



**TO:** Planning Committee South  
**BY:** Development Manager  
**DATE:** 19 September 2017  
**DEVELOPMENT:** Proposed erection of a single storey detached commercial office  
**SITE:** Catsland Farm Bramlands Lane Woodmancote West Sussex BN5 9TG  
**WARD:** Bramber, Upper Beeding and Woodmancote  
**APPLICATION:** DC/17/1240  
**APPLICANT:** **Name:** Mr Jay Scanlan **Address:** 57 Tongdean Avenue Hove BN3 6TN  
UK

**REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA:** More than 8 representations have been received contrary to Officer recommendation.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve application subject to conditions

**1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

To consider the planning application.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION**

- 1.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a purpose-built commercial building. The proposed building would be positioned to the south of the existing converted barn, which houses 3 x office units, within a triangular unkempt area of the site.
- 1.2 The building would be oriented to face west, and would measure to a length of 6.4m and a depth of 7m, and would incorporate a pitched roof extending to a height of 6m. The proposal would provide a gross internal floor area of approximately 53.9sqm, with office accommodation within the ground floor and roof space.
- 1.3 The proposed building would include full height glazing and entrance to the western elevation, with roof lights to the northern and southern elevations. The proposed building would be finished in dark stained timber cladding, with metal roofing to match the existing building adjacent.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

- 1.4 The application site is located within a farm complex positioned to the west of Bramlands Lane, outside of the designated built-up area. The site is surrounded by agricultural fields with a number of sporadic residential dwellings positioned to the north and south of the site.

- 1.5 The site is accessed via a private track that extends from Bramlands Lane, which forks to the south at the entrance to the site. The site includes an area of hardstanding to the west, with other barn buildings positioned directly to the north and west (some of which have undergone conversion to office and storage use). The site is bound by mature hedging to the south, with post and rail fencing to the north and closeboarded fencing to the west.
- 1.6 The site is a farm which in the recent past has undergone a number of conversions of farm buildings to commercial use. The change of use from agricultural to light industrial B1 use was first permitted on a temporary and personal basis for the elongated building to the south of the access track under planning approval HF/62/90, with permanent planning permission later approved under application HF/60/92. A Certificate of Lawfulness was later approved for part of the barn to the north of the access track under application reference DC/06/1998. A previous application under planning reference DC/16/2566 was refused for a larger commercial building. As part of this it was considered that the proposal, which would have resulted in the addition of 2 x purpose built commercial buildings of a considerable scale would have represented in an unsustainable addition resulting in unacceptable harm to the countryside location.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

### STATUTORY BACKGROUND

#### **2.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**

##### RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The following Policies are considered to be relevant to the assessment of this application:

#### **2.2 National Planning Policy Framework:**

- NPPF1 - Building a strong, competitive economy
- NPPF3 - Supporting a prosperous rural economy
- NPPF4 - Promoting sustainable transport
- NPPF11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- NPPF14 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

#### **2.3 Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF 2015)**

- HDPF1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
- HDPF2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
- HDPF3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
- HDPF 4 – Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
- HDPF7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
- HDPF9 - Employment Development
- HDPF10 - Rural Economic Development
- HDPF25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- HDPF26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
- HDPF30 - Protected Landscapes
- HDPF32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
- HDPF33 - Development Principles
- HDPF40 - Sustainable Transport
- HDPF41 - Parking

##### RELEVANT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

#### **2.4 Henfield Neighbourhood Development Plan**

Following a court decision on 13 October 2016, Henfield Neighbourhood Development Plan has been quashed. The Parish Council is currently considering how they will move

forward. Henfield Parish continues to be covered by the Horsham District Planning Framework, and this plan remains the current and up to date plan for the area.

## 2.6 PLANNING HISTORY AND RELEVANT APPLICATIONS

DC/04/1441	Unrestricted B1 (Business) use and new access	Application Refused on 27.08.2004
DC/04/2271	Unrestricted B1 (Business) use of former agricultural building	Application Permitted on 16.03.2005
DC/04/2273	B1 (Business) use of two former agricultural buildings and formation of access road	Application Refused on 10.12.2004
DC/06/1998	Use of part of the ground floor of Barn B for storage use only (Lawful Development Certificate - Existing)	Application Permitted on 11.12.2006
DC/16/2566	Erection of 2 proposed commercial buildings for business enterprise and 'start-up' companies	Application Refused on 12.01.2017

## 3. OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS

### INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 Access Forum -: The proposed WC would need to conform with part M of Building Regulations.
- 3.2 Public Health And Licensing (Env. Health): No objection, subject to a working hours condition.

### OUTSIDE AGENCIES

- 3.3 South Downs National Park Authority: No objection.
- 3.4 County Council - Highways: No objection.

### PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

- 3.5 Woodmancote Parish Council: No objection subject to the boundary hedging being retained and that a personal condition imposed.
- 3.6 Henfield Parish Council: Objection as the proposal does not comply with Policies 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 25, 26, 32, and 33 of the HDPF.
- 3.7 42 letters of objection have been received from 23 separate households. These can be summarised as follows:

- Access is unacceptable;
- Inadequate sewage facilities;
- Loss of light to unit 3;
- Overdevelopment of the site;
- Inappropriate and inadequate car parking;
- Unacceptable development within the countryside location;
- Impact upon amenities through noise and light pollution;
- Safety implications to users of land;
- Impact on existing trees and hedging;
- Detrimental impact on South Downs National Park.

## 4. HOW THE PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION WILL PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS

- 4.1 Article 8 (Right to respect of a Private and Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 are relevant to this application, Consideration of Human rights forms part of the planning assessment below.

## **5. HOW THE PROPOSAL WILL HELP TO REDUCE CRIME AND DISORDER**

- 5.1 It is not considered that the development would be likely to have any significant impact on crime and disorder.

## **6. PLANNING ASSESSMENTS**

- 6.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of an office building.

### **Principle of Development**

- 6.2 Policy 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states that development outside of built-up boundaries must be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of the following criteria: support the needs of agriculture or forestry; enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste; provide for quiet informal recreational use; or enable the sustainable development of rural areas. Proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location, and should not lead either individually or cumulatively to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside. In addition, development should protect, and/or conserve, and/or enhance the key features and characteristics of the landscape character of the area.
- 6.3 In addition, policy 10 states that 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: contribute to the diverse and sustainable farming enterprises within the district, or contribute to the wider rural economy and/or promote recreation in, and the enjoyment of the countryside; and either be contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion; within the existing boundaries of the estate; or result in substantial environmental improvement and reduce the impact on the countryside. New buildings or development in the rural area will be accepted provided that it supports sustainable economic growth towards balanced living and working communities.
- 6.4 The Design & Access Statement advises that the former farm yard was sold with the established B1 building and the proposal would allow the relocation of an existing business to the site. The site is already host to several small companies, including an interior design company, roofing contractor, and a media company. The proposal would create an office unit with no additional vehicle movements or noise anticipated beyond the travel to and from the office. The proposal would not therefore be expected to generate a significant increase in the level of activity within the Countryside, as required by Policy 26 of the HDPF.
- 6.5 The proposed office building would contribute to the economic development of the rural location within the District, providing additional accommodation within an established commercial complex. Whilst the site is located some distance from the built-up area given the nature and scale of the proposed building this is not considered to lead to a level of activity or frequency of movements that would result in unacceptable harm to the countryside location. The proposed development is considered to contribute to the wider rural economy and is considered to be of a scale appropriate for the countryside character and location to which it forms a part. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies 10 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

### **Character of the site and visual amenities of the street scene**

- 6.6 Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF promote development which is of high quality and design, and is sympathetic to the distinctiveness of the dwelling and surroundings. Development should protect, conserve and enhance the landscape character, taking account of the nature environment, landscape and landform pattern to which it forms a part.
- 6.7 The proposed building would be positioned 2 metres to the south of the existing converted barn, within a triangular unkempt area of the site. The building would be oriented to face west, and would measure to a length of 6.4m and a depth of 7m, and would incorporate a pitched roof extending to a height of 6m. The proposal would be finished in dark stained timber cladding and metal sheet roofing to match the existing buildings on the site.
- 6.8 The proposal is considered to be of a modest scale that would sit comfortably within the context of the existing building and existing foliage that surrounds it; given its proposed siting it would not appear prominent within the wider landscape. Whilst the proposal would result in an additional, purpose built office building at this site, it would be of a scale, form and appearance that would relate sympathetically to the character and context of the site. In this regard the proposal would not detract from the setting of the rural countryside location.
- 6.9 The South Downs National Park adjoins to the south of the application site. In views from the national park the proposed development would be partly screened by planting and when seen the building would be viewed against the backdrop of existing development. The modest scale of the building would not therefore have any adverse impact on the setting of the nearby South Downs National Park. There are minimal window openings on the building and this would minimise the potential for harmful light spillage; a condition is recommended to prevent external lighting. The National Park Authority has raised no objections to the proposal.
- 6.10 For the reasons outlined it is considered that in design terms the proposal would accord with Policies 25, 30, 32, and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

### **Amenities of the occupiers of adjoining properties**

- 6.11 It is noted that a number of objections have been raised in respect of potential impact upon neighbouring properties, particularly relating to noise and light pollution. Policy 33 of the HDPF states that development should consider the scale, massing and orientation between buildings, respecting the amenities and sensitivities of neighbouring properties.
- 6.12 The application seeks permission for a B1 Office use. This use, by its very nature, is defined as having limited impact upon the function and amenity of surrounding properties/uses, and is considered to be acceptable within a residential area. The neighbouring properties are positioned at a considerable distance from the site, with the closest residential property sited at a distance of approximately 125m to the east. The nature of the site and its isolated setting in relation to neighbouring residential dwellings is considered sufficient to prevent any harm to the amenities of surrounding occupiers. The siting of the development would not harm any openings to adjoining commercial units, and their future viability would not be impacted by the proposal. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

### **Existing Parking and Traffic Conditions**

- 6.13 A number of objections have been received in respect of potential traffic intensification, safety of the access to the site, and the frequency of movements. Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework development that encourages and supports an

improved and integrated transport networking, with a re-balancing in favour of non-car modes as a means of access to jobs, homes, services and facilities will be supported.

- 6.14 The proposal seeks to erect a B1 Office building, which would provide accommodation for office staff in association with a maintenance business. The proposal would utilise the existing access to the site which runs from the west of Bramlands Lane into the site. The site itself is serviced by a single width access track, with the existing building to the east positioned directly adjacent to the track.
- 6.15 The nature of use of the building, providing an administrative function, would not result in a significant increase in level of vehicle activity or frequency of movement. WSCC Highways have raised no objection to the proposal. It is acknowledged that the proposal would result in additional vehicular movements beyond the existing, but this is not considered to be of a capacity or frequency that would harm the function, safety, or use of the existing track. The site currently provides 24 parking spaces which is considered sufficient to accommodate the parking demand of the existing uses and that proposed by this application. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with policies 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

### **Other Considerations**

- 6.16 Representations have been received raising concerns in respect of sewage disposal and a condition is recommended to secure further details prior to the commencement of development.

### **Conclusion**

- 6.15 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle, contributing to the sustainable rural economic development of the countryside, with the proposed building considered to be of a scale, mass and siting that would relate sympathetically to the character of the site and surroundings. The proposal is not considered to materially harm the amenities of neighbouring properties, and is considered to provide sufficient parking, suitable for all users. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies 10, 26, 32, 33, 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 To approve the application subject to the following conditions.

- 1 Approved plans condition
- 2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 **Pre-Commencement Condition:** No development shall commence until a drainage strategy detailing the proposed means of foul and surface disposal has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the sewerage undertaker. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the development is properly drained and complies with the current Building Regulations as well as Policy 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 4 **Regulatory Condition:** The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the plan reference JB 385/planning 05A received 01.06.2017.

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

- 5 **Regulatory Condition:** Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order amending or revoking and/or re-enacting that Order), the premises hereby permitted shall be used for Class B1(a) purposes only, and not for any other purpose without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: Changes of use as permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order or Use Classes Order 1987 are not considered appropriate in this case due to the countryside location and nature of adjoining uses under Policies 26 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 6 **Regulatory Condition:** No external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed other than that shown on the approved plans. Any that is installed with the permission of the Local Planning Authority shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policies 30 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 7 **Regulatory Condition:** The premises shall not be in use except between the hours of 07:30 and 18:00 Monday to Friday; 08:00 and 13:00 on Saturdays and Sundays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).