

Buildings at
Honeywood House

Horsham Road

Rowhook

RH12 3QD

By



ASPIRE DEVELOPMENTS

CREATING INDIVIDUAL HOMES

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Introduction | From humble farm to country estate.

This presentation has been prepared in support of a planning application for the following:

Conversion and restoration of clock tower and stable building to form a dwelling; Demolition of tractor shed and cottage and replacement with a dwelling; associated car parking

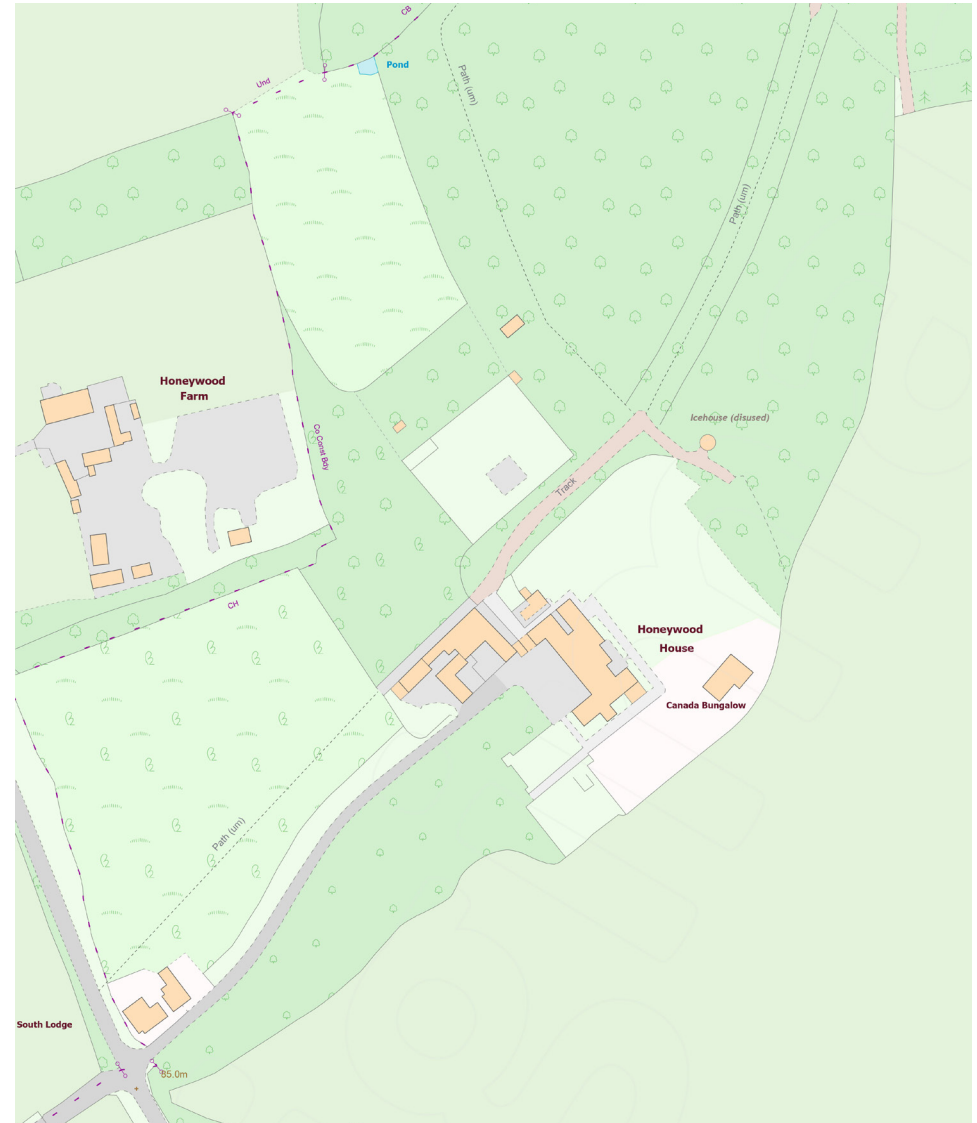
The application is a resubmission of DC/22/1187 refused by Horsham District Council on 18th August 2022.

The application includes amendments to address certain issues raised and seeks to clarify other elements of the scheme.

This presentation sets out the relevant background to assist the planning authority in its determination of the planning application.

This presentation will include:

- A description of the site, its history and its surroundings
- Relevant planning history and planning policies
- Details of the proposed development
- Appraisal of the scheme against all relevant planning considerations



History - Honeywood House

1780's, Original Farmhouse

The original farm house was built in the 1780's and developed and expanded over the years and was known as Hedgecocks Farm between 1871 and 1896.

1895 - 1914, Oakhurst Grange

Purchased in 1895 by Duchess of San Teodora and her husband Don Marcantonio (the Prince Assistant to the Pope) she changed the name to Oakhurst Grange (this is from the village of Oakwood Hill a few miles away from the house).

The Duchess also added the stable block and the clock tower barn (the application site).

The Duchess lived here until her death in 1912.



1912 - 1914

The house then passed to Mr C J Woods for these two years.

1914 - 1949, Honeywood House

In 1914 the house and land was purchased by Lord Tredegar whose wife lived in the house until her death in 1949, she rarely lived with her husband who resided in his ancestral home in Wales, it was she who renamed the house Honeywood House.

During the Second World War (1943 -) The Canadian Army, The Third Division Ordnance Field Park was billeted here and by this time the Viscountess was only living in one wing of the house.



1954, Sale of the Estate and Grounds

The house was sold freehold for £6450

1955, Nursing Home

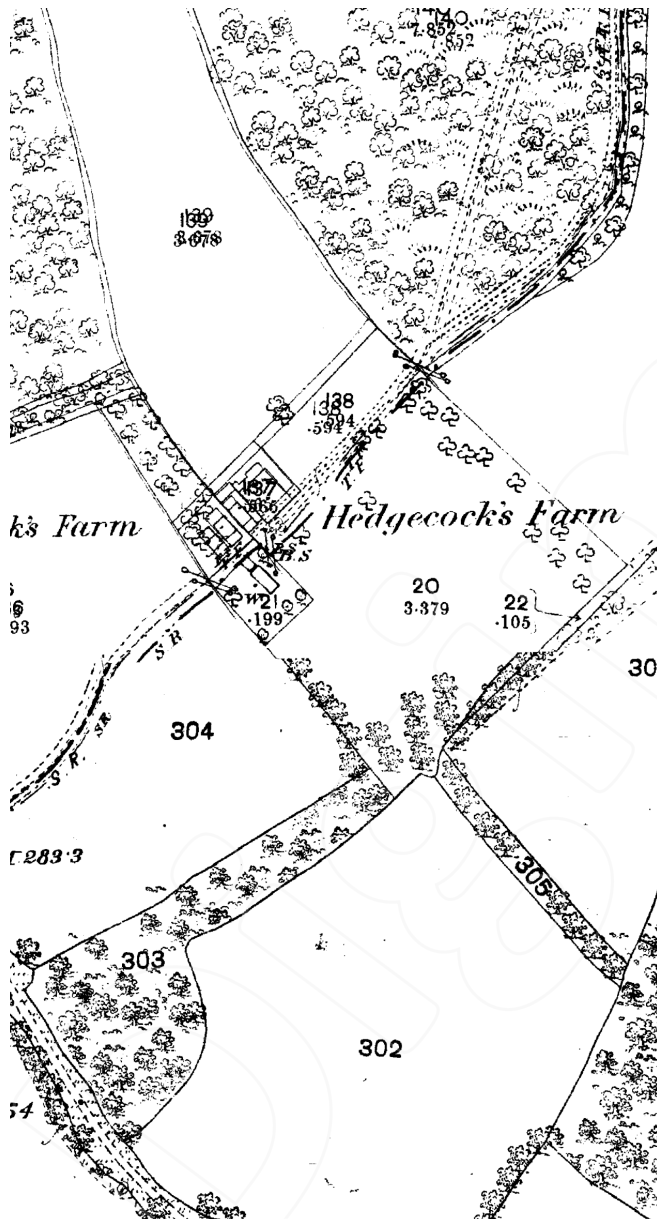
Honeywood House became a nursing home in 1955 when it was acquired by Mr Sidney Miller and Mr John Bellord, it was registered as a convalescence and recuperation home with the Charity Commission and its first Matron was Miss J Sparrow.

1977, Scandal and new beginnings

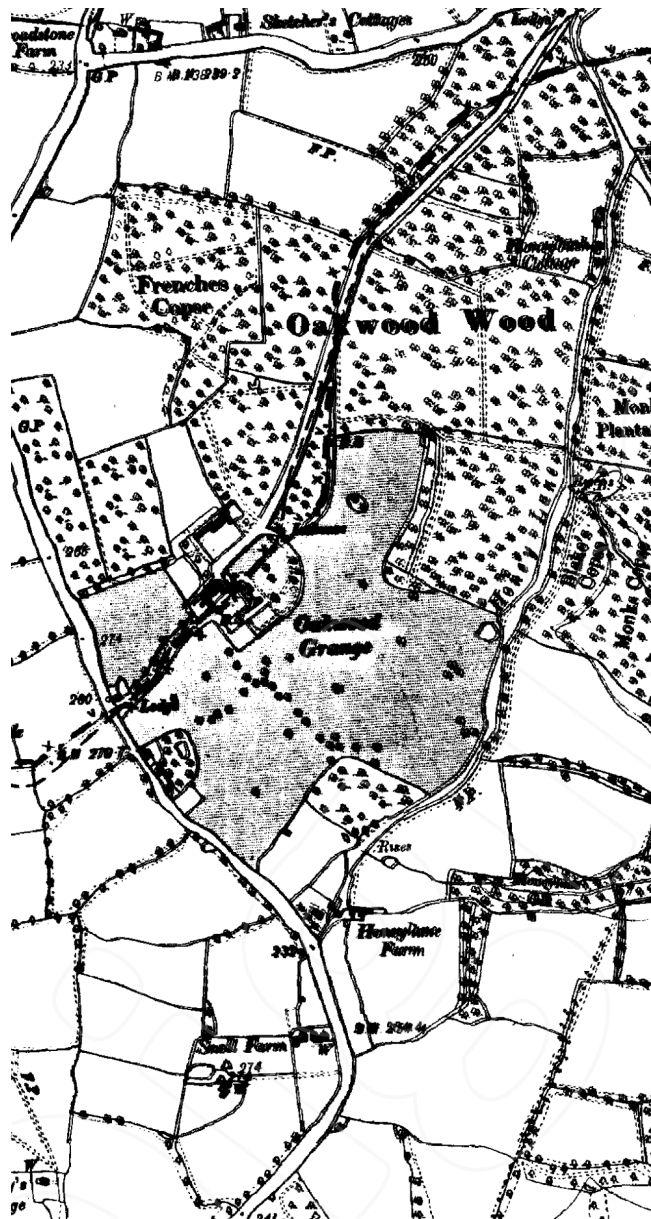
In 1977 both Bellord and Miller were jailed for 6 years for fraud and stealing £10,749 from the Honeywood House Convalescence trust.

It was at this time that Mrs Margaret Cutler (secretary of the Nursing Home) took up the gauntlet and saved the home from closing, she became General manager and Head trustee and worked until her retirement at the age of 82 in 2012.

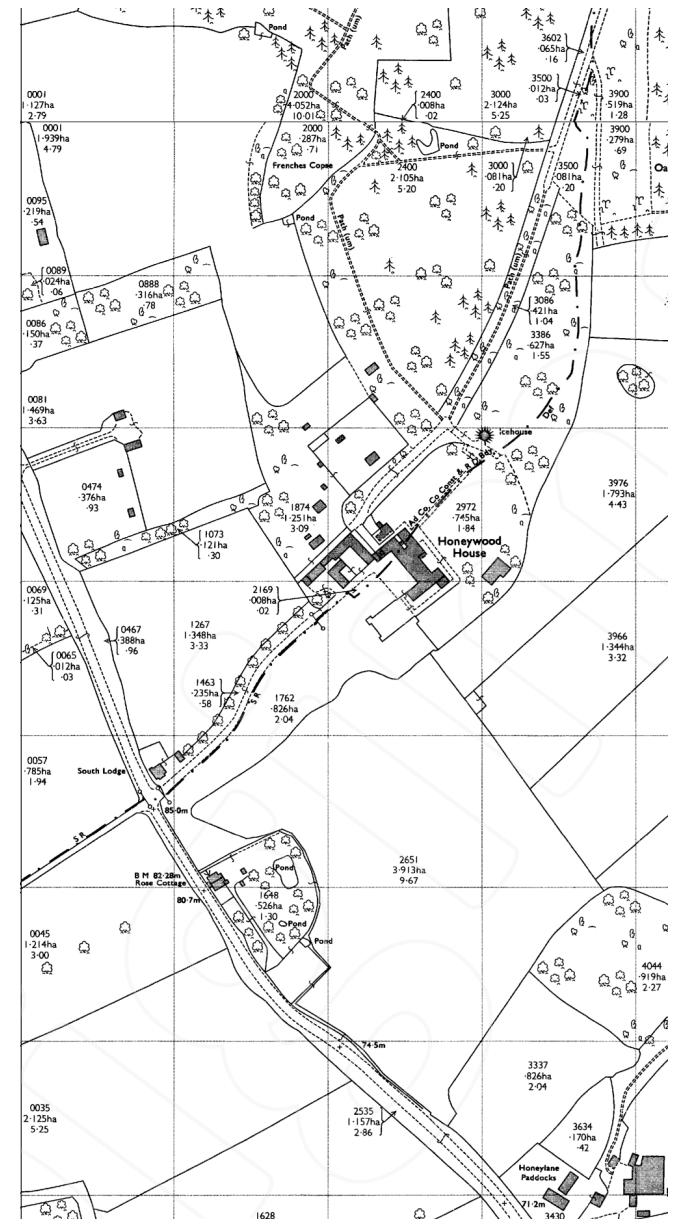
Honeywood House, Rowhook



1870's - Hedgecock's Farm



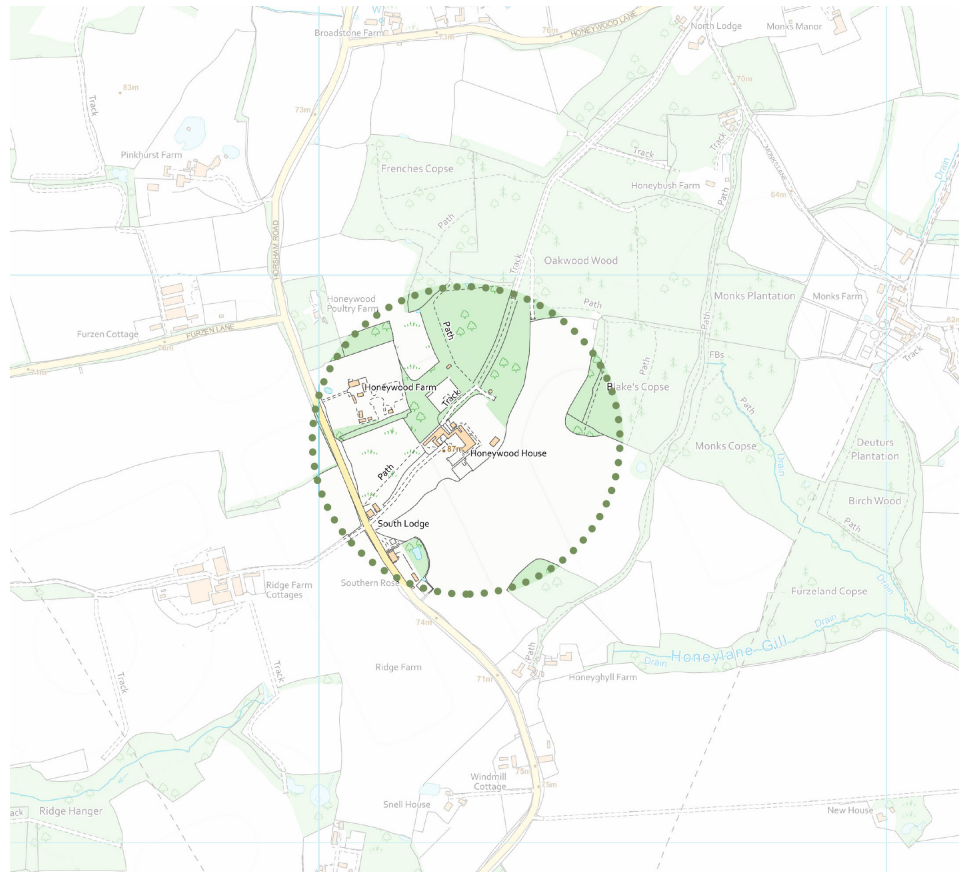
1900's - Oakwood Grange



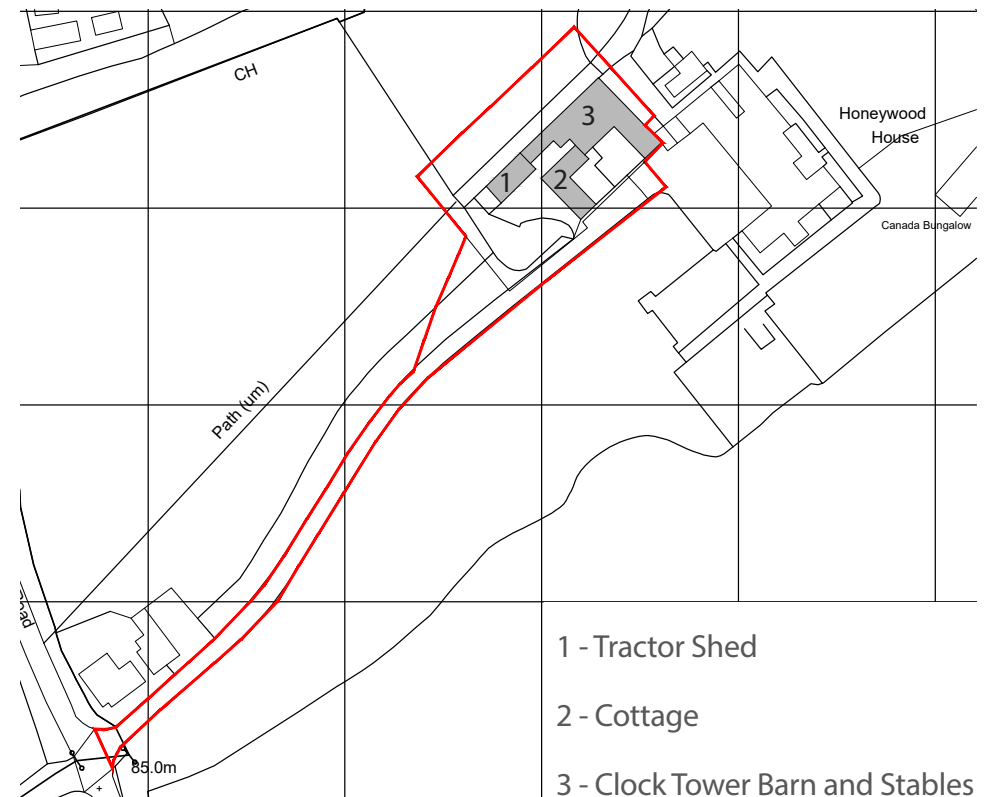
1960's - Honeywood House

The Site

The application site is located to the east of Horsham Road in Rowhook, West Sussex. The site extends to 0.3 hectares and comprises a number of outbuildings, namely stables, a clock tower barn, tractor shed and a cottage. All buildings were last used in association with the neighbouring Honeywood House nursing home.



The buildings were used as staff accommodation for employees of the neighbouring nursing home. Planning permission was granted in the 1960s for three units of staff accommodation, however two further units also exist. Two of these are located within the clock tower barn, one within the cottage and two within attached outbuildings which connect the clock tower barn with the cottage.



- 1 - Tractor Shed
- 2 - Cottage
- 3 - Clock Tower Barn and Stables

Existing Site Plan



Panoramic of Application Site and Honeywood House



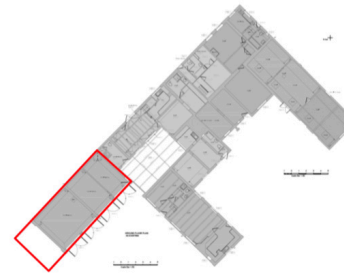
Interior of Application Site



Existing First Floor Plans



Existing Ground Floor Plan



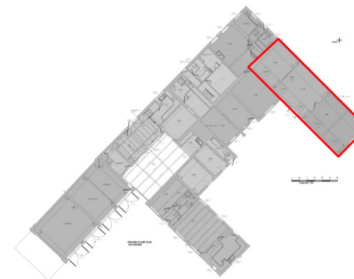
Tractor Shed



Cottage



Clock Tower Barn



Stables



Background

The planning application proposes the conversion and restoration of a clock tower barn and stable building to form a dwelling, and the replacement of an existing cottage and tractor shed to form a second dwelling.

The existing buildings have historically been occupied as three units of staff accommodation by employees of the nursing home since the 1960s. Council tax continues to be paid for the three individual units of accommodation. Two further units of staff accommodation have also been created in the buildings and serving bathrooms and kitchens to these remain. There is therefore a total of five staff units in the buildings.

The buildings have not been needed by the nursing home for over 6 years and are falling into a state of disrepair. The nursing home cannot afford to either maintain nor demolish the buildings. The nursing home has suffered financial challenges in the last 18 months which resulted in them having to use savings intended for essential building repairs on day-to-day costs during this period and funds are now depleted.

To raise funds for the home and find a new purpose for the site Aspire Developments Ltd is proposing to convert the clock tower barn and stables which are considered to be worthy of preservation. The cottage and tractor shed however are in a poor state of repair. There are also various additions to buildings which are of no merit and currently have a negative effect on the more notable buildings. These are proposed to be replaced with a new dwelling.

The Council will be aware that the nursing home has for many years been trying to find a new use for the site. Previous applications (except for the last) proposed the complete demolition of the existing outbuildings and the erection of new build houses. In considering these applications the Council suggested that the re-use of the buildings should be considered.

Surrounding Context

To the south-east of the site is Honeywood House Nursing Home and car park with associated land to the east. To the north and west is woodland.

There are scattered houses and farms located nearby off Horsham Road.

Rudgwick and Broadbridge Heath are the nearest settlements 3 and 5 miles away where shops and services can be found.

The nearest train station is at Christs Hospital 6.5 miles away and bus stops are located 900 metres to the north of the site on Horsham Road.

A public right of way passes through the northern part of the site. Due to the buildings on the applicant site being dangerous (glass from the windows recently falling out onto the ground below) the public footpath which runs to the rear of the buildings has been moved further away to keep footpath users safe.

Case Studies | Horsham District Council

Granted

18/8/2017

DC/17/1415 – Conversion and extension to existing outbuildings to form 4 dwellings at Old Park, Horsham Road, Rusper, RH12 4QT

Old Park is a large residential dwelling, and one of the outbuildings proposed for conversion was granted permission in 1970 for use as staff accommodation. The officer's report acknowledged that both Government guidance and policies of the Council seek to protect the open countryside from inappropriate development, but that an exception is provided for within NPPF (at the time under paragraph 55) where a development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting. Whilst the application site was closer to the nearest settlement boundary at 800m, it did not have a footpath between the two and future residents were similarly likely to be reliant on their cars for accessing services.

Granted

30/12/2019

DC/19/2251 – Demolition of lean to and stables. Conversion of barn into two dwellings, conversion of granary into one dwelling and erection of a dwelling at Clemsfold Farm, Guildford Road, Clemsfold, RH12 3PW

In commenting on the application the Conservation Officer remarked 'it is important that the historic farm buildings are repaired and maintained but this will only be probable if they are more intensively used...It is accepted that residential use is a suitable future use in order that the barn and granary are preserved for future generations.' The farm buildings were listed and the application was supported on the basis that the proposal would respect and reinforce the significance and special interest of them. Clemsfold Farm is located approximately 1.6 miles away from the nearest settlement and there is no footpath connecting the two. The rural location of the site and its suitability for residential use was in any case not a material consideration raised by Horsham District Council in the determination of the application.

Granted

11/4/2018

DC/18/0249 – Conversion and extension of existing outbuildings into a three bedroom dwelling. Demolition of remaining buildings at Beacon Hill Croft, Tower Road, Colgate, RH12 4SX

The application proposed the conversion and extension of agricultural and cattery buildings to form a single house. A previously refused application and appeal was considered irrelevant as the HDPF had since been adopted and case law on the meaning of 'isolated' had evolved to mean where there are neighbouring properties a site should not be considered isolated. In this instance there was a single neighbouring house. The Council accepted that future occupants would be reliant on the private car due to the distance to the nearest settlement, but that the location could be considered suitable for a residential conversion as there was a bus stop 200 metres away albeit with poorly defined pedestrian routes and a train station 1.2 miles away. The site had very similar locational characteristics to the current appeal site.

The reuse of disused buildings, the enhancement to setting, and the improvement to the appearance of the site weighed in the application's favour.

Planning History | Application in Appeal: DC/22/1187

Aspire Developments Application:

18/8/2022

DC/22/1187 – Demolition of tractor shed and cottage; erection of two dwellings; conversion and restoration of clock tower and stable building to form a dwelling; associated car parking and landscaping.

Refused 18/8/2022 for the same reason as DC/19/0291 and DC/20/0562 and the relationship between properties resulting in a poor quality living environment for future occupiers. A third reason for refusal stated that insufficient information to demonstrate a lack of adverse impacts on protected species had been submitted (bat emergence surveys were underway at the time but had not been completed), and how the scheme will contribute towards biodiversity net gain (this information was contained within the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal). This application is now the subject of an appeal (reference 3307772).



It is our opinion that appropriate weight was not afforded to the preservation and reuse of the existing buildings, or the wider benefits the scheme will have on the setting of a heritage asset. In addition, weight was not afforded to the support given under paragraph 80 of the NPPF to the reuse of redundant buildings in the countryside and proposals which represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets. Weight was also not given to paragraph 197 of the NPPF which requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

The officer's report on the application contains inaccuracies about the scheme proposed and planning background and we are unsure as to whether a full site inspection was carried out. These raise concerns about the decision-making process and whether the differences between the proposed scheme and the previously refused schemes were fully appreciated. An appeal against the refusal has therefore been lodged.

The latest application is submitted partly to clarify the differences between the Applicant's proposals and the previous applications. Amendments are also proposed to the scheme to address the second reason for refusal, and the results of a bat survey are submitted to address the third reason for refusal.

Application in Appeal: DC/22/1187



Ground Floor



First Floor

Previous Applications v Current Application

Previous applications submitted by a different applicant have proposed the complete demolition of all buildings. The current application differs significantly in the following ways:

- The most notable buildings are proposed to be reused, not demolished. In commenting on previous applications Horsham District Council itself has suggested this should be considered.

- Previous applications did not benefit from the support given by Paragraph 80 (then 79) of the NPPF for the residential conversion of existing buildings in the countryside. This application does.

- The preservation of these buildings, which are non-designated heritage assets, would be a heritage benefit not just in relation to the buildings themselves but also the setting of Honeywood House.

- The local plan is now out of date and the Council does not have a five year housing supply. Therefore paragraph 11 of the NPPF is engaged and the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies.

- Two dwellings are now proposed. This enables both dwellings to enjoy ample private amenity space with no opportunity for overlooking of gardens or through windows.

- The results of bat emergence surveys undertaken between August and September 2022 are submitted confirming the mitigation measures required to ensure no adverse impacts on protected species.

- Measures to achieve a biodiversity net gain are proposed.



Proposal - Layout

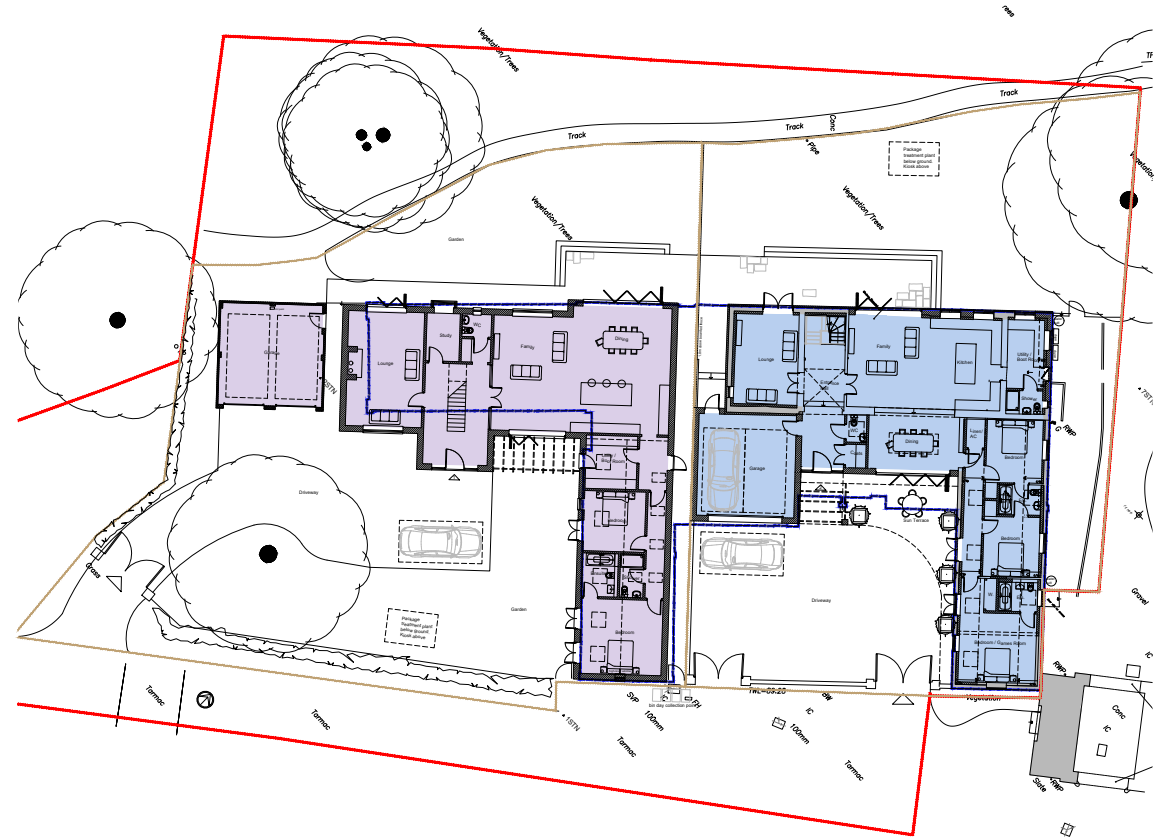
Having reviewed previous linear type refusals on the site that included complete demolition, these were considered rather incongruous to the location and setting. The proposals aim to retain the language of the historic courtyard format whilst preserving the best historic features. The re-use of these significant buildings and the accompaniment of new buildings in the similar footprint will allow for their place in the status and relationship with the main Honeywood House. In this instance the brief has been to take the current footprints, as if the buildings were converted but for practicality replace the two worst buildings with new. The layouts have been specifically designed to resist and mitigate against immediate overlooking.

Gardens for the Great Barn and Clock Tower Barn would be sited to the rear and parking would be provided within courtyards to the front of each property and within garages.

The internal arrangement of each dwelling provides living accommodation at ground floor level with bedrooms at both ground and first floor levels.

The proposed development would reduce the built footprint on the site by around 33sqm and would increase the gross internal area by 101sqm.

The proposals incorporate a number of features to enhance biodiversity including the planting of shrubs and trees and the provision of bird nests and bat roosting boxes to the buildings and neighbouring trees.



Proposal - Floor Plans

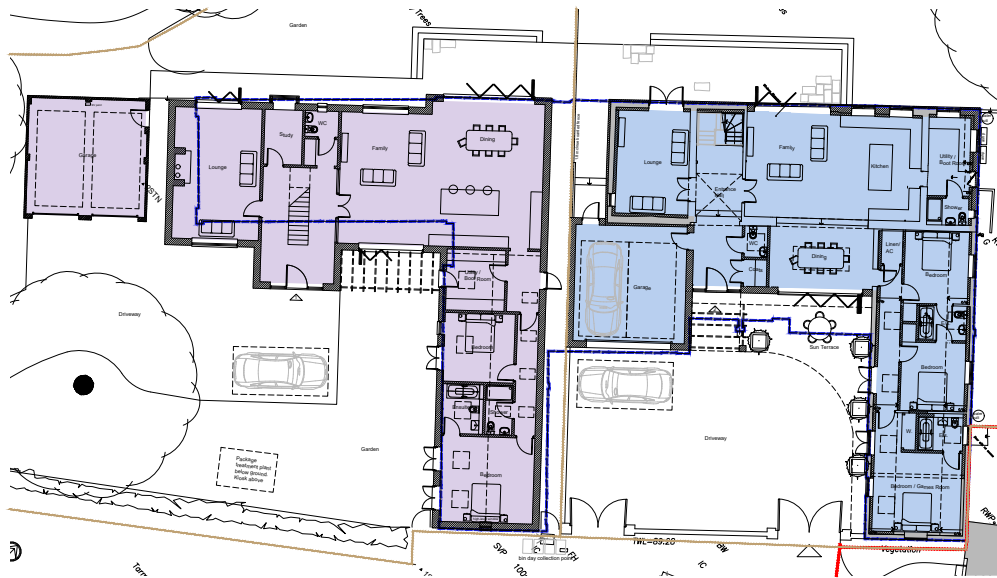
- The Great Barn (following demolition of tractor shed and cottage)
- The Clock Tower Barn (conversion and restoration of clock tower and stable building)
- Existing Footprint

The proposals would largely retain a similar appearance to the existing buildings.

The replacement cottage and tractor shed (Great Barn) would use similar materials and appear as a barn conversion.

The footprint and arrangement of the buildings would remain largely the same.

Overall the scheme is presented as an enhancement to the site and wider area. It makes use of redundant buildings which have fallen into a state of disrepair.



Ground Floor

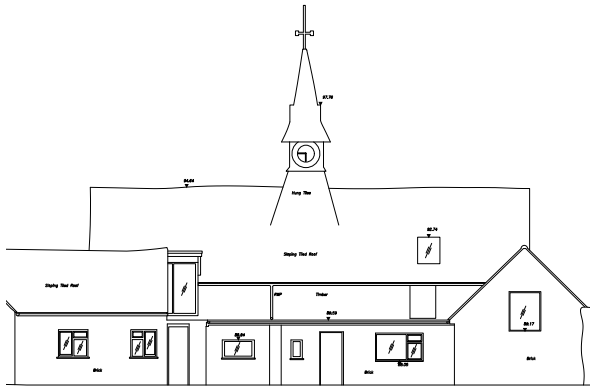


First Floor

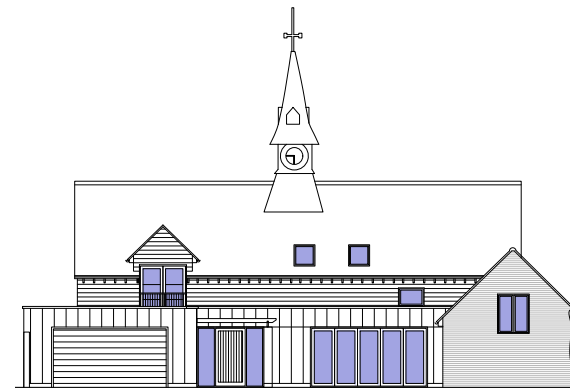
Proposal - Clock Tower Barn

The recent planning application proposes the restoration and conversion of the clock tower barn and stable building. The existing flat roof extension to the barn would be removed and replaced with a zinc clad extension. A car barn would be sited within the front courtyard. The existing front wall would be retained and restored. The resultant building would sit entirely within the footprint of the existing building and structures.

South-East Elevation



South-East Elevation



South-West Elevation



South-West Elevation



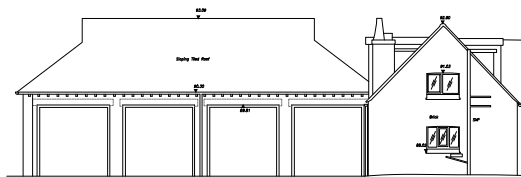
Existing Clock Tower Barn Elevations

Proposed Clock Tower Barn Elevations

Proposal - Great Barn

The tractor shed, cottage and various attached outbuildings are proposed for demolition. The tractor shed and cottage are proposed to be replaced with a 5 bedroom dwelling, to be called 'Great Barn' - this will occupy almost the same footprint as the existing buildings.

South-East Elevation



South-East Elevation

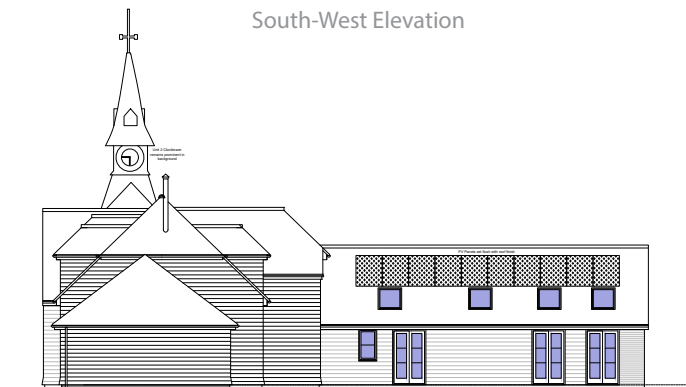


South-West Elevation



Existing Clock Tower Barn Elevations

South-West Elevation



Proposed Clock Tower Barn Elevations

Proposal - Scale and Design

Scale

The proposal will provide 1 x 5 and 1 x 6 bedroom dwellings. The Great Barn would be slightly taller in part than the buildings they replace in order to accommodate first floor bedrooms. However they remain smaller than the Clock Tower Barn to ensure this retains prominence within the site.

Great Barn

The Great Barn would be constructed from dark stained feather edge boarding with brick to the gable end and splashcourse. The roof would feature a clay plain tile. These materials are a feature of the parish mentioned in the Neighbourhood Plan as a suitable material for new dwellings.

Clock Tower Barn

The existing brickwork on the Clock Tower Barn and stable building would be retained and re-pointed where necessary with lime mortar. Lower walls, where new, would feature brickwork with upper sections (where timber) would be reclad in dark stained feather-edge boarding.

The front replacement extension would be clad in vertical larch timber finished in a mid grey preservative to distinguish between the new and old parts of the building.

Existing Streetscene from the driveway



Proposed Streetscene from the driveway



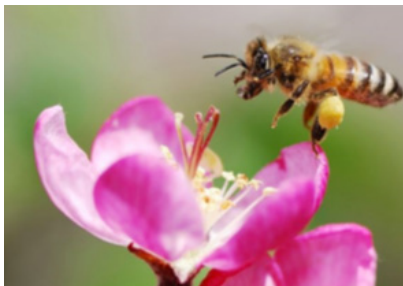
Biodiversity

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Emergence Survey have been carried out and the findings submitted with the application.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The PEA sets out measures proposed to enhance biodiversity and achieve a measurable biodiversity net gain, namely:

- The existing hedgerow can be replaced with a native species-rich hedge. The hedgerow should be at least 2 m in height and depth and managed to form an 'A' profile.
- Garden spaces will include a suitable wildflower seed mix.
- Bat and bird boxes will be installed on buildings.
- A hibernacula for invertebrates and Royal Hedgehog House will be installed.



Bat Emergence Survey

The bat emergence surveys confirm that the existing cottage supports a day roost for bats. To ensure the continued favourable conservation status of bats in the local area the following additional mitigation will be employed:

- A licence will be applied for from Natural England before works may begin.
- Install 4no. crevice and 1no. cavity bat boxes to surrounding mature trees or buildings.
- A tool box talk will be given to all contactors on site;
- Soft strip of roof tiles around roost access points under ecological supervision once the EPS licence is received.
- Transport of any bats encountered to the pre-installed bat boxes.
- Undertake works to the buildings once declared free of bats by the ecologist.
- Permanent roost provision is to be incorporated into the scheme in similar locations and forms as the existing roosts.
- No BRM is to be used in any part of the buildings as this can cause bat entanglement and death; type 1F felt is the only membrane authorised for use in licenced buildings.

Summary

The site has been the subject of a number of previous planning applications for the redevelopment of redundant buildings at Honeywood House. Whilst the purpose of the development remains the same, ie to provide much needed funds to the nursing home, the scheme now presented for consideration differs in a number of significant ways:

- The application proposes to retain and restore the most historically significant buildings on the site. The conversion of the buildings to residential will ensure their long term future which in turn will enhance the setting of Honeywood House.
- The district has a five year housing land supply shortfall and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged.
- The Horsham District Planning Framework is out of date and work on the emerging Local Plan has stalled whilst a solution to the water neutrality issue is found. The district's current and future housing needs are not therefore likely to be addressed within the near future.
- The Neighbourhood Plan does not make any housing allocations to provide for the parish's housing needs, relying instead on the emerging Local Plan to make such provision.

Having reviewed previous linear type refusals on the site that included complete demolition, these were considered rather incongruous to the location and setting. The proposals aim to retain the language of the historic courtyard format whilst preserving the best historic features. The re-use of these significant buildings and the accompaniment of new buildings in the similar footprint will allow for their place in the status and relationship with the main Honeywood House. In this instance the brief has been to take the current footprints, as if the buildings were converted but for practicality replace the two worst buildings with new. The layouts have been specifically designed to resist and mitigate against immediate overlooking.

Whilst the site is in a rural location where there will be some reliance on the private car, traffic generation is not likely to be significantly greater than the previous staff accommodation use where trips to shops and services would have still been undertaken. The main difference would come from commuting, however the associated carbon emissions that would be generated would be offset by the use of renewable energy and other energy efficiency measures incorporated into the development and the provision of electric car charging points.

The benefits of the scheme in terms of housing provision, heritage preservation and improved energy performance are considered to outweigh any perceived negatives arising from the site's location outside of a settlement boundary.

It is hoped the planning authority will feel able to support the planning application.



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Having digested the information presented within this report, if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your time.

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