Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 February 2026

by J Heppell BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/W/25/3375774
Cadrona, Hampers Lane, Storrington, West Sussex RH20 3EX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr J Chadwick on behalf of HGN Homes Ltd against the decision of Horsham District Council.
- The application Ref is DC/25/0895.
- The development proposed is construction of detached dwelling and detached carport/garage building with vehicle access from Hampers Lane.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for construction of detached dwelling and detached carport/garage building with vehicle access from Hampers Lane at Cadrona, Hampers Lane, Storrington, West Sussex RH20 3EX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/25/0895, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note (SDHD) was endorsed by the Council on 17 September 2025, after the determination of the planning application, and is a material consideration in decision-making.

3. A Landscape Strategy Proposals Plan (Drawing No 1135-LA-P-01A) was submitted with the appeal, containing proposals for tree planting in the southern part of the site and additional landscaping in other parts of the site. As the planting does not alter the proposal itself, and as interested parties have had the opportunity to comment on them, no parties have been prejudiced. I have therefore determined the appeal having regard to this plan.

4. During my site visit, I was able to view the site from public land on three sides, allowing me to make an assessment of the appeal site's character and appearance.

Main Issues

5. The main issues in this appeal are:

   - whether the appeal site would be a suitable location for the proposed development having regard to local planning policy; and

   - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area with particular reference to trees.

Reasons

Location

6. The proposal is to erect a dwelling in the countryside. Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework November 2015 (HDPF) and Policy 1 of the Storrington, Sullington & Washington Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031 (SSWNP) together focus growth on Horsham and the built-up areas in order to maintain the district's unique rural character.

7. Policy 4 of the HDPF identifies that outside built-up area boundaries, the expansion of settlements will be supported where: the site is allocated and adjoins an existing settlement edge; the level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type; the development is demonstrated to meet the identified local housing needs; the impact of the development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive long term development; and the development is contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape and townscape character features are maintained and enhanced.

8. The SDHD addresses locational suitability and scale, and in so doing modifies the criteria in Policy 4 by removing the requirement for sites outside built-up area boundaries to be allocated, but continues to require that sites adjoin an existing settlement edge. The remaining criteria in Policy 4 are unchanged.

9. The proposal satisfies several of the criteria in Policy 4 and the SDHD: namely, it would be appropriate to the scale and function of Storrington & Sullington; it would provide a family dwelling which meets local housing needs; and it would not prejudice comprehensive long-term development. However, although the appeal site is situated next to a housing estate known as Millford Grange, the estate is not within the Built-Up Area Boundary, and consequently it does not satisfy the locational criterion in either Policy 4 or the SDHD.

10. The final criterion in Policy 4 and the SDHD requires developments to be contained within an existing defensible boundary and to maintain and enhance landscape character features. The site has well defined hedgerows to both the A283 Washington Road and Hampers Lane, with a wooded bank separating the site from Millford Grange, and as such possesses defensible boundaries. In spite of the recent tree removal which has occurred, the site retains a sylvan character, which the appellant proposes to enhance through additional tree planting. Taking these factors together, I find that the proposal would satisfy the final criterion in Policy 4 and the SDHD.

11. Whilst not essential to its countryside location, the proposal, by virtue of being for a single dwelling and abutting the Millford Grange estate, satisfies the detailed criteria contained in Policy 26 of the HDPF: the proposal would be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location, would not lead to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and would conserve the key features and characteristics of the landscape area in which it is located.

12. Storrington & Sullington are jointly classified as a Small Town/Larger Village in the settlement hierarchy in Policy 3 of the HDPF, meaning they have a good range of services and facilities, strong community networks and local employment provision. To access these facilities, future occupiers would need to walk or cycle over 1km along the A283, which has a 40mph speed limit and lacks pavements

and lighting along some of its length. Such a route would be challenging for pedestrians and inexperienced cyclists. There is, however, a regular bus service linking the site to the centre of Storrington, with bus stops on both sides of the road, the one on the opposite side of the main road being accessible via a length of pavement and a pedestrian refuge on the A283. Future residents would have a choice of modes of travel and not be wholly reliant on the private vehicle.

13. I have been referred to a number of appeal decisions relating to proposed dwellings in the Horsham's countryside. In each case, the Inspector found conflict with the Council's spatial strategy, and applied the presumption in favour of sustainable development having regard to the Council's housing land supply shortfall. As I have not been supplied with the plans for any of the proposals, there is a limited amount of information that I can glean from the decisions, other than that the outcome of applying the 'tilted balance' in each case was dependant on the precise locational and other attributes of the schemes in question.

14. For the reasons set out above, the appeal site would not be a suitable location for the proposed development having regard to local planning policy, being in conflict with the relevant parts of policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF, Policy 1 of the SSWNP, and the SDHD, the aims of which I have outlined above.

Character and appearance

15. On one side of the appeal site is the Millford Grange housing estate, which is set back from the A283 behind a belt of trees, and beyond that is a range of converted farm buildings. On the other side of the appeal site is a quarry which, aside from its entrance, is not visible from the A283. On the opposite side of the A283 is open countryside which is within the South Downs National Park (SDNP). The appeal site itself has an undeveloped appearance from the A283 since the host property and its formal garden are set well back from the road. The overall character of the area is broadly rural but with distinct urbanising elements.

16. Since the dismissal of an appeal for a dwelling in 2024[1], 20 trees have been removed from the site[2]. Subsequently, the Council placed a preservation order on a sycamore and oak located next to Hampers Lane[3]. From the information before me, it appears that many of the trees were removed from the rear portion of the appeal site, adjacent to the garden of Cadrona, with some also being removed from the front of the site close to the A283.

17. Whilst I have not had the benefit of viewing the site prior to the tree removal, the previous Inspector identified that the site contained a significant number of trees, in particular T017 (the sycamore which is now subject to the preservation order) and T010 (a lime tree which has been removed). These trees, together with others on the site, were found by the Inspector to make a positive contribution to the quality and distinctiveness of the area.

18. The loss of so many trees will inevitably have altered the appearance of the site. Notwithstanding the scale of the loss, however, the site retains a generally sylvan appearance when viewed from the A283, and no additional tree removal is proposed. The dwelling would be set back from the A283, aligning approximately with the frontmost dwellings on the Millford Grange estate, and would similarly be

[1] PINS reference APP/Z3825/W/23/3333097
[2] Arboricultural Appeal Statement prepared by Duckworths Arboriculture Ltd
[3] Tree Preservation Order 1593 dated 4 November 2025

two storeys high. Although the dwelling would be larger and on higher ground than the houses on Millford Grange, it would be set within a larger plot, and native tree planting next to the A283 would in time help to screen views of the proposed dwelling.

19. Whilst the proposed dwelling would be visible from Hampers Lane, as is Cadrona itself, its appearance would be softened by the retention and reinforcement of existing boundary treatment. The sycamore and oak would be retained and protected during construction, but the Council has expressed concern about whether their root protection areas (RPA) have been correctly identified. BS5837:2012, which is a material consideration, provides a formula for calculating RPAs, requiring that they are circular in shape, with any deviation from this shape being informed by site conditions including topography and roads.

20. The appellant has shown two RPAs for each protected tree: both a circular one and a rectangular one, the latter accounting for the bank on which the trees sit and the adjacent Hampers Lane. The rectangular RPA represents a more accurate representation of the likely rooting spread. The dwelling would be situated outside both the RPAs of both trees, and whilst the driveway would be within the RPA of the oak tree, it is an existing driveway, meaning that no further excavation is required. I find, therefore, that the proposal adheres to the guidance on RPAs contained in BS5837:2012.

21. Many of the trees which previously gave rise to concerns about shading of the patio area and rear-facing windows of the proposed dwelling, and associated leaf litter and fear of branch fall, have since been removed. The private garden area of the dwelling and its front and rear windows would not therefore be subject to undue shadowing. Whilst trees at the sides of the dwelling could cause some shadowing, the fenestration on the flank walls of the dwelling would be limited to en suites and secondary windows, thereby minimising pressure for tree removal/reduction.

22. Overall, I find that the proposal would not erode the verdant appearance of the site or be out of character with the surrounding area. It would retain existing trees, including those which benefit from protection, and make provision for additional tree planting. In so doing, the proposal would conserve and enhance the setting of the SDNP opposite the appeal site. The proposal would therefore accord with policies 25, 31 and 33 of the HDPF, which together seek to protect, conserve and enhance landscape and townscape character, including the SDNP, and to maintain or enhance the existing network of green infrastructure, including replacement tree planting.

Other Matters

23. S66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty on decision makers to have special regard to preserving the setting of listed buildings. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) guides that the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal, including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset, should be identified and assessed.

24. Chanctonbury Lodge is a Grade II listed building whose significance derives from its seventeenth century or earlier timber frame and oversailing central first floor, despite its modern brick and stone infilling. It has a hipped tiled roof and casement

windows. The building is located in open countryside on the opposite side of the A283 from the appeal site.

25. The proposed dwelling would be set back and largely screened from it by the protected oak tree and existing boundary hedges. Whilst the proposal would represent a degree of urbanisation of the appeal site, the site's existing landscaped character would be largely maintained and over time enhanced. Given these factors, and the distance between the proposal and Chanctonbury Lodge, the proposal would have a neutral impact on the setting of the listed building and would not harm its significance.

26. The proposal would utilise an existing driveway. Whilst an intensification of the use of the driveway is to be expected, it comes off Hampers Lane, a private road which appears to be lightly trafficked. Cars would be able to turn on site and exit in a forward gear. I have not been presented with any evidence that the proposed access arrangements would give rise to highway danger.

Appropriate Assessment

27. The appeal site falls within an area identified as the Sussex North Water Supply Zone, where water abstraction has the potential to adversely affect the Arun Valley Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site. It is a European Designated Site afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended (the Habitats Regulations). It is incumbent upon me as competent authority to consider whether the development is likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of the site.

28. The site supports rare and diverse plant, invertebrate and bird assemblages as qualifying features. It consists of low-lying grazing marsh, largely on alluvial soils. Variation in soils and water supply lead to a wide range of ecological conditions and hence a rich flora and fauna. Natural England has previously advised that due to the additional demand for water abstraction, it could not 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 site.

29. Natural England's recent document entitled Withdrawal of Natural England's Water Neutrality Position Statement confirmed that, based on a voluntary licence reduction and a commitment to delivering a package of mitigation, Natural England is now satisfied that there is sufficient certainty that there would be no adverse impact on the integrity of the European Designated Site. From 1 November 2025, therefore, development can come forward without water neutrality restrictions. Natural England was consulted on the planning appeal and confirmed that there will be no likely significant effect on the SAC, SPA or Ramsar site, and the development therefore accords with the Habitats Regulations.

30. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not have a likely significant effect on the integrity of the SPA, SAC and Ramsar site. I therefore find that the development accords with the Habitats Regulations.

Planning Balance

31. A house is proposed, and the Council has confirmed that it cannot currently demonstrate a five year supply of housing, with its most recent Annual Monitoring

Report 2024/25 showing a supply of 1.7 years. Therefore, paragraph 11(d) of the Framework applies. Although the development falls within the zone of influence of a European Designated Site, there would be no adverse impact on the qualifying features of the site, and therefore the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or asset of particular importance do not provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies as set out in paragraph 11(d)ii and permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.

32. The HDPF sets out a clear strategy for focussing growth on Horsham and the built-up area. The SDHD modifies this strategy by supporting development adjacent to built-up area boundaries. The harm I have identified as arising from the proposal relates to its countryside location in respect to the spatial strategy of the Council. This harm is tempered by the fact that the appeal site offers a choice of modes of travel and, although not abutting a Built-Up Area Boundary, adjoins a housing estate located on the fringes of Storrington & Sullington. I consequently attach moderate negative weight to the degree of conflict I have identified with the development plan.

33. The delivery of a home would be a social benefit, whilst economic benefits would accrue from the construction phase and from expenditure on goods and services by future occupiers. The dwelling would be sustainably constructed, and provide additional landscaping and biodiversity enhancement. A single dwelling is capable of being constructed quickly. Positively contributing to the Council's housing land supply, albeit in a modest manner for a single dwelling, is a particular benefit given the Council's 1.7 year housing land supply. I therefore attach moderate positive weight to the benefits that the scheme delivers.

34. I have given great weight to the duty imposed by Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Parks. The duty extends to consideration of the setting of a National Park when development is proposed outside of but close to it. I have found that the proposal would conserve the SDNP's setting, whilst providing an enhancement as a result of additional native tree planting.

35. Taking all matters into account, the adverse impacts of granting permission would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole. Consequently, the proposal benefits from the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as defined in paragraph 11(d) of the Framework.

Conditions

36. The Framework sets out that conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. I have assessed the suggested list of conditions on this basis.

37. It is necessary to confirm the standard time limit for the development, and to specify the approved plans and drawings, for the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of certainty.

38. It is essential that the development is carried out fully in accordance with the appellant's Arboricultural Method Statement. This needs to be a pre-commencement condition to ensure that the necessary tree protection measures in in place from the start. I have not applied the Council's second tree condition as it essentially duplicates the first condition.

39. To protect visual amenities and in the interests of trees, details of finished floor levels and utilities routes must be approved. The condition needs to be pre-commencement to ensure that all below ground works are agreed before works commence.

40. To minimise the impact of the proposal on existing species, and to enhance biodiversity, the measures set out in the appellant's Ecological Appraisal Report should be implemented in full.

41. To minimise the impact on bats and to protect the SDNP's dark skies, no external lighting should be installed except with the approval of the Council. The use of timed black out blinds and low transmission glazing would be excessive given that the site is just outside the SDNP.

42. In the interests of the character and appearance of the area, a landscaping scheme should be approved and implemented, and external materials should accord with the submitted forms and plans.

43. To accord with Policy 37 of the HDPF, water usage should be controlled and superfast broadband enabled.

44. In the interests of highway safety, parking and turning areas should be laid out in accordance with the approved plans, and plans for cycle storage should be approved and implemented. Alongside these requirements, refuse and recycling plans should be submitted for approval.

45. Given the size of the plot and the distance to neighbouring properties, it is not necessary to remove permitted development rights for extensions.

Conclusion

46. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan. However, other material considerations, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development as defined in the Framework, indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

J Heppell

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following list of approved plans:
   2206.011B - Proposed Site Plan
   2206.012A - Proposed Landscape Plan
   2206.101B - Proposed Ground Floor Plan
   2206.102B - Proposed First Floor Plan
   2206.103A - Proposed Roof Plan
   2206.105A - Proposed Elevations SE
   2206.106A - Proposed Elevations NW
   2206.007A - Proposed Section A-A
   2206.108A - Proposed Section B-B
   2206.109A - Proposed Section C-C
   2206.151A - Proposed Garage Ground Floor Plan
   2206.153A - Proposed Garage Roof Plan
   2206.155A - Proposed Garage Elevations
   2206.157A - Proposed Garage Section A-A
   2206.158A - Proposed Garage Section B-B
3. No development shall commence, including any demolition works, ground clearance, or the bringing of equipment, machinery, or materials onto the site, until the following protective measures have been installed and confirmed, in accordance with the Arboricultural Method Statement prepared by Duckworths Arboriculture Ltd, in the sequence set out below:
   (a) All trees identified for retention on drawing number TPP 06557 / 2025 0.2, together with any off-site trees whose root protection areas extend into the site, shall be safeguarded by the installation of robust tree protective fencing. This fencing shall be securely fixed to the ground and erected in full compliance with Section 6 of BS 5837:2012 ‘Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations’.
   (b) Once installed, the protective fencing shall be retained and maintained in position for the entire duration of the development works, and shall only be removed once all construction activities, machinery, and surplus materials have been cleared from the site.
   (c) The areas enclosed by the protective fencing shall be treated as exclusion zones at all times. These zones shall not be used for the storage of materials, equipment, or machinery under any circumstances. Furthermore, no mixing of cement, concrete, or use of other potentially harmful substances shall occur within or adjacent to these zones where seepage or displacement could compromise tree health.
   (d) Any trees or hedgerows that die or suffer damage during the construction process shall be replaced with species, sizes, and positions agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
4. No development shall commence until full details of all proposed and existing utility and service lines, together with precise details of the existing and proposed finished floor levels, including the driveway and hardstanding, and external ground levels of the development in relation to nearby datum points adjoining the application site, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall be clearly shown on a plan. The

development shall thereafter be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details.

5. The biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures set out in the Ecological Appraisal Report by Wychwood Environmental Ltd shall be implemented in full both during and after the construction phase.
6. No external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed other than with the permission of the Local Planning Authority by way of formal application.
7. Prior to the first occupation of any part of the development hereby permitted, full details of all hard and soft landscaping works, based on Drawing No 1135-LA-P-01A, shall have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include plans and measures addressing the following:
   • Details of all proposed trees and planting, including schedules specifying species, planting size, densities and plant numbers and tree pit details
   • Details of all hard surfacing materials and finishes
   • Details of all boundary treatments
   The approved landscaping scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first planting season following the first occupation of any part of the development. Unless otherwise agreed as part of the approved landscaping, no trees or hedges on the site shall be wilfully damaged or uprooted, felled/removed, topped or lopped without the previous written consent of the Local Planning Authority until 5 years after completion of the development. Any proposed planting, which within a period of 5 years, dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.
8. The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the application form and approved plans.
9. The dwelling hereby permitted shall meet the optional requirement of building regulation G2 to limit the water usage of each dwelling to 110 litres per person per day. The water limiting measures shall thereafter be retained.
10. Prior to the first occupation of the dwelling, the necessary in-building physical infrastructure and external site-wide infrastructure to enable superfast broadband speeds of 30 megabytes per second through full fibre broadband connection shall be provided to the premises.
11. No part of the development shall be first occupied until the vehicle parking and turning spaces have been constructed in accordance with the approved plan. These spaces shall thereafter be retained for their designated use.
12. No part of the development shall be first occupied until covered and secure cycle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with plans and details to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
13. No dwelling hereby permitted shall be first occupied unless and until provision for the storage of refuse/recycling has been made for that dwelling in accordance with details that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These facilities shall thereafter be retained for use at all times.

End of schedule