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Design and Access Statement

in support of a planning application
for a garage conversion at:
2 Lowdells Drive, East Grinstead RH19 2RZ

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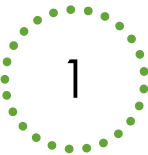
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Vision Statement

The proposal aims to transform the existing garage, too small to be used to store modern day cars, into a functional living space that enhances the property's value and utility. The design will ensure that the conversion respects the architectural integrity and character of the surrounding environment.



Functional integration

Creating a versatile space that seamlessly integrates with the main dwelling, suitable for multiple uses including a home office and playroom.



Architectural sensitivity

Employing design elements and materials that complement the existing structure, maintaining the visual cohesion of the property and its setting.



Accessibility and safety

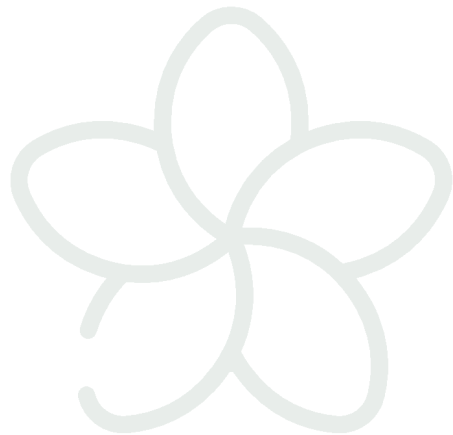
Ensuring the converted space meets all relevant building regulations, with considerations for fire safety, and ventilation, to provide a safe and comfortable environment.

Purpose of the Statement

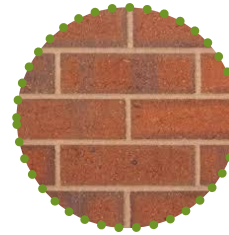
This design and access statement has been provided to explain the rationale behind the proposal to convert the garage at 2 Lowdells Drive, East Grinstead RH19 2RZ into a home office and playroom.

This document reviews the relevant planning policy context associated with the proposal. Where any relevant policies are identified, these are addressed.

The general design principles of the proposal are outlined.



Design Principles



Consistency with the existing property

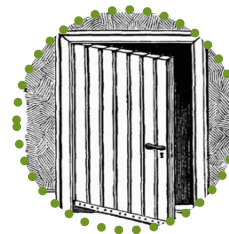
All new external brickwork will maintain consistency with the colour and brickwork pattern of the existing building.

The new window will use the same design as existing windows with square lead grilles.



Consistency with surrounding buildings

The design will be sensitive to the visual aesthetic of the surrounding area and will be in keeping with other nearby garage conversions.



Appropriate access

There is currently an approximately 20cm step from the main house to the garage. The floor of the new room will be built to the same level as the main house, allowing step-free access.

Planning Policy Context

The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (MSDC, 2018) includes the following policies that relate to this proposal:

- Policy DP26 requires that 'all development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages . . . All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:
 - o is of high quality design and layout . . .;
 - o incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;
 - o optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'
- Policy DP28 states that 'all development will be required to meet and maintain high standards of accessibility so that all users can use them safely and easily.'

The original planning permission for the development (TA/85/P/0972) states that:

'Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3, Schedule 1, Class 1-1 of the Town and Country Planning General Development Orders 1917 (or any other order revoking or re-enacting that Order) the garage(s) proposed as part of the development hereby permitted shall at no time be used for any purpose other than the parking of domestic motor vehicles.'

The adjacent dwelling, Woodcote (see Figure 3 on page 6), was part of the same original development and associated planning permission (TA/85/P/0972). It was originally designed to the same specification as 2 Lowdells Drive. Woodcote was granted planning permission to convert the garage into a habitable room in 2019 (DM/19/1106).

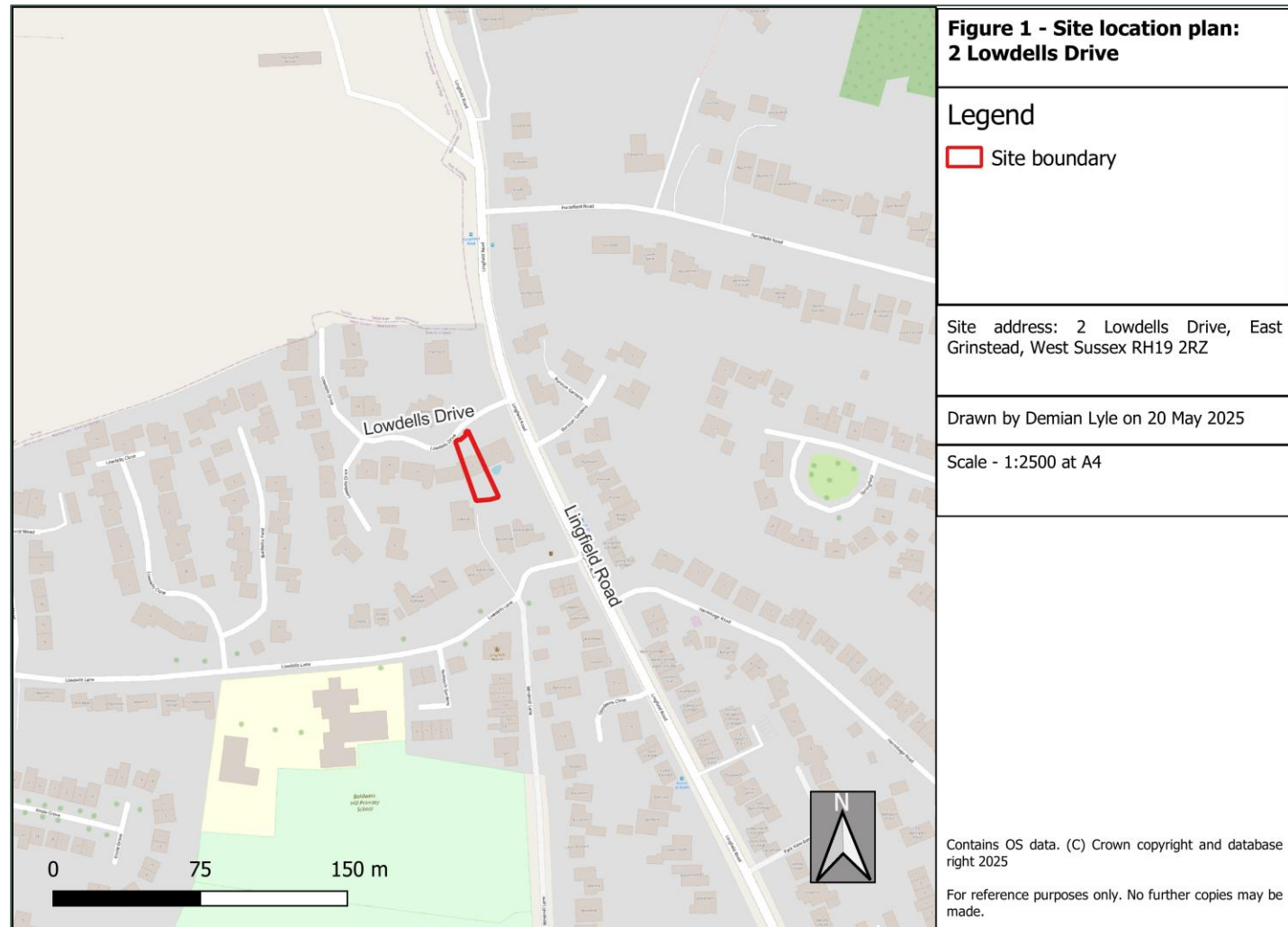


Site

Site location

The site is located at the northern extent of East Grinstead near the boundary of West Sussex and Surrey (see Figure 1 opposite). The address of the site is 2 Lowdells Drive, East Grinstead RH19 2RZ. The area of the proposed works consists of the existing garage, connected to the main building of the property.

The wider area is predominantly residential, with mainly detached properties and associated infrastructure.



Parking

Rationale

There is ample parking available on the property, with two cars able to park on the driveway. There is also additional parking available in various parking locations along Lowdells Drive (see Figure 2 opposite).

The garages on the road to which the planning permission relates are not typically used to store motor vehicles, with cars instead parked on driveways or on the side of the road.

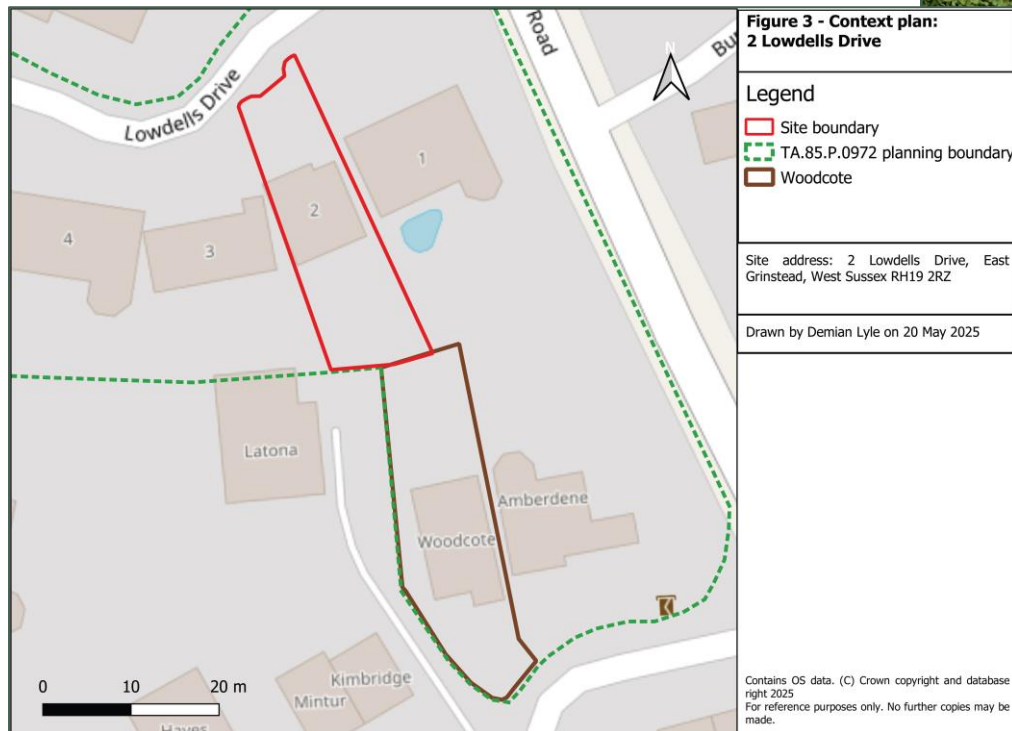
The Mid-Sussex District Council website links to Planning Portal guidance on applying for householder planning permission (Householder Application for Planning Permission for Works or Extension to a Dwelling Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)). Section 8 of this guidance suggests minimum dimensions for parking spaces (4.8m x 2.4m) The dimensions of the existing garage at 2 Lowdells Drive are smaller than this minimum specification (4.14m x 2.51m).



Consistency with Local Area

Precedent

The proposed garage conversion would not result in a design that looks out of place in the street and wider area. The property adjacent on Lowdells Lane (see Woodcote on Figure 3 and the photograph opposite) is a building originally built to the same specification as 2 Lowdells Drive as part of the same original development. It has a consented converted garage (DM/19/1106). This garage conversion is in keeping with the overall design and has had no adverse effect on the visual amenity nor availability of parking, with two cars easily able to park on the front drive.



Conclusion

The proposed conversion of the garage at 2 Lowdells Drive to a habitable space is both reasonable and justified, given the evolving needs of modern households and the changing nature of car ownership and parking trends. The condition imposed as part of the original planning permission (TA/85/P/0972) appears outdated in this context.

Sufficient off-street parking remains available within the curtilage of the property, with additional parking available nearby, ensuring that the conversion would not result in undue parking pressure nor highway safety concerns. Moreover, the proposed conversion supports more sustainable land use, allowing for better utilisation of existing built form without expanding the property's footprint.

Planning permission ((DM/19/1106) for a garage conversion has been granted for an equivalent adjacent property subject to the same restrictive planning condition.

With changing lifestyles and increasing demand for home working, additional living space is essential for modern family life. We respectfully request that the Council reconsider the restrictive condition and allow the conversion subject to the usual planning and building control considerations.

