan
& Elevations As Proposed**

SCALE 1:100	DATE January 2024	DRAWN BY ANH
DRAWING NO. 2024/PL14	REVISION -	