

PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposal: Agricultural Storage Barn

Application Type: Agricultural Determination (Prior Notification – Class A)

Site Address: Boyles Farm, Harwoods Lane, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 4NL

Applicant: Jeremy Amos

Agent: Lucie Latham

Date: January 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

This statement supports a proposal for the erection of a new agricultural storage barn at Boyles Farm, a 93-hectare agricultural holding at Harwoods Lane, East Grinstead, within the High Weald National Landscape (formally known as the High Weald AONB). The proposed building measures 30m x 15m (450m²) and will provide essential covered storage for hay produced on the holding and for agricultural machinery.

The development is proposed under Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). Prior approval is sought in respect of siting, design and external appearance. The proposal is necessary to support the continued and efficient operation of the farm and has been designed to integrate sensitively within the High Weald National Landscape.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The landholding comprises:

Land Use	Hectares	Acres
Pasture	74.3	183.6
Woodland	16.9	41.8
Buildings, dwellings & access	1.8	4.4
Total	93.0	230.0

The 74.3 hectares of pasture form the principal productive area of the farm and are managed primarily for hay production, with occasional grazing. The hay is supplied to local farmers for winter livestock feed as well as the equestrian market. The 16.9 hectares of woodland contribute to the ecological value and landscape character of the High Weald National Landscape, supporting biodiversity and reinforcing the rural setting.

Access to the holding is taken from Harwoods Lane via a number of long-established agricultural and residential entrances. These comprise one access serving Boyles Farm Bungalow, one serving Dairy Cottages, one serving the original farmyard (now operated by Millfield Car Storage), one serving Boyle Farmhouse, and three further established field accesses which together form an internal access network across the agricultural holding.

The main farmstead contains the farmhouse and associated dwellings; however, it currently lacks any agricultural storage buildings. The existing yard structures are fully occupied by Millfield Car Storage, a commercial vehicle storage business, and are therefore unavailable for agricultural use. As a result, the farm presently relies on off-site facilities for the storage of higher-value machinery, while other equipment is left stored outdoors within the fields, shown in Figure 1, where it is subject to weather-related deterioration, corrosion, and visual harm to the High Weald National Landscape. The absence of any on-site agricultural storage also prevents hay from being stored indoors, requiring immediate sale at harvest and significantly restricting operational efficiency and flexibility.



Figure 1 - JCB SC240 Sweeper Collector, Vicor Fertilizer Spreader and Kuhn Hay Turner currently being stored outdoors

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal comprises the construction of a 450m² agricultural storage barn (30m x 15m) of steel portal frame design, clad in tanalised timber Yorkshire boarding with a non-reflective grey fibre cement roof. The barn features an open-fronted elevation to maximise access, manoeuvrability, and flexible internal layout for the storage of hay and agricultural machinery. It will be located on a newly resurfaced concrete pad at the end of the existing 70-metre access track, which is to be upgraded to a durable concrete surface, shown in Figure 2. A surrounding concrete apron will provide safe, year-round operational access for farm vehicles.



Figure 2 – Existing 70 metre track

The development includes the removal of two existing shipping containers, shown in Figure 3, representing a visual and functional improvement to the site. The barn will serve as essential covered storage for the farm's annual hay crop and key machinery currently kept off-site. Its siting on the opposite side of Harwoods Lane from the commercial yard ensures agricultural operations remain fully separated from Millfield Car Storage, avoiding any conflict with their activities.



Figure 3 – Two existing shipping containers which will be removed

3.1 Building Specification

- Dimensions: 30m (length) × 15m (width) × 6m (eaves height)
- Floor area: 450m²
- Structure: Steel portal frame to BS 5502 standards
- Roof: Grey fibre cement sheeting (non-reflective, low pitch)
- Cladding: Tanalised timber Yorkshire boarding (vertical 'hit and miss' style) on gable ends and one long side
- Access: Open-fronted on one long side for machinery access
- Floor: Concrete base with a 7 metre apron
- Drainage: rainwater management - via gutters and downpipes - will direct runoff to permeable areas, preventing soil erosion and surface-water issues.

3.2 Site Works

- Removal of two existing shipping containers
- Construction of 70m concrete access track
- Concrete hardstanding and apron around building

The barn will be sited on the opposite side of Harwoods Lane from the existing yard, ensuring agricultural operations remain separate from the commercial storage business and minimizing operational conflicts.

4. AGRICULTURAL JUSTIFICATION

The proposed agricultural storage barn is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture on the 93-hectare Boyles Farm holding. The scale, siting and internal layout of the building respond directly to the identified functional requirements of the farm and do not exceed what is required to support the ongoing agricultural use of the unit.

The barn provides 450 m² of floorspace, divided between hay storage and machinery storage, reflecting established agricultural practice and ensuring efficient, safe operation of the holding.

Use	Area (m ²)	Justification
<i>Hay storage</i>	261	Capacity for approx. 725 round bales stacked four high
<i>Machinery storage</i>	189	Sufficient space for all essential farm machinery
<i>Total</i>	450	Proportionate and necessary for a 93 ha agricultural unit

4.1 Hay Storage Requirements

Boyles Farm manages 74.3 hectares of productive pasture, primarily used for haymaking with occasional grazing. Based on historic yields, soil conditions, and recent climatic patterns, a conservative average yield of 4 tonnes per hectare is assumed. This equates to:

- Annual hay production: approx. 297 tonnes
- Equivalent to: approx. 990 round bales (1.2 m diameter, ~300 kg each)

For health and safety reasons, bales are stacked no more than four layers high, which reflects accepted agricultural practice. Each bale occupies a footprint of approximately 1.44 m², allowing for ventilation gaps between stacks.

In practice:

- Around 200 bales are sold immediately at harvest
- Some land remains in occasional grazing, reducing retained hay volumes
- Typical on-site storage requirement is therefore approximately 725 bales

This equates to a realistic operational requirement of approximately 261 m² of barn floor area when stacked four bales high. The proposed hay storage space therefore:

- Reflects actual operational need, not maximum theoretical yield
- Avoids excess or speculative capacity
- Is proportionate to the size and output of the holding

Indoor storage is functionally essential for maintaining hay quality and safety:

- Protection from moisture: Prevents mould, nutrient loss, and spoilage.
- Market suitability: Equestrian buyers require clean, dust-free, mould-free forage.
- Feed security: Ensures reliable winter forage during increasingly unpredictable weather patterns.

Without a barn, all hay must be sold immediately at harvest, limiting profitability and removing flexibility to sell into the higher-value winter market. The proposed development directly supports the farm's ability to meet its operational, welfare, and commercial requirements.

4.2 Machinery Storage Requirements

Essential equipment requiring covered storage:

<i>Machine</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Height (m)</i>	<i>Min. Floor Area (m²)</i>	<i>Recommended Allowance (m²)</i>
<i>McHale Fusion 1 Baler</i>	5.8	2.94	3.02	17	25
<i>Kuhn GMD 1011-Disc Mower</i>	3.35	1.5	1.2	6	10
<i>Leyland 272 Tractor</i>	3.40	2.10	2.67	7.1	12
<i>Ford 4600 Tractor</i>	3.35	1.97	2.43	6.6	10

<i>JCB 520-50 Telehandler</i>	4.40	1.84	1.97	8.1	12
<i>Leyland Synchro 262</i>	3.40	2.10	2.60	7.1	12
<i>84 Hydro International</i>	3.70	2.15	2.75	8.0	12
<i>Massey Ferguson 590</i>	3.90	2.20	2.55	8.6	12
<i>Merlo Telehandler</i>	4.50	2.25	2.45	10.1	15
<i>Kuhn Hay Turner</i>	2.80	2.40	1.40	6.7	10
<i>Tincknell Hay Turner</i>	3.00	2.60	1.50	7.8	10
<i>Kuhn Flail</i>	2.20	1.50	1.30	3.3	6
<i>Slewtic Topper (8' Side Mounted)</i>	2.45	2.20	1.25	5.4	7
<i>General-Purpose Trailer</i>	7.00	2.40	2.00	16.8	25
<i>JCB SC240 Sweeper Collector</i>	2.10	1.30	1.10	2.7	5
<i>Vicon Fertilizer Spreader</i>	1.80	1.80	1.50	3.2	6
Total				124.5	189

Approximately 189 m² of the barn is required for machinery storage. This provides space not only for secure parking, but also for safe manoeuvring of large equipment, and provides space for maintenance, servicing, and winter repairs.

Importance of covered storage:

- Protects hydraulics, electrics, belts, and bearings from weather-related deterioration
- Extends machinery lifespan and reduces repair costs
- Ensures reliability during narrow haymaking windows
- Maintains readiness for emergency or seasonal land management tasks

At present, key machines (including the mower and baler) must be kept off-site in rented accommodation, creating additional cost and inefficiency. Accessing machinery during harvest requires shuttling equipment between locations, reducing responsiveness and increasing road movements.

4.3 Operational and Environmental Benefits

The barn delivers substantial operational improvements:

- Eliminates off-site storage costs and reliance on third-party facilities
- Improves efficiency by keeping all machinery and hay on-site
- Reduces transport movements, fuel use, and emissions
- Improves biosecurity by avoiding external storage areas
- Ensures rapid response during limited weather windows for cutting, turning, and baling
- Provides a safe, dry workspace for maintenance and inspections
- Removes visually intrusive containers and outdoor equipment storage

- Supports the long-term viability of the agricultural unit

The proposed barn therefore directly supports the economic viability, environmental sustainability, and long-term resilience of agricultural operations at Boyles Farm.

5. DESIGN AND SITING

5.1 Design Rationale

The proposed barn has been designed to meet the functional needs of hay and machinery storage while respecting the landscape character of the High Weald National Landscape. The building adopts a traditional agricultural appearance and uses materials and forms that integrate sympathetically with the surrounding countryside.

Materials

- **Tanalised Timber Yorkshire Boarding:** Provides natural ventilation essential for hay storage, and delivers a traditional rural appearance that weathers sympathetically. The ‘hit-and-miss’ profile reduces visual massing and is fully consistent with local agricultural vernacular.
- **Grey Fibre Cement Roof:** A non-reflective, muted roofing material that blends with the subdued colour palette of the High Weald. Fibre cement avoids the glare and industrial character associated with metal sheeting.
- **Steel Portal Frame:** Offers a durable, cost-effective, and long-span structural form, enabling flexible internal layout and unobstructed movement for machinery and bale stacking.

Form and Function

- **Open-Fronted Elevation:** One long side is left open to allow efficient access for tractors, telehandlers, and implements, and to provide natural ventilation for stored hay.
- **Simple Agricultural Massing:** The overall form is intentionally modest, avoiding unnecessary embellishment and reflecting the functional nature of a working farm building.
- **Proportionate Scale:** The height and footprint respond directly to operational requirements for hay stacking and machinery storage without exceeding what is necessary for an agricultural unit of this size.

5.2 High Weald National Landscape Considerations

The design directly aligns with guidance for new agricultural structures in the High Weald National Landscape, ensuring the building conserves landscape character and enhances rural distinctiveness.

Key points of compliance include:

- Use of natural, locally sympathetic materials such as timber.
- Muted, non-reflective roofing that avoids intrusion in long views.
- Traditional agricultural form consistent with historic patterns of farm development.
- Open-sided structure that reduces apparent mass and integrates more subtly into the landscape.
- Scale appropriate to the functional needs of the farm.

The proposal provides additional landscape benefits:

- Removal of two existing shipping containers, improving the visual quality of the site.
- Consolidation of previously dispersed outdoor storage, reducing clutter.
- Use of traditional materials that integrate the building into the National Landscape, minimising visual impact and reflecting its established character.

5.3 Siting Justification

The proposed barn is carefully sited to maximise operational efficiency while minimising landscape, visual and amenity impacts. It is positioned along an existing fence line at the entrance to the field, shown in Figure 4, at the end of the established agricultural access track. This location has been selected to ensure the building is screened from Harwoods Lane and is not visible from public roads or public rights of way.



Figure 4 – Location of proposed barn at field entrance

The siting offers the following key advantages:

- Separation from non-agricultural uses: The barn is located away from the original farmyard now occupied by Millfield Car Storage, preventing conflict between agricultural machinery movements and commercial vehicle activity.
- Use of existing access arrangements: Direct access is taken from Harwoods Lane via long-established farm entrances and the existing internal track network, ensuring safe and efficient ingress and egress for agricultural vehicles without the need for new accesses or any intensification of use.
- Landscape integration: Positioning the building adjacent to established field boundaries provides natural screening, reduces visual prominence, and reflects best practice for agricultural development within the High Weald National Landscape.
- Operational practicality: The location provides immediate access to surrounding hay fields and avoids routing machinery through residential or commercial areas, supporting efficient and safe day-to-day farm operations.

Overall, the siting represents the least visually intrusive and most functionally appropriate location on the holding, directly supporting the agricultural use of the land while conserving the character of the surrounding landscape.

5.4 Access, Siting of Track and Historic Use

The proposed barn will be served by one of the existing agricultural accesses taken from Harwoods Lane, which forms part of a wider network of long-established entrances serving the agricultural holding. This particular access serves land at the west the farm and has historically provided access to hay fields and machinery storage areas. The track has existed in its current alignment since at least 2005, as evidenced by historic aerial imagery, and long-established agricultural use, and forms an integral part of the operational access network of the holding.

The track is already in regular agricultural use and currently accommodates two shipping containers positioned along its length, which are proposed to be removed as part of the rationalisation of storage associated with the development. The proposal does not introduce any new access onto Harwoods Lane, nor does it result in any intensification of access or increase in vehicle movements beyond those already associated with the established agricultural use of the land. Vehicle movements associated with the barn relate solely to existing agricultural operations and represent a consolidation of activity currently dispersed across the holding and at off-site storage locations.

A previous application for a Certificate of Lawful Development (ref. DM/23/0723) related to the hard-surfacing of the access track used for agricultural purposes and the siting of two shipping containers used for agricultural purposes to the west of the main farmyard area. That application concerned evidential matters only and did not question the agricultural use of the track or the functional requirement for access serving the holding. Following the determination of that application, the track was reinstated to its former unsurfaced condition, consistent with its historic alignment and appearance, as shown in Figure 2.

The resurfacing of the existing 70-metre access track is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture, in accordance with Part 6, Class A of the GPDO. The improvement is required to enable the safe, efficient and year-round operation of the agricultural unit, specifically to serve the proposed barn and surrounding hay fields. In practical terms, the resurfacing is necessary to:

- Provide reliable all-weather access for heavy agricultural machinery;
- Ensure safe movement during winter and periods of high rainfall; and
- Support the storage, handling and transport of hay and essential machinery integral to the functioning of the holding.

Concrete is an appropriate and proportionate surfacing material, offering the durability, load-bearing capacity and low maintenance characteristics required for regular agricultural traffic. The works represent a permanent improvement directly related to agricultural use and are not excessive in scale or extent.

The proposal causes no harm to highway safety, does not result in any material change in traffic levels on Harwoods Lane, and accords with both local highways policy and the permitted development assessment set out elsewhere in this statement. It also delivers environmental and landscape benefits by consolidating access arrangements and enabling the removal of inappropriate and visually intrusive storage.

6. PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT COMPLIANCE

The proposed agricultural barn fully complies with Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended by the 2024 Order. The development meets all relevant permitted development criteria applicable to agricultural units over 5 hectares.

Criterion	GPDO Requirement	Proposal	Compliant
<i>Agricultural unit size</i>	Holding must exceed 5ha	93ha agricultural holding	✓
<i>Building size</i>	Max. 1,500m ²	450m ² barn	✓
<i>Agricultural purpose</i>	Must be reasonably necessary for agriculture	Hay and machinery storage	✓
<i>Listed building curtilage</i>	Must not be within curtilage	Not within any listed building curtilage	✓
<i>Distance from trunk/classified roads</i>	Over 25m	Exceeds 25m	✓
<i>Livestock / protected dwellings</i>	No livestock housing within 400m	No livestock element	✓

The proposal fully accords with Part 6, Class A of the GPDO (as amended 2024). It satisfies all dimensional, siting, agricultural purpose, and procedural requirements. The barn is unequivocally necessary for the functioning of the 93ha agricultural unit, and the prior approval process is correctly and comprehensively followed.

7. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021/2023) provides strong support for agricultural development and rural economic activity. Relevant sections include:

- Paragraph 84 – Supports the sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses, including the construction of new agricultural buildings.
- Paragraph 81 – Promotes a prosperous rural economy and the continued operation of land-based industries.
- Paragraph 174 – Requires valued landscapes such as AONBs to be protected and enhanced, while recognising the role of active land management.

The proposal satisfies these policy principles by meeting a clear functional agricultural need, adopting an appropriate rural design, and minimising landscape impact in the High Weald National Landscape (formally known as the High Weald AONB).

7.2 Local Planning Policy (Mid Sussex District Plan & East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan)

Mid Sussex District Plan (2014–2031)

- Policy DP12 – Countryside Protection
Supports agricultural development necessary for farm operations where landscape character is conserved. The proposal improves the site by replacing outdoor storage and containers with a single, well-designed barn.
- Policy DP21 – Transport
Resurfacing of the track and provision of a concrete apron ensure safe, year-round access for agricultural vehicles.
- Policies DP26–DP39 – Character, Biodiversity and Design
The barn uses timber boarding and a muted roof finish, minimising visibility and enhancing site tidiness, which aligns with rural design expectations.

East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan – Policy EG1

Supports high-quality agricultural buildings in the AONB where design is sensitive and landscape character is conserved. The proposal meets these aims through careful siting and use of traditional materials.

7.3 High Weald AONB Management Plan

The proposal aligns with AONB objectives to:

- Conserve the historic field pattern and working farmed landscape;
- Maintain traditional land-based activities;
- Use appropriate rural building forms and materials;
- Avoid visual intrusion and support landscape character.

The barn replaces scattered outdoor machinery and containers with a single, subdued, timber-clad structure that integrates neatly into the landscape.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed agricultural storage barn at Boyles Farm is a necessary and proportionate development that supports the efficient operation of this 93-hectare holding. It provides essential covered storage for the farm's hay production and machinery, addressing current operational constraints caused by reliance on off-site storage and outdoor equipment parking.

The barn is carefully sited, designed, and constructed with traditional materials to integrate sensitively into the High Weald National Landscape. The removal of two shipping containers and consolidation of outdoor storage will improve visual amenity and reduce landscape clutter.

The development fully complies with Part 6, Class A of the GPDO (2015, as amended), satisfying all criteria for size, siting, and agricultural necessity. It aligns with national and local policy, including the NPPF, Mid Sussex District Plan, East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan, and High Weald AONB Management Plan.

By enabling secure, all-weather storage, the proposal enhances operational efficiency, resilience, and sustainability, while minimising environmental and visual impact. The barn is therefore a functional, policy-compliant, and visually sensitive agricultural building, and prior approval is respectfully sought.
