

**PLANNING, HERITAGE AND  
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**CONSTRUCTION OF A DETACHED DWELLING WITH BASEMENT  
FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF BARN IN COMMERCIAL B8 USE;  
CREATION OF NEW GARDEN; CYCLE SHED; LANDSCAPING WORKS**

**PONDS HOUSE FARM BARN  
PONDS LANE  
SHERE  
GUILDFORD  
GU5 9JL**

Submitted on behalf of:

Mr H Guest

December 2023

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the demolition of an existing barn and its replacement with a new detached dwelling at Ponds House Farm Barn, Ponds Lane, Shere, Guildford, GU5 9JL.

1.2 Within this statement we set out the context of the planning application, the site's planning history and provide a detailed description of the development. We provide an assessment of the proposal, demonstrating that the scheme is acceptable having regard to Local Plan policies and any other material considerations, such that planning permission should be approved.

1.3 The remainder of this statement will cover:

2. Application site and surroundings
3. Planning history
4. Application proposal, including Design & Access considerations
5. Relevant planning policy
6. Planning assessment, including Heritage Statement
7. Summary and conclusion

1.4 The application is supported by the following documentation:

- Location plan
- Existing and proposed block (site) plans
- Existing floor plan and elevations
- Proposed floor and roof plans, and proposed elevations
- Street scheme comparison of proposed vs. existing
- Ecology report
- Arboricultural Method Statement, with tree survey and impact assessment
- Landscaping proposal
- Climate Change, Energy and Sustainable Development Questionnaire
- Minimum internal space standards statement
- Pre-application response from the Surrey Hills AONB officer

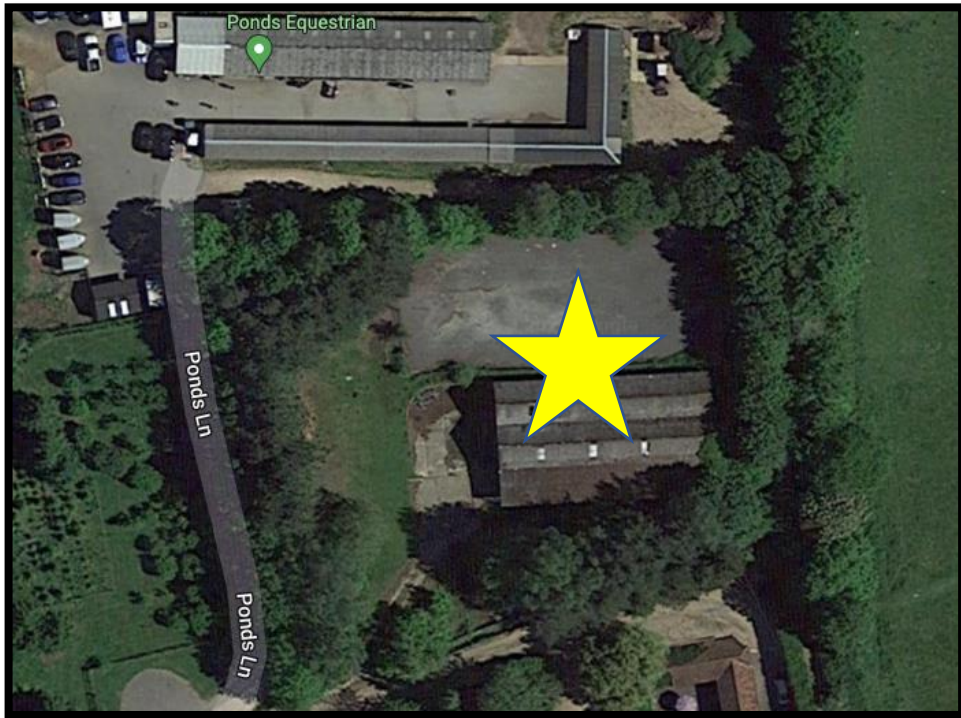
## 2. APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The site is situated to the east of the hamlet of Brook, to the west of Hound House Road and to the south of the train line connecting Gomshall to Chilworth. The area is designated as Green Belt, an Aea of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). The site is identified as Flood Zone 1. Ponds House, located approximately 62 metres to the south-west to the south of the site, is a Grade II listed building.
- 2.2 The property is accessed via Ponds Lane to the west which serves various residential properties including Ponds Farm Bungalow, Ponds Farmhouse and Ponds House located to the south of the site. The buildings and facilities to the north of Ponds House Farm Barn are occupied by an equestrian centre. The surrounding landscape is generally comprised of rural paddocks. The layout of the property and generally vicinity is depicted in the map below:



*Map of site and surrounds (source: Surrey Interactive Maps)*

- 2.3 The property is heavily screened by trees and vegetation bordering the site on all sides as shown in the aerial image below. A gravel track leads to the barn with an expansive horse manège located immediately to the north situated at a higher ground elevation.



*Aerial image of the application site (source: Google maps)*

- 2.4 The existing building is a large two-bay barn with a double pitched roof and steel frame. There is an open-sided lean-to structure extending from the south of the building for the full length. Structurally, the barn is in good condition. Images of the existing barn are provided below:





*Photos of existing building*

**3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:**

3.1 The following history is relevant to the application site:

APPLICATION	DESCRIPTION	DECISION/DATE
<b>Pre-app enquiry 21/A/00028</b>	Conversion of redundant agricultural barn to residential use	favourable advice received 28/04/2021
<b>Application 22/P/01084</b>	Conversion of barn to residential dwelling including external alterations and associated landscaping	Refused 02/12/2022
<b>Prior Approval 23/W/00009</b>	Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to a flexible use within Storage or Distribution (Use Class B8). The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R	Required and granted 30/03/2023 implemented
<b>23/D/00055</b>	Discharge of conditions 1 (fast charge socket) and 2 (secure cycle storage) of planning permission 23/W/00009	Approved 02/05/2023
<b>Surrey Hills AONB pre-application enquiry</b>	Proposed demolition of commercial building and construction of a residential dwelling	favourable advice received 03/09/2023

3.2 Despite receiving favourable pre-application advice in April 2021, the subsequent planning application to convert the existing building into a dwelling was refused for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposed development would fail to re-use of a building of permanent and substantial construction within the Green Belt and as such would represent inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. No very special circumstances have been put forward in this instance to outweigh this identified harm, and none are considered to exist. The proposal would therefore fail to comply with policy P2 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 and the NPPF.*

2. *The proposed development, by virtue of its poor design with numerous wall and roof openings and the addition of glazing features particularly on the front elevation would undermine the architectural integrity of the agricultural building, fail to respect the wider rural character of the area and would be harmful to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Great Landscape Value as a result of its confused identity which would be visually jarring. The proposal would therefore fail to comply with policy P1 and D1 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 and the NPPF.*

3.3 Following this refusal, an application was submitted to (and approved by) the LPA for the change the use of the building to a Class B8 commercial unit. This has been implemented and the barn has been used by a builder for storage since May 2023.

3.4 The applicant subsequently revisited the possibility of securing permission for a dwelling on the site and sought pre-application design advice from the Surrey Hills AONB officer. The key advice is summarised as follows:

- *my advice is that the current proposal overcomes the AONB concerns I expressed to the earlier application for the residential conversion and would not be as harmful to the AONB as the current commercial and distribution use and the retained building. This is subject to certain provisos explained below.*
- *in AONB terms the design of the proposed replacement dwelling would not be any more harmful to the AONB than the existing building and use.*
- *The new dwelling would be on the site of the existing and be about 60% smaller. Its footprint would be less. Whilst its ridge height would be much the same and the house would be of two storeys, importantly the eaves height would be lower, allowing the building to have a less dominating visual impact than the existing building. In my view, the proposed design would sit relatively comfortably in this setting and reflect Surrey Hills vernacular including in the choice of the external materials. I consider it takes into account my previous concerns on 22/P/01084.*
- *I suggest a line of additional planting between those trees [adjacent to adjoining public right of way open to all traffic] and the proposed house.*
- *I suggest there be a tree survey to identify the condition of trees and identify which would be removed that would then inform a landscaping scheme proposing additional planting.*

#### 4.0 APPLICATION PROPOSAL, INCLUDING DESIGN & ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

##### Overview:

- 4.1 This application proposes an alternative form of development to take into account the LPA’s reasons for refusal of application 22/P/01084. The scheme now proposed is materially different to that considered unacceptable by the LPA, i.e. it is a new build rather than a conversion. The application also reflects the material change of use that has occurred on site following the granting of Prior Approval under 23/W/00009, i.e., the building on site has been lawfully used as a Class B8 commercial unit since May 2023. Finally, advice was sought from the Surrey Hills AONB officer on this new build scheme and this advice has been incorporated within the design.
- 4.2 This application seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing barn and its replacement with a new dwelling across the former footprint, with associated landscaping works and the creation of a formal private garden.

##### Layout:

- 4.3 The new dwelling will be constructed across part of the footprint of the existing barn covering a considerably smaller area, as shown in the drawing extract below:



*Extract from proposed site plan*



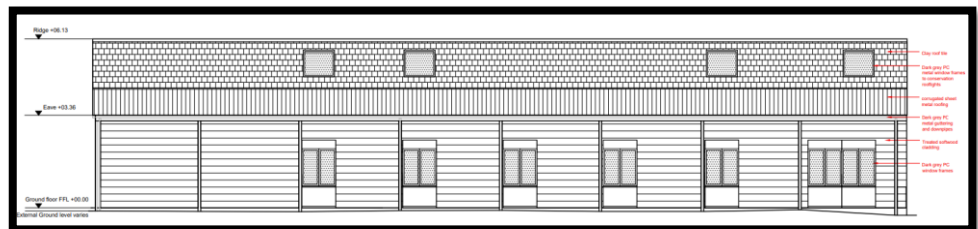
4.4 The existing sand manège to the north of the building will be reinstated as a natural meadow with a small formal garden area located immediately to the rear of the new dwelling. The existing driveway will provide space for at least two cars to park, and there is adequate hardstanding existing to enable vehicles to manoeuvre on site.

Scale:

4.5 The new dwelling has been designed to provide first floor accommodation whilst reflecting the height of the existing building; this is demonstrated by the following comparison drawing and an elevational extract from the refused conversion scheme (aligned for ease of comparison):



*Proposed new dwelling with existing barn shown dotted*

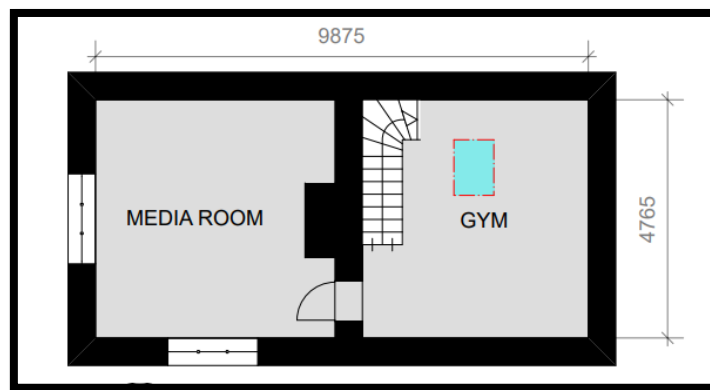


*Conversion scheme refused under 22/P/01084 (aligned for ease of comparison)*

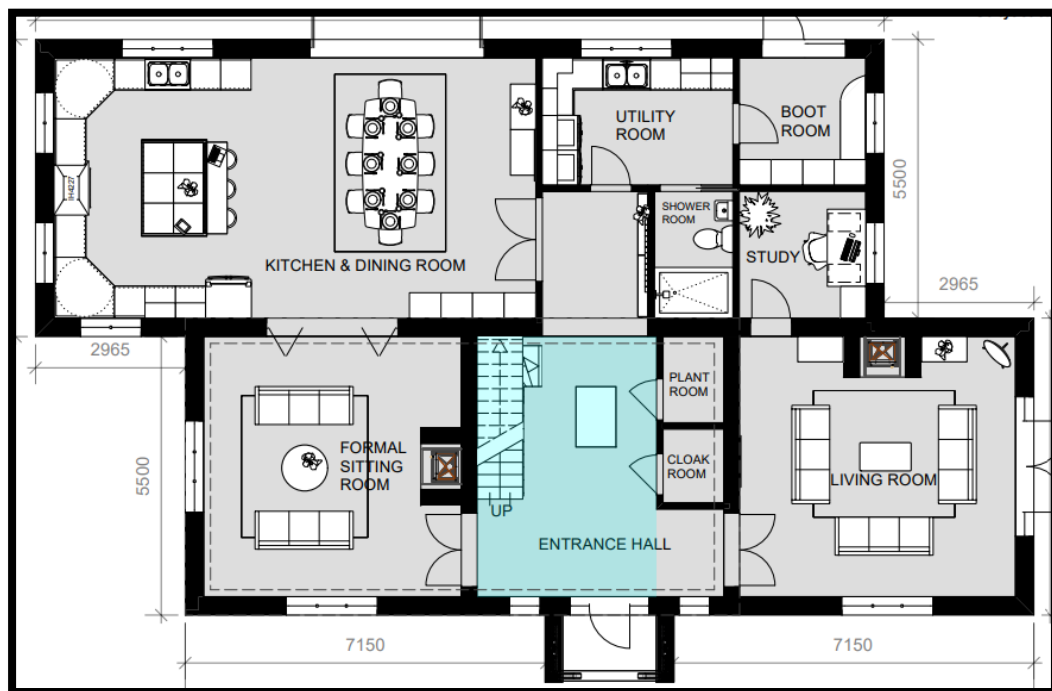
4.6 It is also significantly smaller than the existing building, and thus the dwelling that was refused under application 22/P/01084, as evidenced by the following figures:

	<b>22/P/01084</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>
<b>FOOTPRINT</b>	486.4 sq.m.	195.2 sq.m. <b><u>60% reduction</u></b>
<b>HEIGHT</b>	6.13 metres	6.29 metres
<b>WIDTH</b>	29.25 metres	19.77 metres (max.)
<b>DEPTH</b>	16.71 metres	11.37 metres

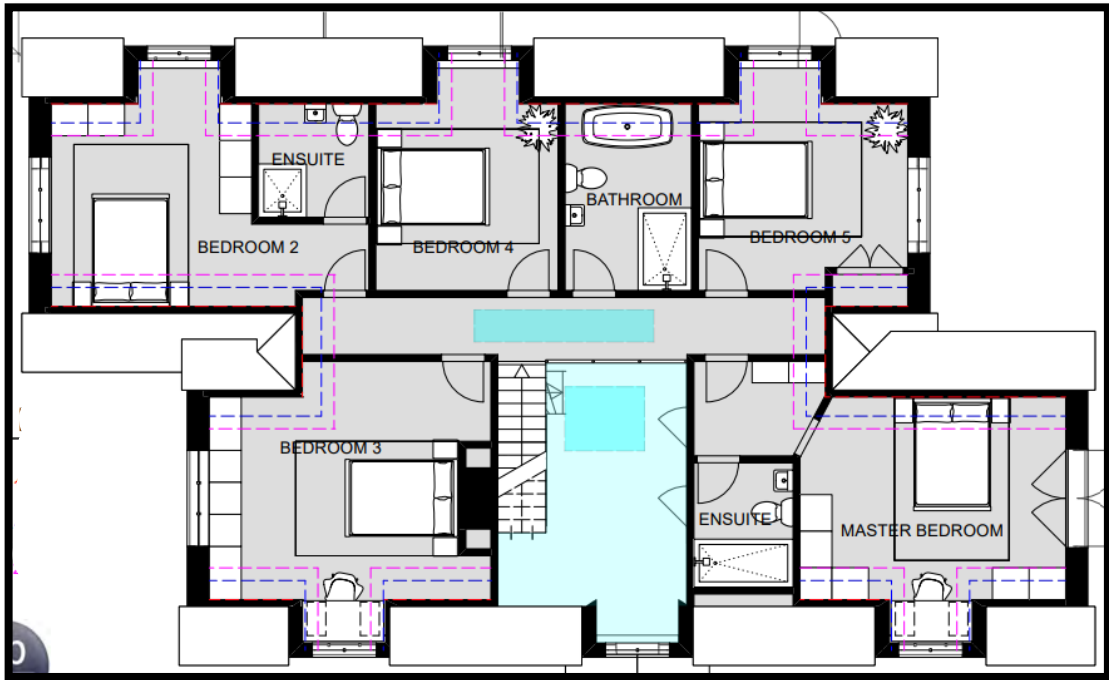
- 4.7 The new dwelling is principally single-storey /chalet in scale, with rooms provided within the roof space and served by a minimal number of dormer windows.
- 4.8 The dwelling will have a small basement for a gym and media room (sitting underneath the entrance hall and formal sitting room) whilst the ground floor will have a living room, sitting room, an open plan kitchen/dining room and several smaller ancillary rooms. Leading up a central staircase, there are five bedrooms on the first floor (two with ensuites) and a family bathroom.



*Proposed basement*



*Proposed ground floor plan*



*Proposed first floor plan*

Appearance and materials:

- 4.9 The proposed dwelling will have a single-storey / chalet style appearance and will be finished with a pitched roof, gable ends and low eaves. It will be traditional in design, with stone, red brick and tile hung elevations under a gabled roof with clay tiles. Gabled dormer windows would be provided at eaves level. A small area of flat roof will be provided in the centre of the building to provide light into the galleried entrance hall and the first floor landing.



*Proposed front elevation*



*Proposed rear elevation*



*Proposed side elevations*

Access and parking:

- 4.10 There is ample space on-site for both resident and visitor car parking.
- 4.11 The number of car parking spaces to be provided for the development is in accordance with Council's parking standards. The vehicular access to the building via Ponds Lane will not be altered.

## **5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY**

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **Development Plan:**

5.2 The development plan comprises:

- Guildford Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015 - 2034 (Part 1) (LPP1)
- Guildford Local Plan: Development Management Policies (Part 2) (LPP2)

### **Local Plan Part 1: strategy and sites:**

5.3 The following policies are relevant for this proposal:

- Policy H1: Homes for All
- Policy P1: Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Great Landscape Value
- Policy P2: Green Belt
- Policy D1: Place Shaping
- Policy D2: Climate change, sustainable design, construction and energy
- Policy D3: Historic Environment

### **Local Plan Part 2: Development Management Policies:**

5.4 The following policies are applicable:

- Policy P6: Protecting Important Habitats and Species
- Policy P7: Biodiversity in New Developments
- Policy D4: Achieving High Quality Design and Respecting Local Distinctiveness
- Policy D5: Protection of Amenity and Provision of Amenity Space
- Policy D14: Sustainable and Low Impact Development
- Policy D16: Carbon Emissions from Buildings
- Policy D18: Designated Heritage Assets
- Policy D19: Listed Buildings

5.5 The Surrey Hills Management Plan (2020-2025) is also a material planning consideration, as is the guidance in the 'Building Design into the Surrey Hills' document and the 'Environmental Design Guidance'.

National policy:

5.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 is a material consideration in the determination of this case and the following are considered relevant:

- Chapter 2: Achieving Sustainable Development
- Chapter 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Chapter 13: Protecting Green Belt Land
- Chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

5.7 Paragraph 147 states that *'Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.'*

5.8 Paragraph 150 instructs LPAs to consider *"the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt"*. One of the exceptions to this is:

*"g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development"*

5.9 Previously developed land (PDL) is defined in the NPPF as:

*"Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape"*.

5.10 The application site meets this definition.

## 6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING HERITAGE STATEMENT

### Principle of Development

- 6.1 The site is located within the Green Belt. The building and its curtilage are currently in lawful use as Class B8, and meet the PDL definition. The proposal involves the complete redevelopment of PDL and therefore complies with exception (g) of paragraph 150 provided it does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.
- 6.2 The proposed redevelopment will significantly reduce the visual impact on Green Belt openness as demonstrated by the comparison figures provided at paragraph 4.6, notably:
- 60% smaller in footprint than the existing building
  - Only 13cm taller than the existing building
  - 9.48 metre reduction in width (32%)
  - 5.34 metre reduction in depth (32%)
- 6.3 Compliance with other relevant development management policies is considered in this following section, namely the likely impact of the development on:
- Character / AONB/AGLV
  - Trees and landscaping
  - Neighbour amenity
  - Ecology and biodiversity
  - Parking
  - Heritage assets (Heritage Statement)

### Character / AONB/AGLV

- 6.4 LPP1 Policy P1 seeks to conserve and enhance the special landscape quality and scenic beauty of the AONB. LPP2 Policy D4 requires development to be well-designed and contribute to local distinctiveness.
- 6.5 In refusing planning permission for application 22/P/01084, the LPA raised an objection to the *“numerous wall and roof openings and the addition of glazing features particularly on the front elevation”*. It was concluded that these would *“undermine the architectural integrity of the agricultural building, fail to respect the wider rural character of the area and would be harmful to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*

*and Area of Great Landscape Value as a result of its confused identity which would be visually jarring”.*

- 6.6 As the scheme now proposes a new build rather than conversion, and no longer needs to retain an agricultural appearance, this has enabled the applicant to radically improve the design. There are no rooflights proposed in this current scheme; instead, three well-designed dormer windows have been included in the North and South elevations. The ground floor windows are more sympathetic in their style, and there is a rhythm to their positioning. The overall reduction in the size of the building is also a significant improvement.
- 6.7 The front (South) elevations of the previously refused scheme and the proposed are shown below for comparison:



*TOP: refused scheme under 22/P/01084; ABOVE: proposed (aligned for scale comparison)*

- 6.8 The low eaves will ensure that the building does not have a dominating impact on the visual amenities of the site, and the design and use of traditional external materials, such as stone and red brick, reflect the Surrey Hills AONB vernacular.
- 6.9 Pre-application advice on the design and its impact on the AONB has been sought from the Surrey Hills AONB officer who has concluded that the scheme will have an acceptable impact, overcoming previous concerns.



- 6.10 It is considered that the proposal respects local distinctiveness and is well-designed, preserving the landscape character of the AONB and AGLV. The proposal would therefore comply with relevant local and national policies.

Trees and landscaping

- 6.11 Policy P6 (Protecting Important Habitats and Species) requires proposals for sites that contain significant trees, including ancient and veteran trees and ancient woodland, to *“incorporate the trees and their root structures and understorey in undeveloped land within the public realm, and to provide green linkages between them”*.
- 6.12 The application site is enclosed by trees along all boundaries. Whilst the new dwelling will be constructed across the footprint of the existing building, this application has been accompanied by a tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment. Further to the AONB officer’s advice, a proposed landscaping scheme has also been prepared.
- 6.13 The submitted tree survey confirms that all the trees on the site are categorised as B, C or U; there are no category A trees. Five dead, category U trees (4 x Scots Pine and a Holly) trees are to be removed for sound arboricultural management reasons. The arboricultural impact assessment concludes that, subject to the imposition of an appropriately worded planning condition to ensure tree protection fencing is erected (as per the submitted plan), the scheme will have an acceptable impact on existing trees.
- 6.14 In terms of landscaping, the application site lies immediately adjacent to a Public Right of Way (no.511, a Byway open to all traffic). The AONB officer accepts that views from this footpath are unlikely to be significant; nevertheless, it is important that this boundary screening is maintained and protected during construction work. The proposed landscaping scheme includes an additional line of hedge planting between these eastern boundary trees and the proposed new dwelling, as per the AONB officer’s recommendation.
- 6.15 The remaining three boundaries are already marked by mature trees and hedges. Again, as requested by the AONB officer, the submitted tree survey has informed the proposed landscaping scheme which seeks to retain the most important trees and supplement the boundaries with additional planting. The northern and western boundaries will remain unaltered. The southern boundary will be enhanced with new native hedge and tree planting.

- 6.16 Subject to planning conditions to secure the proposed tree protection fencing and the implementation of the landscaping scheme, the development will have an acceptable impact and comply with the requirements of Policy P6 of LPP2.

Neighbour amenity

- 6.17 Policy D5 (Protection of Amenity and Provision of Amenity Space) states:

*“Development proposals are required to avoid having an unacceptable impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or resulting in unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties”*

*“All new build residential development proposals, including flatted development, are expected to have direct access to an area of private outdoor amenity space”*

- 6.18 The proposal is unlikely to cause any significant harm to neighbouring amenity due to the context of the site and lack of proximity to neighbouring properties. The existing barn is located approximately 40 metres from the nearest residential dwelling, Ponds House, immediately to the South. The two are separated by an access track, tall trees and mature vegetation, illustrated below:



*Aerial image to show separation distance to residential properties to the South*

- 6.19 Beyond Ponds House to the SW of the application site is Ponds Farmhouse and Ponds Farm Bungalow. Comings and goings to the dwelling will not be excessive and similar to that of a typical residential dwelling. Ponds Lane is not unfamiliar to traffic movements given that it is used to access the equestrian facilities at Ponds Equestrian.
- 6.20 The proposed dwelling offers high quality living conditions for future occupants with sufficient natural light, ventilation, aspect and internal areas to meet the Government's 'nationally described internal space standards'. An appropriate private amenity space is provided to suit the needs of the occupants.
- 6.21 On the above basis, the proposal will not adversely impact the residential amenities of the surrounding occupiers by way of building bulk, overshadowing, loss of privacy or general disturbance. The proposal is in full accordance with Policy D5 of the LPP2.

Ecology and biodiversity

- 6.22 Policy P7 (Biodiversity in New Developments) states:

*“Development proposals, including those exempt from minimum biodiversity net gain standards, are required to seek maximum biodiversity gain on site balanced with delivering other planning priorities and to follow the mitigation hierarchy”*

*“Planting and landscaping schemes... are expected to incorporate species, habitats ... regimes that provide best biodiversity benefit”*

*“new tree planting is expected to focus on the creation of new connected tree canopies and/or the extension of existing canopies.... Planting schemes are expected to use UK sourced, native species...”*

*“Development proposals are required to include appropriate features in or on building structures that support nature, will last for the lifetime of the development and will cater for appropriate species and habitats”*

- 6.23 An Ecology Report is provided in support of the application demonstrating that the proposal can take place subject to its recommendations without harm to protected species or biodiversity.
- 6.24 The October 2023 survey confirms that:

*“in relation to designated sites, the proposed development is considered to pose a ‘negligible’ impact risk”*

*“There are no habitats of intrinsic importance within the site. The grass should be kept under its current management to avoid becoming suitable for reptiles and amphibians”*

*“The repeat survey identified a day roost supporting one bat species (analysis results needed), the overall potential for the building to support bats is still considered to be low. As the roost type and species has been identified and the rest of the building is of low potential suitability, no further emergence surveys are required but a ‘bat mitigation class licence’ is required for the proposed development to proceed. The potential roost features identified will require endoscopy and torching prior to the licence submission”*

*“As the bat dropping was sent off for DNA analysis and the species and type of roost has been identified, no further bat emergence surveys are required as all peeling plywood was torched and droppings sent for analysis.”*

- 6.25 In terms of biodiversity enhancements, the ecology report recommends that any planting scheme include native shrub species and flowering species known to encourage insect diversity; integral bat roosts are also recommended. All of these have been included in the proposed development.

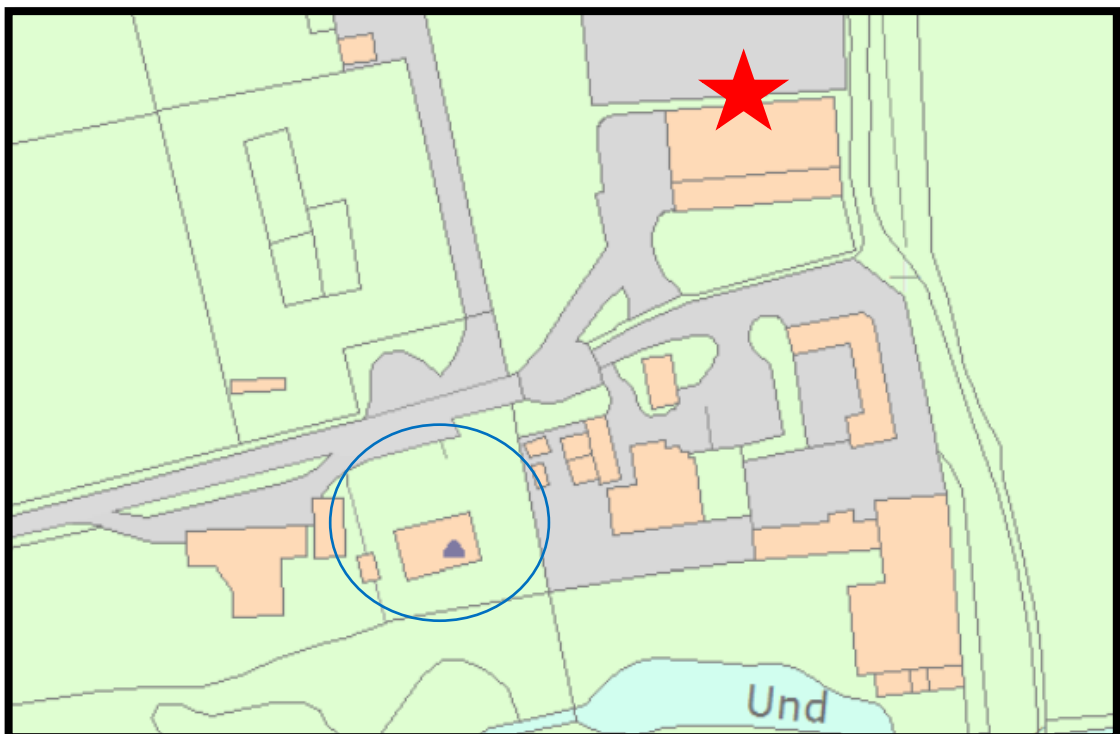
#### Parking

- 6.26 The proposal involves the use of an existing access road that services the equestrian centre and surrounding dwellings. This road is capable of accommodating the number and size of vehicles likely to be associated with a single dwelling.
- 6.27 The Council’s Parking Guidelines (2023) indicate a requirement for 2.5 x car parking spaces for a 4-bedroom+ dwelling. The proposed new dwelling will have adequate parking as well as hardstanding available for manoeuvring vehicles. This provision complies with the relevant policy and is acceptable.

#### Heritage assets (Heritage Statement)

- 6.28 National policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This promotes sustainable development through economic, social and environmental roles, the latter including the protection and enhancement of the historic environment.

- 6.29 Core principles of the NPPF include making better use of existing resources, and conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.
- 6.30 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF states *“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance”*.
- 6.31 Paragraph 202 states *“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”*
- 6.32 In this case, the identified heritage asset is Ponds Farm House, a grade II listed building located to the South of the application site; a mapping extract showing the relationship between the two is below:



*Ponds Farm House and relationship to the application site (red star) (source: Historic England)*

6.33 The relevant Development Plan policies relating to heritage are:

Policy D3: Historic Environment

Policy D18: Designated Heritage Assets

6.34 As required by paragraph 194 of the NPPF, this Heritage Statement provides the necessary assessment of the significance of the identified heritage assets, and the likely impacts upon that significance as a result of the proposed development.

6.35 The listing for Ponds Farm House is:

*“House. Late C16/early C17 altered and restored in C20. Timber framed with whitewashed render cladding to ground floor and C20 tile hanging above; plain tiled roof. Two storeys with corbelled offset stack to right end on galleted ironstone plinth. Leaded casement fenestration with three windows across the first floor and three wood framed open “cross” windows below. Door to right end set back behind stack in recessed porch under pentice hood. Pentice roofed extension to right hand return front with gable lit attic. C20 brick wing at right angles to rear.  
Interior: substantial amounts of framing exposed mostly restored.”*

6.36 In this case, the proposed new dwelling will be located over 60 metres from Ponds Farm House, and the intervening access track, tall trees and mature vegetation means that the two will not be viewed in the same context. The new dwelling will have no impact on the setting of this listed building.

## **7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

7.1 The proposed dwelling accords with Development Plan and NPPF policies and should be viewed favourably for the following reasons:

- acceptable, in principle, as it is the redevelopment of previously developed land with no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than existing
- dwelling is well-designed, reflecting the Surrey Hills vernacular with a low eaves/ridge heights and quality traditional materials
- acceptable impact on the AONB, as confirmed by the AONB officer through pre-app advice
- all mature category 'B' trees to be retained (there are no 'A' trees); only dead, category 'U' trees to be removed
- new landscaping proposed, to enhance biodiversity and improve the visual appearance of the AONB
- no loss of amenity to neighbouring residents given the significant separation gaps
- no impact on the setting of a nearby grade II listed building given a separation gap of over 60 metres
- no further bat surveys are required and there will be no adverse impact on bats as works will be covered by a bat mitigation licence from Natural England
- biodiversity enhancements are proposed with bat tiles and bats boxes shown on the elevations

7.2 The development has been assessed against national and local planning policy and is considered to meet the requirements and criteria set out within. We therefore respectfully request that planning permission is granted for the proposed residential development.