

Planning Supporting Statement

Retention of existing timber children's playhouse with raised play platform

16 Reeves Mead, Burgess Hill, RH15 0YR

Planning Portal reference: PP-15280230

Applicant	Steve Palmer
Application type	Householder planning permission - retrospective retention
Development	Existing timber children's playhouse with raised play platform
Overall dimensions	Approx. 2.029m wide x 2.815m deep x 3.229m high
Platform level	Approx. 1.50m above ground level
Site offsets	Approx. 0.80m from side boundary and 1.00m from rear boundary

1. Purpose of this statement

This statement accompanies a retrospective householder application seeking permission to retain an existing timber children's playhouse in the rear garden of 16 Reeves Mead. The structure was installed in April/May 2026. Following a site visit by a Mid Sussex District Council Planning Investigations Officer on 29 September 2026, it was confirmed that planning permission is required because the structure exceeds the relevant permitted-development height limits and includes a raised platform above 0.3m.

The application therefore asks the Council to assess the development on its planning merits. The proposal is not for a new residential or commercial use: it is a small-scale domestic play structure used incidentally to the enjoyment of the dwelling house.

2. Site and development context

- The playhouse is positioned at the far end of the rear garden, approximately 0.80m from the side boundary and 1.00m from the rear boundary.
- The structure is formed principally in natural treated timber with a dark bituminous roof finish and a green moulded slide.
- The raised platform is approximately 1.50m above ground level. The playhouse has an overall manufacturer-published size of approximately 2.029m wide, 2.815m deep and 3.229m high.
- The site is enclosed by close-boarded timber fencing. Mature trees and vegetation form a substantial landscape backdrop beyond the rear boundary.
- No trees or hedges are proposed to be removed or pruned as part of this application.

3. Planning policy context

The current adopted development plan includes the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031. Policy DP26 (Character and Design) requires development to be well designed, to respond appropriately to the character and scale of its surroundings and, importantly for this application, not to cause significant harm to the amenities of nearby residents, including privacy and outlook.

The Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD provides further guidance on residential amenity. Principle DG45 identifies privacy as a relevant consideration and advises that the relationship between buildings, relative heights, gardens, balconies and existing development should be considered when assessing potential overlooking.

4. Planning assessment

Domestic use and scale

The structure is clearly read as a children's playhouse rather than habitable accommodation. Its use is occasional and ancillary to the dwelling, and it does not introduce a separate use, additional household, commercial activity or intensified residential occupation. Its timber form and domestic garden character are appropriate to its function.

Visual impact

The playhouse occupies a relatively small part of a substantial rear garden and sits against an established backdrop of fencing, trees and vegetation. Its natural timber finish helps it sit comfortably within the garden setting. Although the structure can be glimpsed from the public road through the side of the dwelling, it is located well within the rear garden and is not a dominant feature in the street scene.

Neighbouring amenity and privacy

The raised platform is a relevant planning consideration, but the actual site relationship limits its effect. The principal outlook from the front of the playhouse and platform is back into the applicant's own garden. Some oblique views across the adjoining rear garden are possible; however, the playhouse is positioned at the far end of the garden, with the neighbouring dwelling separated from it by the depth of that rear garden. Existing close-boarded fencing provides ground-level screening and established vegetation contributes additional visual containment.

The platform is used for children's play rather than as an adult sitting terrace or balcony intended for prolonged occupation. Taken together - the use, orientation, separation, boundary treatment and landscaped context - it is considered that the structure does not result in significant harm to neighbouring privacy or outlook in the terms of Policy DP26.

If the case officer nevertheless identifies a specific residual privacy concern, the applicant would be willing to discuss proportionate supplementary boundary planting or screening. This is offered as a practical mitigation option rather than an acknowledgement that the existing arrangement causes unacceptable harm.

5. Comparable local decision

For context only, Mid Sussex District Council granted householder planning permission under application DM/20/3225 at 27 Fir Tree Way, Hassocks, described as 'Retention of tree house structure on a raised platform'. The applicant recognises that each planning application must be determined on its own site-specific merits and does not rely on that decision as a binding precedent. It nevertheless demonstrates that a raised children's play structure that falls outside permitted-development limits can be acceptable in principle following assessment of its planning impacts.

6. Conclusion

The application seeks to regularise an existing domestic children's play structure. The development is modest in footprint, visually recessive within the rear garden, surrounded by established boundary treatment and mature vegetation, and used solely for incidental family recreation. Having regard to its siting, orientation, separation from neighbouring dwellings and the limited nature of the use, the development is not considered to cause significant harm to residential amenity.

The applicant therefore respectfully requests that planning permission is granted for retention of the existing timber children's playhouse with raised play platform.

Submitted plans: Drawing 01 - Location Plan; Drawing 02 - Site / Block Plan; Drawing 03 - Playhouse Plans & Elevations.

Prepared October 2026