

Application for change of use from Recording Studio to a single dwelling house

Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement

Aerial Site Photo



ADDRESS :Stanbridge Studio, Stanbridge Farm, Stanbridge Lane, Staplefield RH17 6BB
APPLICANT Mr Jack Birthwright, Stanbridge Farm east, Stanbridge Lane, Staplefield RH17 6BB
DATE December 2025 Document formatted to print on A4

Application for a change of use application

Existing Studios to be used as a dwelling.

Site address:

Stanbridge Lane, Staplefield, RH17 6BB

1-12-2025

Contents .

1. Introduction
2. Existing Use
3. Scale
4. Layout
5. Landscaping
6. Appearance
7. Access
8. Conclusion

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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1. Introduction

1.1 This is a Design and Access Statement prepared to accompany a change of use application for Stanbridge Studio, rh17 6bb from a recording studio to a dwelling house.

1.2 By way of context, Stanbridge Studio has been in operation since 1980 located in one of the farm buildings, as part of the Stanbridge Farm group of buildings. The music industry has undergone seismic changes since the adoption of the internet and in 2006 the original studio was closed and converted it into a residential dwelling, now Stanbridge Barn.

1.3. In 2012 we obtained permission to build a stables and machine store in an adjacent field, **12/00325/FUL**. We started to build this self build ourselves in 2013.

1.4 The external appearance has not changed since its construction in 2014 to now.

2. Existing use

2.1. Once the building was complete, my son Jack, aged 23 at the time, wanted to use his musical skills to start recording. He moved his recording machines and computers into the machine room and worked on various domestic projects.

2.2 It soon became obvious in 2015 that other musicians wanted to use the space for their rehearsals and recording and Jack helped these amateur musicians to rehearse and record in the stables.

2.3 in October 2021 we were granted permission to use the building as a recording studio DM/21/2479

2.4 The Studio was assessed for business rates in 2023 by the revenue office and they wanted Circa £7,000 a year tax. I explained that the recording industry had changed drastically and that the studio was now used by local amateur musicians for their rehearsals , not recording and was charged at £12 an hour, like a recreational community asset. Once the Light, heat, maintenance was paid there was nothing left for the business rates. Nightclubs, bars concert halls, school halls etc didn't have to pay business rates, but because there was no classification for studios, the rates bill stuck.

2.5 I understand that businesses lower than 1200 sq ft don't pay business rates and the studio would qualify. But in the meantime Revenue decided to summons me!

2.6 In 2019 a friend of Jacks, Dave Petersen was living in Staplefield and working and living in a tied house at Brantridge School. Brantridge School decided to close their residential care and so asked Dave and his parents to leave. Dave was homeless. His parents managed to obtain a council flat after four months, but Dave was not allowed to live with them. Jack bought a caravan and parked it behind the Studio for him to live in (see aerial photo 2019). He could use the toilet and shower in the studio until he found suitable accommodation. Winters were too cold for the caravan so, Dave moved into the recreation area of the studio and lived there from 2019 till he moved out in September 2025.

2.7 The Studio was assessed for business rates in 2023 by the revenue office and we have been waiting for the building to be assessed properly by the VOA for business rates but have not yet been properly assessed. In the meantime it was agreed with MSDC that Dave's part of the property should be assessed for domestic Council tax and in 2025 he was asked to pay towards the charge by the revenue office.

2.8 In 2025 we were told by the council that all domestic properties had to have a proper name and address for the fire brigade etc. It was agreed to call the property 'The Meadows' and this was agreed by the council on the 16 September 2025, reference SN-0023 and I paid the fee.

2.9 The present position is that the residential side of the property is vacant because it doesn't have planning permission and the studio side still has a large Business rates liability, even though it covers the whole of the building and doesn't make a reference to the residential side. We have waited nearly a year and are still waiting for it to be classified by the VOA. We don't have a date for the valuation although we have asked the revenue dept at MSDC Many times.

3. Scale

3.1 This application demonstrates the following:

3.2 The scale, form and massing of the existing building and its position away from the existing residential buildings. It is settled behind a bank to avoid disturbance to other residents and this bank and its vegetation will stay as is.

3.3 The studio is of a suitable size and scale in context with the existing properties and grounds.

3.4 The proposals will not have any detrimental impact upon the amenities of the neighbouring properties.

4. Layout.

4.1. The Studio is a modern, single story detached property constructed in 2013 that sits within a large site and is positioned low in the landscape surrounded on three sides by high

trees and shrubs. The low roof is of green corrugated steel and the walls are clad in ship lap timber to keep the appearance of stables.

4.2 The site is accessed via a quiet cul de sac 'private road' Stanbridge Lane, off Staplefield Lane RH17 6BB.

4.3 The property is classed as a recording studio and has not impacted on the residential use of the surrounding houses, and is in keeping with the use of development in the area.

4.4 The layout of the proposal is straightforward and can be viewed on the accompanying plans.

4.5 The property and the surrounding houses are located outside of the built-up area of Staplefield as defined by the Mid Sussex Local Plan and also lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB).

4.6 The studio has been constructed to the original plans for permission 12/00325/FUL and has not been modified in any way.

4.7 The only adjustments that will be made to transform the studio to a dwelling will be two wings to the reverse of the building housing the proper kitchen and bedroom 1.

5. Landscaping

5.1 The present building sits low in the landscape and is surrounded by high banks and hedges, which will stay.

5.2 The building has resulted in minimal landscaping adjustment and to relate well with the surrounding houses and the established gardens.

6. Appearance

6.1 The appearance of the studio can be reviewed from the plans and elevations supplied with this application and please use the planning portal for application 12/00325/FUL for greater detail.

6.2 I enclose now drawing to show the internal layout necessary for modern living.

6.3 As the property lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB), care has been taken in designing the building so that it is not intrusive to the surrounding properties and landscape.

7. Access

7.1 The site is accessed via a quiet cul de sac 'private road' Stanbridge Lane, off Staplefield Lane RH17 6BB.

7.1 No access arrangements will be affected by the application. Please refer to the submitted plans for reference. All users (including the young; old; disabled; emergency services etc) are able to access the studio building easily and safely.

7.2 Everything is on ground level ideal for disabled access.

7.3 There is adequate car parking for 6 cars.

8. Conclusion

8.1 The scale, form and massing of the building offers a sympathetic design approach and are of a suitable size and scale in context with the existing properties.

8.2 The present studio has been used since 2015 by local musicians for their rehearsals and recordings. A conversion to a dwelling will mean far less traffic movements and disturbance for the local residents.

8.3 The proposals will not have any detrimental impact upon the amenities of the neighbouring properties.

In addition to this Statement, the application is supported by the following documents and plans

Change of use existing plans and elevations 2025 PDF

Change of use Stanbridge location plan 2025 PDF

Historical references.

Stanbridge Location Plan

https://padocs.midsussex.gov.uk/PublicAccess_LIVE/Document/ViewDocument?id=899973EFDA7A11EBAD20A87EEA7C714A

Location Plan

https://padocs.midsussex.gov.uk/PublicAccess_LIVE/Document/ViewDocument?id=899973F1DA7A11EBAD20A87EEA7C714A

Location Plan 2021

https://padocs.midsussex.gov.uk/PublicAccess_LIVE/Document/ViewDocument?id=899973F3DA7A11EBAD20A87EEA7C714A

Floor plan and elevations 2013

https://padocs.midsussex.gov.uk/PublicAccess_LIVE/Document/ViewDocument?id=899973F5DA7A11EBAD20A87EEA7C714A

Grid Reference

TQ 26816 27242

Grid Reference (6 figure)

TQ268272

X (Easting) , Y (Northing)

526816 , 127242

Latitude , Longitude (decimal)

51.030566 , -0.19290447

Latitude , Longitude (degs, mins, secs)

51°01'50"N , 000°11'34"W

What3Words :

occupiers.freely.defends