

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL COWFOLD ROAD, BOLNEY, RH17 5QU

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Abstract

Conversion and Reconstruction of Existing Stable Building to Form Ancillary Accommodation with Associated Storage and Office Space

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1. INTRODUCTION

Site: Providence Chapel, Cowfold Road, Bolney, West Sussex RH17 5QU

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Negus

Prepared by: Cityzen Design Ltd

Date: 15/12/25

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the conversion and reconstruction of the existing stable building within the curtilage of *Providence Chapel*, Cowfold Road, Bolney.

The proposal seeks to:

- Rebuild the existing stable structure (which is in poor structural condition) within its current footprint (part reduced to allow continued tree growth);
- Convert it into **ancillary accommodation** associated with the main dwelling;
- Replace an existing covered storage area with a new storage space and small office above; and
- Enhance the site's environmental and architectural quality through consistent use of materials, sensitive design and improved sustainability measures.

This document sets out the site context, planning background, design rationale, and access considerations in line with Mid Sussex District Council's Design Guide SPD and the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The site forms part of the established residential curtilage of Providence Chapel — a former Baptist chapel converted to a single dwelling in the early 1980s. The wider site includes driveway access, parking areas and associated outbuildings.

The site sits adjacent to the A272 / A23 junction on Cowfold Road, with a petrol station to the east, Crossport Industrial Estate to the rear (north), and residential properties to the west. Agricultural land lies to the south.

The immediate setting is semi-rural but with mixed-use character due to nearby commercial premises. The existing stable building and covered store sit to the rear of the main Chapel building, largely screened by existing boundary planting.

There are **no listed buildings or conservation area designations** affecting the site. However, the Chapel is recognised locally as a non-designated heritage asset.

A mature **tree** immediately adjacent to the stable carries a **Tree Preservation Order (TPO)**. An arboricultural assessment, and structural report has been commissioned to guide construction and root protection measures. (See sections 4.11 & 4.6)

3. PLANNING BACKGROUND

The site has an established planning history, most notably:

- **DM/18/4596** – Proposed alterations to the Chapel and outbuildings to form multi-media studios (withdrawn, January 2019).
- **BK/029/79 & BK/047/80** – Change of use of disused Baptist Church to a single dwellinghouse (approved).
- **BK/013/94/AP1** – Toilet and porch addition to house (approved).

A 2019 **Planning Statement** prepared by Batcheller Monkhouse supported the previous studio proposal. That statement identified the outbuildings (including the current stable) as structurally suitable for conversion, of local historic interest, and forming part of the established curtilage of the dwelling.

The current proposal continues this lineage of adaptation. The clients professional team have reviewed the existing building and concluded that the majority of elements are beyond economic repair and that upgrading the existing structure to meet current Building Regulations is not practicable.

The proposal therefore replaces the stable use with a low-impact, **ancillary residential** use building and involves the rebuilding of the deteriorating structure in a sustainable and visually coherent manner reducing the long-term risk of vacancy and further deterioration.

4. DESIGN RATIONALE AND EVOLUTION

4.1 DESIGN OBJECTIVES

- Preserve the character and form of the existing stable building while addressing significant structural decay;
- Protect the adjacent TPO'd tree by **reducing the building footprint slightly** and improving ground conditions near the root protection area; and allowing for future movement.
- Deliver accommodation that remains **wholly ancillary** to the main dwelling;
- Achieve a unified architectural language across all outbuildings through **black timber cladding, slate roofs, and minimal-profile aluminium joinery**;
- Enhance environmental performance via the use of sustainable and natural materials, where practicable, air source heat pump (ASHP) heating,;
- Rationalise the site layout by replacing ad-hoc covered storage with a coherent storage/office structure; and
- Maintain the discreet, rural character of the site and its relationship to the surrounding landscape.

4.2 USE

The proposed use is **ancillary residential accommodation** associated with Providence Chapel. It is intended as **dependent accommodation for a family member** (elderly mother), providing independent living space while remaining functionally and legally tied to the main dwelling.

The Stable will not have separate curtilage, independent access, separate utilities nor postal address.

The storage accommodation is to be provided for the upkeep of the gardens, chapel and adjacent church yard, typically ladders, gardening equipment and materials. This has been enclosed, a change from existing as the clients have had attempted burglaries in the past. This accommodation also allow the client a space to work from home.

The ancillary nature of the use will be secured through planning condition if required.

4.3 AMOUNT AND SCALE

The rebuilt stable will remain **within its existing footprint and overall massing**, with minor reductions where necessary to protect the adjacent TPO tree. But a slight increase in height to the stables to enable the head height to be retained above a screw pile grillage (so as to minimise the disturbance to the tree routes)

84m² Proposed - 91m² Existing

The new storage building with office above will occupy the area of the existing covered store, maintaining a modest height and subordinate relationship to both the main dwelling and the stable.

39m² Proposed - 49m² Existing

Together, the rebuilt structures will remain clearly secondary in scale and form to the Chapel.

4.4 LAYOUT

The layout retains the existing courtyard arrangement, ensuring clear visual hierarchy between the Chapel and its outbuildings.

The ancillary accommodation is accessed from the existing driveway via a revised pathway. Parking and turning remain unchanged.

Internal spaces will be arranged to maximise natural light and flexibility while respecting existing layout and alignments (roof windows have been added so as they can be cleaned and maintained from the clients property).

4.5 APPEARANCE AND MATERIALS

The design intentionally uses a restrained, coherent palette:

- **External walls:** Black-stained vertical timber cladding to match the existing stable finish;
- **Roof:** Natural slate to match existing Chapel and outbuildings;
- **Windows / Doors:** Powder-coated aluminium frames with minimal sightlines;
- **Rainwater Goods:** Black metal, half-round profile;
- **Surfaces:** Permeable gravel / resin-bound surfacing to minimise runoff.

The consistent use of black timber and slate ensures visual unity across the site and helps the rebuilt elements recess visually into the landscape.

4.6 STRUCTURAL CONDITION AND NECESSITY OF REBUILD

The existing stable building is in **very poor structural condition**:

Masonry sections are leaning and cracked;

Timber cladding and framing are extensively decayed;

Differential movement has occurred due to proximity to the Oak tree;

Roof structure exhibits deflection and water ingress.

To preserve safety and prevent further tree-root conflict, the proposal involves dismantling and **rebuilding the structure on the existing footprint**, with the North West corner slightly reduced from the tree's root zone. This ensures both the longevity of the building and the continued health of the TPO tree.

The rebuild will use a **lightweight timber frame**, reducing ground loading.

“The proposed structural strategy and construction methodology have been developed collaboratively with the project arboricultural consultant and structural engineer to ensure the long-term health of retained trees, while delivering a safe, durable and policy-compliant replacement building.”

Additional commentary from Haworth McCall structural engineers can be found in the supplementary documentation provided. And this has also been reviewed and included within the Arboriculturalists report

4.7 CONSTRUCTION & IMPACT

Works are to be relatively small scale and time limited, the works will ensure a maintainable structure going forward.

Construction will remain within the existing footprint of the structures, with no additional access or compounds required.

No piling noise beyond screw piles.

Tree protection fencing and ecological controls shall be in place prior to works or demolition is starting on site. (See sections 4.11 & 4.10)

Works affecting roofs/voids will not commence until the required bat surveys have been completed and any necessary mitigation/licensing approved and implemented. (See section 4.10)

4.8 LANDSCAPING AND LIGHTING

Existing soft landscaping will largely remain, with selective trimming and root protection fencing installed during construction.

Low-level, low spill, warm lighting will be provided along paths and entrances to ensure safety without introducing unnecessary glare or light spill, designed to avoid impact on bats whilst allowing safe movement around the external space.

4.9 SUSTAINABILITY AND SERVICES

Sustainability measures include:

- **Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP)** for efficient heating and hot water.
- **Natural insulation materials** within the rebuilt envelope to ensure breathability of the timber frame.
- **Permeable hardstanding** for improved surface water drainage.
- **Connection to existing foul drainage** system serving Providence Chapel.
- **Retaining timbers for reuse**, there are some key timbers within the stables these will be treated and retained for reuse within the building to show a clear link to the stables history.

- **Improved air tightness** through the use of air tightness tapes and membranes this will reduce heat losses and ventilation losses
- **Water efficiency** through efficient appliances to exceed the requirements of part G of the Approved documents

These interventions improve energy efficiency while maintaining the site's rural character

- Note the potential for photovoltaic panels is limited due to the trees / overshadowing

4.10 ECOLOGY

Ecological Baseline and Constraints

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) have been undertaken by Bakerwell Ltd to assess ecological constraints associated with the proposed works.

(See PEA and PRA report in the supplementary documentation provided)

The site is located within a semi-rural context with moderate ecological connectivity, supported by nearby woodland and pond features that provide foraging and commuting habitat for bats.

Protected Species – Bats

The assessment identifies that the existing stable buildings within the construction footprint have **moderate to high potential** to support roosting bats, primarily due to gaps beneath roof coverings, soffits, and internal timber construction. No confirmed bat roosts were identified at the time of survey; however, given the presence of suitable features and nearby licensed bat records, further survey work is required to fully inform mitigation, during the appropriate season.

Survey Strategy and Mitigation Commitment

In accordance with Bat Conservation Trust guidance (2023), additional emergence and re-entry surveys will be undertaken at the appropriate seasonal window prior to demolition works. Should bats be confirmed, mitigation will be delivered either through a Non-Licensed Method Statement or, if required, a Natural England European Protected Species Mitigation Licence. The design has been developed to retain existing trees and minimise lighting spill, noise, and disturbance, thereby reducing indirect impacts on bats and other wildlife.

Wider Ecology

No evidence of other protected or notable species was recorded on site. Due to the small scale of development and the retention of the existing footprint and surrounding habitats, the proposals are not anticipated to result in significant adverse ecological impacts.

4.11 TREES

Arboricultural Assessment and Constraints

An Arboricultural Implications Assessment has been prepared by Broad Oak Tree Consultants Ltd in accordance with BS 5837:2012

See provided report in the supplementary documentation provided

The assessment identifies four trees within or adjacent to the site, including a mature oak subject to Tree Preservation Order, which represents a key constraint influencing the design.

Design Response and Tree Retention

The proposal has been specifically shaped to retain all existing trees, with **no tree removal or arboricultural surgery required**. The rebuilt stable remains largely within the footprint of the existing structure, with minor reductions where necessary to improve separation from the TPO'd oak and allow for future growth and movement.

Foundations and Root Protection

Given the proximity of high water-demand trees and clay soils, a lightweight structural solution using **screw pile foundations and a steel grillage** is proposed. This approach avoids deep excavation, accords with BS 5837 guidance for construction within Root Protection Areas, and significantly reduces the risk of root damage. Detailed tree protection fencing, ground protection measures, and construction sequencing will be implemented in accordance with the approved Tree Protection Plan.

Construction Management

All works within proximity to retained trees will be undertaken using controlled methods, with protective fencing installed prior to commencement and retained for the duration of construction. Service routes and drainage will be designed to avoid Root Protection Areas where practicable, with any unavoidable works undertaken using hand excavation or air-spading under arboricultural supervision.

4.12 FLOOD RISK AND SURFACE WATER

The application site sits within Flood Zone 1, meaning that it has a low probability of flooding from Rivers or the Sea. A copy of the Flood map for planning is appended to this document

The assessment also confirms that the stables is not shown to be at risk of surface water flooding. The proposals will discharge surface water to a soakaway system, to be designed based upon the requirements of BRE Digest 365. There is sufficient space within the grounds of the property to achieve this.

The existing private drainage system serving the main dwelling will receive the discharge from the stables and will not therefore increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

5. ACCESS

Vehicular and pedestrian access will remain via the existing entrance from Cowfold Road.

No new vehicular access is proposed.

Parking and turning areas are sufficient for domestic use.

Entrances will feature level thresholds, and circulation routes will be accessible and well-lit. Given the scale and domestic nature of the accommodation, full Part M compliance will be achieved where practicable.

6. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The proposal accords with the Mid Sussex District Plan (2014–2031) and the Bolney Neighbourhood Plan (2015–2031). Relevant policies include:

Policy	Title	Compliance Summary
DP12	Protection and Enhancement of Countryside	The rebuild maintains and enhances rural character; no increase in footprint.
DP26	Character and Design	Reflects local vernacular and scale; cohesive use of materials.
DP34	Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets	Retains unlisted heritage fabric; sensitive reuse.
DP29	Noise, Air and Light Pollution	Low-intensity residential use
DP39	Sustainable Construction	Lightweight timber construction, reduced embodied carbon, permeable surfacing and low-energy services support sustainable development objectives.
DP37	Non Designated Heritage Assets	Conserves the significance of a locally important historic building through sensitive reuse and subordinate ancillary development.
DP39	Sustainable Construction	Lightweight timber construction, reduced embodied carbon, permeable surfacing and low-energy services support sustainable development objectives.
DP41	Biodiversity	Potential ecological impacts identified and appropriately mitigated through survey, timing, and licensing where required.
DP42	Trees, Woodland and Hedgrows	All existing trees retained and protected; design and foundation strategy informed by BS5837-compliant arboricultural assessment.
BOLE2	Landscape Character	Minimal visual impact; improved tree protection and landscape integration.

The proposal is also consistent with the NPPF's aims for **sustainable development**, particularly reusing existing buildings, reducing embodied carbon, and supporting family adaptation of existing homes.

7. CONCLUSION

This proposal represents the **natural and necessary evolution** of the existing stable building at Providence Chapel and the revised Storage provides the client with security to maintain the grounds and work from home and care for relatives.

It:

Addresses significant structural deterioration responsibly;

Protects the adjacent TPO'd tree through reduced footprint and lightweight construction;

Provides appropriate, ancillary family accommodation that remains subordinate to the main dwelling;

Enhances the overall character of the site with consistent materials and improved environmental performance; and

Aligns fully with Mid Sussex District Plan and Bolney Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal constitutes a **sensitive, sustainable and policy-compliant redevelopment** of an existing structure and should be supported by the Local Planning Authority.