

Applicant: Diagrama Foundation – Duckyls Farm Centre

Site: Duckyls Farm Centre, Selsfield Road, West Hoathly, RH19 4QY

Local Planning Authority: Mid Sussex District Council

Proposal: Installation of a small single-storey timber building on existing concrete pad

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement supports an application for the installation of a small, single-storey timber building at Duckyls Farm Centre, operated by Diagrama Foundation. The building will sit on an existing concrete pad and provide essential quiet, private and flexible space for the Residential Care Service and the Day Opportunities programme for adults with a learning disability.

The proposal represents the reinstatement of built form in a location where a building formerly stood, rather than the introduction of development into previously undeveloped land. It seeks to improve operational functionality while respecting the rural character of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

2. Site and Surroundings

Duckyls Farm Centre comprises approximately 100 acres of farmland, woodland, horticultural areas and buildings associated with regulated care and life-skills services.

The proposed building will be sited on an existing concrete pad measuring approximately 7m x 4.5m, located beside the main driveway entrance. This pad is currently used only as an informal seating area and is not in active operational use.

Historic development on the pad

The submitted Land Registry Title Plan (WSX52260) clearly shows a rectangular former building located exactly where the concrete pad now lies. This confirms the concrete pad corresponds to the footprint of a historic farm outbuilding.

There is no vegetation on or immediately adjacent to the pad, and no trees will be removed. The site is within the High Weald AONB, but to the applicant's knowledge, no listed buildings or designated heritage assets are present. The nearest neighbouring dwelling is approximately 50m away.

3. Description of the Proposed Development

The proposal is for a 5.5m x 3.5m, single-storey timber building constructed from responsibly sourced pressure-treated timber, with insulated cladding, Multifoil

insulation and thermally efficient IzoPanel roofing (U-value 0.21 W/m²K). Windows and doors are grey uPVC double-glazed units with toughened glass.

Updated glazing configuration

- One short elevation (the one nearest the neighbour) contains double doors only and no windows.
- One long elevation contains:
 - one long fixed window
 - one long full-length opening window
- The remaining two elevations have no glazing.

All windows face internally towards Diagrama's own land and buildings, not towards the neighbouring dwelling.

The building will connect to electricity and Wi-Fi only, with no plumbing or drainage. No excavation is required; the structure will sit entirely on the existing pad.

4. Need and Justification

Duckyls delivers two regulated services:

- Residential Care for adults with a learning disability (operating 24/7)
- Day Opportunities under a West Sussex County Council contract

The site requires a small, quiet indoor space for:

- safeguarding and confidential conversations
- private discussions with adults with a learning disability
- meetings with families
- workspace for staff
- private calls or inspections by external professionals (including CQC)
- calm, low-stimulation space for individuals experiencing distress

Existing buildings do not offer enough private, sound-separated rooms. Reusing this concrete pad provides an effective, modest solution.

5. AONB and Landscape Considerations

The site is within the High Weald AONB, where development must conserve landscape character. The proposal has been designed to minimise landscape impact:

- It reinstates built form on a location that historically accommodated a building, as confirmed by the submitted title plan.
- The building is small (approx. 19.25m²) and single-storey.
- It is sited on existing hardstanding, avoiding encroachment into open land.
- There is no excavation, no land-take, and no loss of vegetation.
- Materials (natural timber, grey joinery) are appropriate to the rural setting.
- Glazing faces inward, not towards open countryside.

Given these factors, no significant effect on the character or appearance of the AONB is anticipated.

6. Ecology and Trees

The development footprint contains no vegetation and lies outside tree root protection areas.

Ancient woodland exists elsewhere on the estate, but this proposal involves no ground disturbance, no loss of habitat and no change to ecological features.

Low shrubs will be planted around the building, consistent with existing horticultural practices carried out by adults with a learning disability, providing minor biodiversity benefits.

7. Access, Parking and Servicing

Access is via the existing driveway, which already passes the concrete pad. No changes to vehicle access or parking are required.

The building will have electricity and Wi-Fi only; no water supply or wastewater infrastructure is proposed.

8. Use and Neighbour Amenity

Use will be quiet and low-intensity, typically involving 1–2 people at a time. It will be used mainly by staff, with occasional supervised use by adults with a learning disability and meetings with families or external professionals.

Neighbour privacy (updated)

- The short elevation closest to the neighbour has doors only and no windows.

- All windows are on the long elevation facing internally towards Diagrama-operated land.
- At ~50m away and with no window-facing relationship, there is no reasonable prospect of overlooking or loss of privacy.

Only quiet conversation will occur inside. The building will have no material noise impact.

9. Flood Risk and Drainage

Based on publicly available Environment Agency mapping, the site is understood to lie within Flood Zone 1.

Rainwater from the small roof area will be managed by a sustainable drainage system.

10. Planning Policy Compliance

The proposal accords with the NPPF and policies of the Mid Sussex District Plan, including those relating to:

- good design
- protection of AONB character
- efficient use of land
- neighbour amenity
- environmental considerations
- use of existing developed surfaces

Reinstatement of built form on a historic footprint within a managed care setting is consistent with these policies.

11. Conclusion

The proposal reinstates a small building on an existing concrete pad where a former outbuilding historically stood. The development is modest, low-impact, and provides essential operational space for regulated care services.

It avoids harm to the AONB, ecology, landscape or neighbour amenity, and represents an appropriate and policy-compliant form of development. Planning permission is respectfully requested.