

From: LPC Clerk clerk@limpsfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk
Subject: 2025/1434: Connerton Farm, Red Lane, Limpsfield, Oxted, Surrey, RH8 0RT
Date: 4 March 2026 at 09:53
To: statutory@tandridge.gov.uk
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LC

Planning application 2025/1434: Connerton Farm, Red Lane, Limpsfield, Oxted, Surrey, RH8 0RT.

Demolition of equestrian site, erection of 5 dwellings

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above application. We note that Connerton Farm is located in the Limpsfield parish, however the Planning Statement submitted by the applicants makes no reference to the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan which forms part of the District's Development Plan; - A number of LNP policies are of direct relevance to this submission.

Having reviewed the application and the associated documents, we would like to make the following comments.

Green Belt and Grey Belt (Policy LNP1 of the Neighbourhood Plan). The Parish Council has previously expressed its concern about residential development on the east side of Red Lane in the context of its potential impact on the character of the Green Belt.

We acknowledge that the Connerton Farm site has been previously developed. However, we do not accept the assertion in the applicant's Planning Statement (para 3.27) that *'the application site sits within an established context of ribbon development running in a southerly direction'*. We consider that, together with other land on the east side of Red Lane, it makes a strong contribution to purpose (a) of the Green Belt, namely *'to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas'*.

Countryside (Policy LNP5 of the Neighbourhood Plan and Appendix A). The site lies in an area of open countryside, albeit close to the built-up area of Hurst Green. It is also in an Area of Great Landscape Value. Policy LNP5 of the Neighbourhood Plan indicates that development will only be permitted where:

- 1. It would not have a detrimental impact on the sensitive landscape areas and would contribute to the Character Management Principles set out in the Limpsfield Heritage and Character Assessment.*
- 2. Would not have an adverse impact on the landscape.*

Further context is given by the Character Assessment (Appendix A of the Plan). The site falls within 'Area LCA05: Low Weald Farmland' for which the Neighbourhood Plan states, amongst other things:

Managing change in this LCA should focus on retaining the rural and tranquil characteristics of the area. The following principles should be considered when defining policies with respect to heritage and character:

Conserve the rural, largely unsettled landscape.....

Whilst it is recognised that the site contains a number of buildings, those buildings are of a type which is a feature of a rural and agricultural landscape. The introduction of residential development would create a different and suburban character, in conflict with the approach adopted in policy LNP5 and the principles set out in the Character Assessment.

Sustainability (Neighbourhood Plan Vision). The Planning Statement submitted on behalf of the applicants asserts that the site is in a sustainable location. We disagree. The site is not as asserted in the Planning Statement (para 3.30) approximately 1.3km from Oxted High Street. It is some 3.5-4 km from Oxted Town Centre. Hurst Green Station and other local facilities are closer. However, the Station is still between 1.5 and 2 km from the site and, as things currently stand, only properly accessible by car.

Red Lane has, at this point, no pavement and no street lighting, and the footpath referred to by the applicants is an unlit path through fields and across the railway, a path which is highly unlikely to be attractive as the prime means of access to Hurst Green Station, Holland School or other local facilities. Whilst the Parish Council has previously commented on sustainability issues in relation to other sites in Red Lane, the issues at Connerton Farm are, in our view, more severe.

The distances to community facilities are greater, the absence of suitable footways and/or cycleways in Red Lane are more significant given the distances involved, and the length and form of the public footpath referred to in the Planning Statement cannot be viewed as a suitable means of access for everyday use by future residents.

The Planning Statement also notes the expected decrease in the number of movements which would result from a residential development. However, it should be noted that the site is in a good location for its authorised use as equestrian stables. This is a rural activity which relies on people from the surrounding area. Other locations for such activities could involve significantly longer journeys.

Rural Activity Policy LNP10. In line with the NPPF, the Neighbourhood Plan supports the maintenance of a strong rural economy and makes specific reference to local farms, agriculture and equestrian activities.

The authorised use of the site is as an equestrian centre. It is appropriately located within the countryside but close enough to the urban area of Oxted, Limpsfield and Hurst Green to limit the need for lengthy journeys to the centre by its users. Given the nature of the activity, we believe it to be in as sustainable location as is possible for this type of establishment (rural business). In these circumstances, and as indicated above, we do not accept that the reduction in movements from the site as a result of a residential development is a valid argument in favour of such a development.

The Planning Statement in support of the application makes no reference to the viability of the current business or to the potential for alternative business uses for the premises. In the absence of clear evidence that the existing buildings are redundant and could not be reused or sympathetically replaced for business use, we consider the proposed development conflicts with the purpose of Policy LNP10.

Housing Mix Policy LNP2. The proposed development consists of 5 dwellings, 2 x 3 bedroom houses and 3 x 4+ bedroom houses. The Neighbourhood Plan is clear in its approach towards the mix of housing in new residential developments. In order to secure a suitable proportion of smaller dwellings, it states:

.....in developments of four or more dwellings, at least 50% of the dwellings should have three bedrooms or less.

The applicant's Planning Statement makes no reference to this policy and, in our view, there is no justification for a departure from it. In the event that, either at this stage or at some point in the future, planning permission is granted for a residential development it should incorporate at least 50% of the dwellings with three bedrooms or less. In order to maintain the supply of smaller dwellings, conditions should then be attached to any planning permission, removing permitted development rights and ensuring that any extensions or alterations to those dwellings are the subject of further applications to the local planning authority.

Concluding Comments. The Parish Council recognises that, as local planning authority, Tandridge District Council must balance the need for new housing within the District against other issues. We continue to consider that, in the context of sites such as this, any release of land for housing from within the green belt should be dealt with on a comprehensive basis through the development of the Local Plan. Only in this way can issues of housing supply be properly addressed and suitable and sustainable locations secured.

Accordingly, the Parish Council objects to the proposed development. Whilst acknowledging the status of the land as 'previously developed', it considers that other factors far outweigh this and that the development would cause significant harm. Furthermore, the Parish Council considers that the direct conflict with Policy LNP2 with respect to the housing mix is in itself a clear ground for refusal.

With best regards,

On behalf of Limpsfield Parish Council Planning Committee

Sophie Martin

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