

SITE PLAN

RR/2022/2506/P

BATTLE

Wylands Farm  
Powdermill Lane  
Catsfield



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Not to Scale

## Rother District Council

Report to - Planning Committee  
Date - 12 January 2023  
Report of the - Director - Place and Climate Change  
Subject - Application RR/2022/2506/P  
Address - Wylands Farm, Powdermill Lane, Catsfield  
Proposal - Replacement of the existing store building with a new commercial building comprising Class E (offices and workshops) and B8 (storage use) uses.

[View application/correspondence](#)

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**RECOMMENDATION:** It be **RESOLVED** to **GRANT (FULL PLANNING)**

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**Director: Ben Hook**

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**Applicant:** Yesterdays World Limited  
**Agent:** Kember Loudon Williams  
**Case Officer:** Miss Harriet Nurse  
(Email: [harriet.nurse@rother.gov.uk](mailto:harriet.nurse@rother.gov.uk))

**Parish:** CATSFIELD  
**Ward Member:** Councillor G.C. Curtis

**Reason for Committee consideration: Councillor referral: Parish concerns / over development / lack of enforcement of previous applications**

**Statutory 8-week date: 12 December 2022**

**Extension of time agreed to: EOT requested for 20 January – No response**

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This application is included in the Committee site inspection list.

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### 1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 The proposal is for the replacement of an existing storage building and change of use to a similar scale and design single storey commercial building comprising Class E (offices and workshops) and B8 (storage use) uses. The main issues for consideration are the principle of the development, the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the locality and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the impact of the proposal on neighbouring amenities and highway safety. On assessment, it has been concluded that the proposal would comply with the development plan and that the proposal would not result in undue harm. It is considered that the landscape of the AONB would be conserved and enhanced.

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## **2.0 SITE**

- 2.1 Wylands Farm with its international angling centre lies to the south side of Powdermill Lane within the countryside of the High Weald AONB. There is a long winding access road into the heart of the site. The former farmstead comprises a mix of buildings with small and large barns, a pair of bungalow cottages and a mixed part two-storey brick building providing offices and storage and some holiday lets. Under a previous planning permission RR/2021/498/P a number of the buildings have been refurbished and some replaced, to provide a farm shop, new tack shop, cafe, storage and small commercial units.
- 2.2 The site comprises a mixture of lakes, woodland and some open fields with a public footpath traversing through the site, (footpath Catsfield 15a). While not visible from Powdermill Lane, the complex of buildings and uses can be viewed to varying degrees from a public footpath (footpath Catsfield 16a) to the south across the valley to the west of Church Farm.
- 2.3 The building subject of this application is positioned to the centre of the site among the other buildings in the former farmyard. Trees and hedging exist to many of the boundaries.
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## **3.0 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 This application seeks planning permission for the replacement of the existing store building with a new commercial building comprising Class E (offices and workshops) and B8 (storage use) uses.
- 3.2 The existing storage building has a footprint of 13.7m x 18.7m, a single storey building with a maximum height of 2.85m. The existing storage building comprises of roof sheeting and black cladding to the walls. The proposed building would have a pitched roof with a ridge height of 4.5m and an eaves height of 2.17m. The proposed building would have the same footprint. It would offer four areas of office/workshop/storage to one half and then three areas for office/workshop to the other half of the building.
- 3.3 The proposed materials would consist of roof sheeting and black shiplap cladding, as present on the existing building. uPVC is proposed for the doors and windows throughout, as on the adjacent buildings.
- 3.4 The application is accompanied by a covering letter.
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## **4.0 HISTORY**

- 4.1 Wylands has quite an extensive history with regard to the fishing lakes since 1985, when existing lakes were enlarged, and existing barn was converted to offices and stores. Additional lakes being formed with reference to applications in 1994 and 2012. Various other barns have had applications for associated storage/business uses. A variety of large-scale camping proposals have historically been refused with service of an Enforcement Notice in 1999.
- 4.2 More recently the following applications have been made:

- 4.3 RR/2022/1895/P Use of land for the siting of caravans/motorhomes (up to 12 serviced pitches) and for camping (up to 30 pitches), to include re location of existing caravans/motorhomes; creation of an overflow car park (approx. 37 spaces); retention of ancillary building providing toilet, shower, changing and washing facilities to serve those fishing and camping at Wylands (retrospective); and associated works and landscaping. APPROVED CONDITIONAL
- 4.4 RR/2021/2519/P Erection of a new facilities building to serve those fishing and using the wider site (Retrospective). REFUSED
- 4.5 RR/2021/498/P Conversion and refurbishment of redundant agricultural buildings and storage sheds to include the change of use of the buildings and operational works: Old Barn Courtyard - Part change of use from ancillary storage sheds to self-catering holiday accommodation (three units), together with operational works (existing offices retained); Workshop Building - Operational works (part retrospective and replacement) and proposed change of use from agricultural storage building to flexible office, workshop, and storage within use classes E (excluding retail uses) and B8, and part change of use to fishing tackle shop (Use Class E); Dutch Barn - Change of use from agricultural barn and cafe, together with operational works, to form a new visitor centre, creative arts hub and cafe (within Use Class E); Hay Barn - Operational works (part retrospective) and proposed change of use from agricultural barn to a farm shop (ground floor) (Use Class E) and offices within Use Class E (excluding retail) (first floor) and Machinery Shed and Easterly Storage Buildings - Operational works (part retrospective) to refurbish and support continued ancillary 'storage and workshop uses; together with associated landscaping and car parking layout. APPROVED CONDITIONAL
- 4.6 RR/2019/2518/P Outline: Proposed demolition of existing office, storage and ancillary buildings and clearance of static and touring caravans from site. Construction of new angling centre, vehicle/materials store and 4 No. family lodges. Proposed demolition of existing pair of semi-detached residential cottages and erection of 2 No. replacement detached dwellings. WITHDRAWN
- 4.7 RR/2016/162/P Outline: New angling centre and relocation of 4 No. static caravans. WITHDRAWN
- 4.8 RR/2015/3117/P Outline: Erection of two detached dwellings including demolition of existing cottages, offices, outbuildings and barns. WITHDRAWN
- 4.9 RR/2013/754/P To site three additional caravans for holiday/recreational use in the specified location where permission already exists for one caravan to be sited permanently. (up to four

		caravans have been sited in this location from time to time for in excess of 20 years). REFUSED – APPEAL ALLOWED
4.10	RR/2012/151/P	Renovation works to junior lake (retrospective). APPROVED CONDITIONAL
4.11	RR/2011/1311/P	External improvements to seating area to existing cafe building (erection of pergola and decking). APPROVED CONDITIONAL
4.12	RR/2011/1183/P	Change of use from store room to fishing tackle shop. APPROVED CONDITIONAL
4.13	RR/2011/1182/P	Relocation of touring field. REFUSED
4.14	RR/2011/1027/P	Excavation works to and surrounding house lake (retrospective). APPROVED CONDITIONAL
4.15	RR/2009/462/O	Lawful use for the land for the siting of two caravans for the purpose of providing holiday accommodation. REFUSED FOLLOWING COUNSEL ADVICE
4.16	RR/2009/460/O	Lawful use of the land for the siting of a caravan for the purposes of holiday accommodation. APPROVED – (there is also a planning permission related to this one caravan).

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## 5.0 POLICIES

5.1 The following policies of the [Rother Local Plan Core Strategy 2014](#) are relevant to the proposal:

- OSS2: Use of development boundaries
- OSS3: Location of development
- OSS4: General development considerations
- RA2: General strategy for the countryside
- RA3: Development in the Countryside
- EC3: Existing employment sites
- EN1: Landscape Stewardship
- EN5: Biodiversity and green space
- TR4: Car parking

5.2 The following policies of the [Development and Site Allocations Local Plan \(DaSA\)](#) are relevant to the proposal:

- DEC3: Existing employment sites and premises
- DEN1: Maintaining landscape character
- DEN2: High Weald AONB
- DEN4: Biodiversity and green space
- DEN5: Sustainable drainage
- DEN7: Environmental Pollution

- DIM2: Development boundaries
- 5.3 The following objectives of the adopted High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 are relevant to the proposal:

- S2: To protect the historic pattern and character of settlement.
- S3: To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure development reflects the character of the High Weald in its scale, layout and design.

The National Planning Policy Framework (as updated 2021) and Planning Policy Guidance are also material considerations with particular reference to the AONB paragraph 176 and supporting a prosperous rural economy paragraphs 84 and 85.

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## **6.0 CONSULTATIONS**

### **6.1 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Highways – NO OBJECTION**

- 6.1.1 No major concerns regarding the existing access serving the site. Furthermore, the parking provision and turning facilities available within the site are also considered to be acceptable. It is evident that the proposed development will result in an increase in the level of traffic visiting the site on a day-to-day basis; however, this increase in traffic is likely to be relatively low and ESCC have no concerns that it would be to the detriment of highway safety. With this in mind ESCC have no major concerns regarding the developments impact on the site access or the surrounding highway network from either a highway safety or capacity perspective. ESCC therefore do not wish to object to this proposal subject the imposition of conditions

### **6.2 Pevensey & Cuckmere WLMB – NO RESPONSE**

### **6.3 Footpaths Officer – ESCC – NO RESPONSE**

### **6.4 The Ramblers Association – NO RESPONSE**

### **6.5 Sussex Newt Officer – NO RESPONSE**

### **6.6 Planning Notice – NO REPRESENTATIONS RECIEVED**

### **6.7 Catsfield Parish Council – OBJECTION**

- 6.7.1 The Parish Council object to this planning application due to the unresolved previous planning enforcement issues and overdevelopment.
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## **7.0 APPRAISAL**

### **7.1 The main issues for consideration:**

- Principle of development
- Impacts on the Character and Appearance of the area and within the AONB
- Impacts on neighbours

- Highway impacts

## 7.2 *Principle of development*

- 7.2.1 The application site comprises a mix of buildings with small and large barns in various authorised uses, a pair of bungalow cottages and a mixed part two-storey brick building providing offices and storage and some holiday lets. A number of the buildings have been refurbished and some replaced, to provide a farm shop, new tack shop, cafe, storage and small commercial units.
- 7.2.2 The application proposes the replacement of the existing store building with a new commercial building comprising Class E (offices and workshops) and B8 (storage use) uses. The replacement building would be of the same footprint, remain a single storey building with matching materials including roof sheeting and black shiplap cladding to the walls. In both national (para. 84 and 85 of the National Planning Policy Framework) and (Policies EC4 and RA2&3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy) terms, subject to other considerations, improvement and growth of the rural economy is encouraged by the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings, for employment purposes. In addition, Policies EC3 and DEC3; to promote the effective use of existing employment sites. The High Weald Management Plan also recognises that this is important to maintain its rural settlements, educate inhabitants and visitors, improve its landscape and promote the rich cultural, artistic and historical associations with the landscape that attracts many visitors both local and from further afield.
- 7.2.3 The proposal is to replace an existing building. It is acknowledged that this building is in a poor condition and that this building has not been replaced before within other recent applications. However, the proposal seeks to improve the condition and appearance of the building as well as providing improved commercial floor space including storage/workshop/offices. They seek to build on the existing facilities and provide improved local employment opportunities. In principle the proposal would support the rural economy within an existing employment site and as such would accord with those policies.
- 7.2.4 Collectively there is now national and local support for proposals that support the rural economy and employment opportunities at paragraphs 84 and 85 of the National Planning Policy Framework; RA2, RA3 and EC3 of the CS; DEC3 of the DaSA; and the High Weald Management Plan. Subject to considering compliance with the criteria of the relevant policies, there is no objection in principle to the proposal for a replacement building of a similar scale and design with a commercial use, which would become part of the wider site use as a tourism and local commercial business.

## 7.3 *Impacts on the Character and Appearance of the area and within the AONB*

- 7.3.1 Wylands is an established tourism and commercial site hosting international angling competitions with a few chalets (7) and static caravans (4) at the site, farm shop, café, tackle shop and other small commercial units. The building lies to the centre of the main commercial site area. The main cluster of buildings can be viewed from both public footpaths, footpath 15a running through the site and footpath 16a to the south on the higher valley side at Church Farm. The proposed building replaces an existing building and with exception of a slightly higher roof than the existing, would have no new

impacts on the existing character or appearance of the site within the AONB or when viewed from the footpaths.

- 7.3.2 While the site is not visible from Powdermill Lane to the north or from the east and west sides, by reason of the surrounding woodland, it is noted that the site is open to views from the south across the valley and from the public footpath to the east of Church Farm. There is also a public footpath that runs through the site. However, the buildings are existing, and assessment needs to be made as to whether the replacement of the building is harmful. The use of black shiplap to the structure and roof sheeting is not considered to present any more visual impact as it matches materials used on the adjacent existing buildings.
- 7.3.3 Turning to the landscape character, the question is whether the proposed uses would have an impact on the AONB. It is noted that the uses and parking are confined to the central former farmyard area and other units are already occupied and well used. Access to the fishing lakes and café and walking along the public footpaths already exists. The proposal would give rise to increased numbers of visitors during the day but not in the evenings. The commercial unit including storage/workshop/offices would all be subject to normal working hours, i.e. 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday. No working on a Sunday/bank holiday for the business units (offices/workshops/storage). This could be secured by condition.
- 7.3.4 Dark Skies are a feature of the High Weald in areas remote from other development. As previously mentioned, the uses of the site for the large part are daytime related and given that those staying at the site come to enjoy the tranquil and rural area for its own intrinsic value, there is no requirement for bright intrusive lighting around the site. There is no lighting currently required or proposed and a condition should be imposed to preclude this unless a scheme is first submitted for approval.
- 7.3.5 While the proposal may represent an increase in daytime activity at the site, it is confined to the area of an existing complex of buildings and would not represent harm to the AONB.

#### 7.4 *Impacts on neighbours*

- 7.4.1 There are no immediate neighbours to be impacted by the proposals.

#### 7.5 *Highway Impacts*

- 7.5.1 The report of the ESCC Highways is reproduced above and has carefully considered the potential traffic generation of the proposals as well as considering the provision of on-site parking facilities.
- 7.5.2 It has been acknowledged by the officer that *it is likely that the development will result in some increase in traffic visiting the site; however, there are no major concerns regarding the development proposal from a highway safety or capacity perspective. Furthermore, the parking provision and turning facilities available within the site are also considered to be acceptable. It is evident that the proposed development will result in an increase in the level of traffic visiting the site on a day-to-day basis; however, this increase in traffic is likely to be relatively low and I have no concerns that it would be to the detriment of highway safety. With this in mind I have no major concerns regarding the*



*developments impact on the site access or the surrounding highway network from either a highway safety or capacity perspective.*

7.5.3 The existing site layout provides parking and turning facilities for the various uses. As such the proposals are policy compliant in terms of highway and parking matters.

#### 7.6 *Other Matters*

7.6.1 While noting the concerns of the Parish in regard to overdevelopment the building is existing, and the existing site has had recent improvements and developments of a commercial nature. While noting the references to other enforcement matters, these are not within the scope of this application.

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## **8.0 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION**

8.1 Having considered the current relevant planning policies that pertain to the site, it has been concluded that the proposal would be acceptable in principle and would comply with the development plan and that they would not result in undue harm. It is considered that the landscape of the AONB would be conserved and enhanced.

8.2 Neighbours and highways would similarly be unharmed, and the proposals would provide additional commercial facilities supporting the rural economy and local employment opportunities.

8.3 It should be noted that other new matters of planning control outside this application, remain the subject of ongoing investigation.

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## **RECOMMENDATION: GRANT (FULL PLANNING)**

### **CONDITIONS:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.  
Reason: In accordance with section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and details:  
Drawing No. 6754 / 22 / LBP / 2 / A, Site Location and Block Plan dated 28.09.22;  
Drawing No. 6754 / 22 / 5 / B, Proposed Machinery Building dated 21.12.2022;  
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
3. The materials to be used in the replacement of the building hereby permitted shall match in materials, colour and texture those used in the existing building and as specified within the application unless an alternative finish is first submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The

details include the use of roof sheeting and black shiplap cladding to the walls.

Reason: To maintain the rural characteristics and detail of the existing buildings and the rural location within the High Weald AONB, in accordance with Policy OSS4 (iii) and EN1 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and Policy DEN2 of the Rother Development and Site Allocations Local Plan.

4. No part of the development shall be first occupied until visibility splays of 2.4m x 160m westbound and 2.4m x 215m eastbound have been provided at the proposed site vehicular access onto Powdermill Lane. Once provided the splays shall thereafter be maintained and kept free of all obstructions over a height of 600mm.

Reason: To ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway having regard to Policies TR3 and CO6 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy.

5. No external lighting shall be erected at the site unless in accordance with a scheme that has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any scheme should comply with the Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note for the reduction of obtrusive light 2011(or later versions). It should be designed so that it is the minimum needed for security and operational processes and be installed to minimise potential pollution caused by glare and spillage.

Illuminated area m2	Zone E1	Zone E2	Zone E3	Zone E4
Up to 10.00	100	600	800	1000
Over 10.00	n/a	300	600	600

### Environmental Zones

Zone	Surrounding	Lighting Environment	Examples
E0	Protected	Dark	UNESCO Starlight Reserves, IDA Dark Sky Parks
E1	Natural	Intrinsically dark	National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty etc.
E2	Rural	Low district brightness	Village or relatively dark outer suburban locations
E3	Suburban	Medium district brightness	Small town centres or suburban locations
E4	Urban	High district brightness	Town/city centres with high levels of night-time activity

The guidance advises that, where an area to be lit lies on the boundary of two zones or can be observed from another zone, the limits used should be those applicable to the most rigorous zone, in this case E0 or E1.

Reason: To prevent light pollution within the dark skies of the High Weald AONB, in the interests of the amenities of the area and to protect the dark sky environment, in accordance with Policies OSS4 (iii), RA3 (v) and EN1 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy, Policies DEN2 and DEN7 of the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan and Objective OQ4 of the High Weald Management Plan.

6. The office/workshop/store building, shall be used for the purposes specified in the application only and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class E (as applicable) of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: To ensure control of the uses at the site and allow assessment of the impacts of any potential changes via an application, thereby maintaining the landscape character and scenic beauty of the High Weald AONB, ensuring continued highway safety and protecting as required the local ecology and drainage matters pertinent to the site within the High Weald AONB and adjacent ancient woodland and watercourses, in accordance with Policies OSS4, EN1, RA3, SRM2, TR3, TR4 and EN7 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies DEN1, DEN2 DEN4 and DEN7 of the Rother Development and Site Allocations Local Plan.

7. The hours of operation of the business units (offices/workshop/storage) shall be restricted to 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday and no working/operation shall take place on a Sunday or Bank Holiday unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy OSS4 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy.

**NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK:** In accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 38) and with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.