

25006 - Retrospective Planning Application Statement

For: Retention of Decking at Front of The Thatched Inn, Hassocks

Applicant Name: James Fitzgerald, Co-owner of Thatched Holding Ltd

Site Address: The Thatched Inn, Grand Avenue, Hassocks, BN6 8DH

Proposal: Retrospective application for the retention of raised timber decking to the front garden area to the right of the property (when facing outward from the pub).

1. Description of Development

This retrospective application seeks planning permission to retain a raised timber decking structure installed in the front garden area of The Thatched Inn in Hassocks. The decking covers three parking spaces and was designed to enhance customer experience and support outdoor hospitality.

The decking measures 9.35 metres in width and 7.2 metres in depth, with the height to the top of the handrail ranging from 1.3m at the lowest point to 2.25m at the highest, in response to the natural gradient of the land. The structure includes perimeter balustrades for safety, integrated planters, and step-free access from the pub entrance.

The installation has opened up and framed the outstanding views of the fields opposite the property and significantly improved the usability of this garden space.

2. Design, Materials & Appearance

The structure is constructed from natural timber, with a neutral, untreated finish that complements the traditional rural aesthetic of the Thatched Inn. No synthetic or industrial materials have been used. The handrails, planters, and perimeter edges are also timber-built to maintain a unified and sympathetic design.

There is no intrusion on public pathways or the highway, and the decking remains well within the pub's private curtilage.

The decking also includes an L-shaped fixed bench seating arrangement along the east side, designed to reduce foot traffic and congregation directly adjacent to the neighbouring boundary. This seating transitions neatly between the garden and decking areas, without obstructing the scenic view.

3. Access, Parking & Highways

Although three parking spaces have been repurposed for the decking, the pub retains ample on-site parking and has not reached full capacity at any time since the installation. To date, there has been no need to restrict use of the car park by local walkers or visitors, but parking can be actively managed in the future if required.

There is no impact on vehicle access or highway visibility, and pedestrian routes around the site are clear and unobstructed.

The main entrance opposite the decking remains fully functional, with more than adequate space for customer and service throughfare.

4. Neighbour Consultation

We have directly engaged with our immediate neighbour, who has raised no objections. In fact, they have expressed support for the business and the improvements we have made.

To further reduce any potential impact, we have installed new fencing and positioned planters and trees carefully along the boundary. The fencing was installed in front of the original fence line, creating an approximate 40cm buffer that adds privacy and protects the neighbour's amenity space. This design has been applied consistently throughout the garden area.

5. Environmental Health / Pest Control / Drainage

A comprehensive pest control survey was carried out across the entire premises. The results showed no evidence of pest activity and made no recommendations. We are committed to maintaining these standards through regular pest audits, which have already been scheduled.

We have also undertaken extensive garden and landscaping improvements, including the installation of a new underground drainage and plumbing system to resolve standing water and drainage issues. This work has been successful in managing surface water and maintaining a clean, safe environment.

6. Business & Community Benefit

The decking installation plays an important role in sustaining the Thatched Inn's economic viability. It provides safe, flexible, and attractive outdoor space, which is now a key part of customer expectations—particularly post-COVID.

The space also supports local hospitality employment, enhances accessibility, and encourages community use of the pub for events and social gatherings, reinforcing its role as a local community hub.

7. Conclusion

This application seeks retrospective approval for a well-considered and high-quality decking structure that:

- Responds sensitively to the existing pub building and surroundings
- Does not adversely impact neighbours, highways, or the local environment
- Brings clear benefit to the local economy and community use
- Maintains adequate parking and full pedestrian and vehicle access
- Is actively managed through pest control and improved drainage

We respectfully request that Mid Sussex District Council grants retrospective planning permission for the development.