Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/24/0381
Broomlands Farm, Robin Hood Lane, Warnham, West Sussex, RH12 3RR

DESCRIPTION:
Change of use of agricultural barn to commercial use comprising Class B8 (Storage)

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/23/1997	Prior Notification for Change of Use of redundant agricultural buildings to flexible commercial use	Application Withdrawn
WN/63/01	Change of use of land & buildings to allow equestrian rehabilitation Site: Broomlands Farm Robin Hood Lane Warnham	Application Permitted on 14.02.2002

SITE AND SURROUNDS

The application site consists of land and buildings at Broomlands Farm, located approximately 500 meters north of Broadbridge Heath and 1.2 kilometers south of Warnham's built-up area. The site covers 0.72 hectares (1.77 acres) and features a large hardstanding area and four traditional farm buildings.

Historically part of a dairy farm, these buildings have fallen into disrepair since dairy farming ceased. The proposed development aims to restore the larger barn (Building 1) and its adjacent lean-to (Building 2) in the north, ensuring a sustainable future through a sensitive, high-quality conversion. The site is bordered by a smaller redundant barn to the southwest and two additional barns further southwest. An older farm building to the west is currently being converted for residential use (approved by Horsham District Council, reference DC/20/0716). Two residential properties lie to the northeast and northwest, and an unused, deteriorating sand school and horse yard are situated to the east.

Building 1, measuring 21.5m x 26.7m (570 sqm), and Building 2, measuring 7.7m x 26.9m (204.6 sqm), share a combined footprint of 780.8 sqm. The buildings are enclosed on three sides, with an open port on Building 2's southeast elevation and are positioned on a large hardstanding area with direct access to Robin Hood Lane to the north.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The applicant seeks a change of use from a former agricultural use to commercial storage (Class B8) for buildings that were initially used for farming but later converted to equestrian use in 2001. Since equestrian activities ceased 10 years ago, the buildings have remained unused. The change is intended to prevent further disrepair and provide a new income stream for the estate.

According to the Design and Access Statement the proposed storage use is well-suited for the site for several reasons:

- Local Demand: There is proven demand for storage space in Horsham, as confirmed by a surveyor's email from August 2023. A similar planning application (DC/23/1385) supports this,

indicating a need for variously sized storage units across the district, appealing to both local and urban users.
- Low Impact: Storage is a quiet, low-traffic use that can coexist with neighbouring activities without causing significant disruption.
- Efficient Use of Redundant Buildings: The buildings, no longer needed for agriculture or equestrian purposes, are well-constructed with ample headroom and open space ideal for storage. Farming on this part of the estate has long since relocated to nearby Ends Place Farm (as noted in planning reference DC/18/1864).
- Access and Parking: The site is accessed via Robin Hood Lane, with ample hardstanding for parking. A transport report (March 2024) indicates no significant traffic or safety issues, and the change in use would not notably increase traffic compared to previous agricultural operations.

Modest alterations to the buildings will be made to support the proposed use.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 39 - Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities

Neighbourhood Plan:
Warnham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017-2031 (June 2019)

Parish Design Statement:
Warnham Parish Design Statement (2008)

Planning Advice Notes:
Facilitating Appropriate Development
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

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

Consultations:

HDC Environmental Health: No Objection, subject to conditions

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

Nature Space: No Objection - Thank you for consulting me on the above planning application. The type of development is not considered to be relevant to the District Licensing Scheme in this case and we consider there would be no likely impact on great crested newts or their habitats. I therefore have no comments to make at this time.

Ecological Consultant: No Objection – permission granted subject to conditions and subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the Water Neutrality Statement.

Natural England: Objection - We concur with the conclusion of your authority's HRA appropriate assessment insofar that adverse effects on the integrity of the Arun Valley Designated sites cannot be ruled out, as such:

Further information is required to determine the significance of impacts on designated sites and the scope for mitigation, chiefly:

- Details of the application's existing water use
- Evidence of the application's proposed water use, distinct from any additional offsetting measures.
- Further reconsideration of water neutrality, mitigation measures and water budget.

Parish Comments:
Warham Parish Council object to the development. The decision is based on the serious concerns of highways issues and safety. The most recent heavy movements caused by Field Place, show the extent of the concerns to both residents, road users and the condition of the road. Robin Hood Lane is not built for consistent heavy goods movement.

Representations:
None received

Member Comments:
None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

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

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

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

Policy 10 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) 2015 seeks to support the rural economy where this meets rural community needs and enables rural towns and villages to remain self-sufficient and economically vibrant. The policy further accepts that diversification can enable positive re-use of existing buildings within rural areas, thus potentially limiting adverse impacts on the

landscape character. 10(1) states that development must 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 (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;

The principle of finding alternative uses of the existing and long-established buildings within this rural agricultural cluster would provide a sustainable re-use of existing infrastructure, buildings and resources. Though the buildings have been described as redundant, and have not been in use for c., 10 years, the proposal would contribute to the wider rural economy and be contained within eixsintg buildings, in accordance with Policy 10(1)(a). The re-use of buildings which are suitable for conversion, such as those within the application site, would be in accordance with HDPF policy 10.

Officers consider that the proposed re-use of the application building to alternative employment uses would provide the land-owner with a flexible use of the buildings, which could continue to support a smaller ongoing agricultural activity at the site. It is therefore considered that the proposed conversion of the applicant buildings would accord with policy directive seeking to find suitable, appropriate and alternative uses of serviceable agricultural buildings.

Notwithstanding all other material planning considerations, the principle of the change of use of the building would be supported.

Design and Appearance:

Policy 32 and 33 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

It is clear from the submitted information and Officer site visit photos that the established farm results in a utilitarian appearance that is suited to its functional purpose. The building dimensions and external materials are appropriate to typical rural enterprises which require robust fit-for-purpose structures. The area around the buildings is a mixture of crushed aggregate, soil / grass and concrete hard standings.

The proposed change of use would not deviate from this overall established appearance, with the only external changes to the buildings by reclad with green metal sheeting to elevations with roller shutter doors at the front and pedestrian exit doors to the side. Therefore, officers consider that the proposal would continue to adhere to Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the HDPF, which promotes development that protects, conserves and enhances the landscape character, and paras 135 and 139 of the NPPF (2023).

Amenity Impacts:

Policy 33 requires that development avoids unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land.

Officers are satisfied that, given the existence of an established agricultural land holding the Warnham Estate which is a 500-acre rural estate consists of a range of commercial, agriculture and residential buildings, the access has been subject to a reasonable amount of vehicular movements, vehicles would access the site via the shared access to the north of the site along Robin Hood Lane, which would be no change to the existing situation. Whilst overall movements would increase on a comparative floor area basis, the pre-existing nature of the site is noted, and the relationship between the site's use and nearest residential properties. The nearest residential dwellings to the site are Robin Hood Cottage to the north, Broomlands Farmhouse to the north-east and Broomlands Cottage to the south-west. Further residential units have been approved under Planning reference DC/20/0716 following the conversion of an old agricultural building.

The concerns raised by the council's Environmental Health department are fully acknowledged, with the requested noise impact assessment considered essential in order to assess whether the proposed commercial and storage uses accord with the rural location and proximity to residential properties. Condition have been recommended should the application be approved. Given the pre-existing nature of the agricultural holding operating form this site, the limited nature of the proposed uses and the conversion of existing buildings rather than any new construction, officers consider that planning conditions could therefore be used to restrict the potential for external storage within the site. As such, officers consider no undue adverse harm would occur to the amenities of neighbouring properties or users of land, in accordance with Policy 33(2) of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Highways Impacts:

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

This application seeks the change of use of agricultural barn to commercial use comprising Class B8 (Storage). The site is located on Robin Hood Lane, an unclassified road subject to national speed limit. This application is supported by a Transport Note prepared by i-Transport.

WSCC in its role as Local Highway Authority (LHA) previously provided consultation advice for this site for application DC/23/1997, raising no highway safety concerns. This application was withdrawn.

Regarding access and visibility, the applicant proposes to utilise the existing vehicular access point on Robin Hood Lane, with no alterations proposed to this arrangement. From inspection of the submitted visibility splay diagram, the LHA are satisfied that the existing achievable visibility is suitable for the anticipated road speeds in this location.

An inspection of collision data provided to WSCC by Sussex Police from a period of the last five years reveals no recorded injury accidents attributed to road layout within the vicinity of the site. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest the existing access has been operating unsafely or that the proposals would exacerbate an existing safety concern.

The Transport Note includes trip generation data ascertained from the TRICS Database. The data suggests that the proposed use could generate 38 two-way movements per day, 10 of which would be HGVs. Considering the existing agricultural use which does have the potential to generate significant movements, the LHA are satisfied that the proposals would not represent a significant material intensification of movements to or from the site.

Existing parking for eight cars is to be retained, and this is in accordance with WSCC Parking Standards for B8 use. On-site turning appears achievable, allowing vehicles to exit in a forward gear.

As such, the LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 115), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Water Neutrality:

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

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

Planning permission is sought for a change of use of agricultural barn to commercial use comprising Class B8 (Storage).

No water demand is provided for the existing water demand. The existing baseline is therefore considered to be NIL.

The report states that the proposed B8 use would not benefit from mains water connection. However, both existing and proposed floor plans illustrate WC facilities. Therefore, there is likely a water demand for both uses. In any case, it would be unreasonable to assume that an employment use such as B8 would not provide for staffing facilities (WC etc.). OffPAT indicates an FTE per 70m2. The overall floor area to be used for B8 purposes is 819.5m2. The use therefore has the potential for 11.7FTEs.

In the absence of a detailed strategy setting out how the applicant intends to demonstrate water neutrality, the Local Planning Authority is not currently in a position to ascertain whether or not the proposal would result in an adverse impact on the integrity of the interest features of the Arun Valley SPA, SAC & Ramsar site from the development either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

With the above in mind, there is no certainty that the proposal will not contribute further to the existing adverse effect on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, contrary to Policy 31 of the HDPF and NPPF paragraphs 185 and 186.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the principle of development aligns with the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) 2015 and supports rural diversification through the re-use of existing agricultural buildings, significant concerns remain regarding water neutrality. The proposal lacks sufficient information on existing and projected water demand, which is critical given the site's location within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone. Without a detailed strategy addressing water neutrality, it is not possible to conclude that the development would avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Arun Valley SPA, SAC, and Ramsar sites. Therefore, further information is required before the application can be considered compliant with Policy 31 of the HDPF and relevant sections of the NPPF.

Recommendation: Application Refused

Reason for Refusal:

1. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate with a sufficient degree of certainty that the proposed development would not contribute to an existing adverse effect upon the integrity of the internationally designated Arun Valley Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and Ramsar sites by way of increased water abstraction, contrary to Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Paragraphs 185 and 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), thus the Local Planning Authority is unable to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

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

Plans list for: DC/24/0381

Schedule of plans/documents **not approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan		none	08.03.2024
Block plan		none	18.03.2024
Plans	Flood	515266/132312	08.03.2024
Supporting Statement	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment	23-214	08.03.2024
Supporting Statement	Planning	none	08.03.2024
Supporting Statement	Transport	JN/LC/DM/ITL19761-001A R	08.03.2024
Floor plan	Existing	none	08.03.2024
Design & Access Statement		none	08.03.2024
Supporting Docs	Noise Assessment	none	28.05.2024
Elevation plan	North	none	26.03.2024
Elevation plan	South	none	26.03.2024
Elevation plan	East	none	26.03.2024
Elevation plan	West	none	26.03.2024

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Shazia Penne Date: 17.09.2024

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 17.09.2024