



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Detailed Application for a Detached Single Storey, 3 Bedroomed Dwelling

Located on Land at 8A Highfields, Brighton Road, Warringlid, West Sussex, RH17 5SY

1.00 DESIGN

1.01 Site Location and Context

Site Description and Designation

The application site is located at 8A Highfields, a Gypsy & traveller designated residential development on the eastern side of Brighton Road in Warringlid. The site has been formally designated by Mid Sussex District Council for Gypsy, Traveller & Touring Traveller accommodation and forms part of an established residential curtilage. The application proposes a new single-storey detached dwelling within this designated area, continuing the residential use in accordance with the site's planning designation.

The application site currently comprises part of the designated land associated with the existing Highfields complex. The land is laid to grass and remains unobstructed, providing a suitable location for residential development that complements the existing community at Highfields.

Surrounding Character and Context

The immediate area is characterised by a mixed and varied residential development pattern. The approach to Highfields from Brighton Road passes through a sequence of residential properties, including detached two-storey dwellings, recently constructed single-storey units, and a replacement single-storey dwelling currently under construction. This demonstrates an established pattern of single-storey development within the immediate locality, which the proposed dwelling will complement and respect.

The site benefits from existing boundary screening. To the north lies a driveway with woodland beyond, providing visual separation from Thorndean Drive. To the south, a post & rail fence separates the application site from agricultural fields beyond. To the east, (9A) a close boarded fence & residential unit provide further visual containment. To the west, close-

boarded fencing creates a defined boundary with adjoining residential curtilage. This arrangement ensures the new dwelling will be well-integrated into the landscape and does not create visual intrusion into the wider countryside.

Topography and Flood Risk

The application site and immediate area are topographically flat, with no significant changes in level. This flat terrain simplifies site development and allows the dwelling to sit naturally within the existing landscape without requiring substantial earthworks or retaining structures.

The Environment Agency has confirmed that the site is not located within a designated functional flood plain. Accordingly, a formal flood risk assessment is not required. The site benefits from effective natural drainage into adjoining agricultural land, and surface water management has been designed in accordance with Building Regulations requirements. Where necessary, sustainable drainage principles have been incorporated into the final detailed design.

1.02 Proposed Development

Scale and Footprint

The proposal comprises a single-storey, 3-bedroomed detached dwelling with on-plot parking for two vehicles.

Dwelling Size: The proposed dwelling will provide 128.5 m² of gross internal floor area, which exceeds the Technical Housing Space Standards requirements published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for a new 3-bedroom single-storey dwelling. This ensures that occupants benefit from generous, high-quality living accommodation.

Site Coverage: The dwelling footprint is approximately 137 m², representing a gross site coverage of 15.48%. This modest coverage demonstrates that the development makes appropriate and efficient use of the available land whilst leaving substantial amenity space for the occupiers and maintaining visual openness within the site.

For comparison, the site area and scale of development are consistent with other recent single-storey additions within Highfields, confirming that the proposal sits comfortably within the established pattern of development on this designated site.

Compliance with Housing Standards

The proposed dwelling complies with and exceeds the Technical Housing Space Standards. All bedrooms meet minimum sizes, with the principal bedroom providing ample floor area and amenity. Living spaces are generously proportioned with good natural light and ventilation. The kitchen benefits from direct access to the garden, supporting healthy, sustainable living. All rooms are arranged to maximise usable floor area and avoid wasted circulation space.

This commitment to space standards ensures the dwelling provides a high quality of life for occupants and will remain fit for purpose over the long term.

1.03 Use Class and Planning Policy

The existing Highfields site is designated in the Local Plan for Gypsy, Traveller & Touring Traveller accommodation. The proposed dwelling is a private residential dwelling that will continue and support this established residential use, in accordance with Mid Sussex District Council's planning policy objectives for this site.

The proposal represents a logical extension to the existing residential community at Highfields, providing additional accommodation that will be of benefit to the local community and support the Council's commitment to meeting accommodation needs for this protected group.

1.04 Design Approach and Philosophy

Design Rationale

The design of the proposed dwelling has been carefully considered to respond to its location within an established residential community. The approach has been guided by three key principles:

1. Integration with Existing Character

The dwelling is designed as a single-storey detached unit, reflecting the predominant built form within the immediate area. Recent additions to Highfields have established a pattern of high-quality, contemporary single-storey dwellings, and the proposed scheme continues this approach. The design respects the scale and massing of neighbouring properties, ensuring visual harmony and avoiding any sense of intensification or overdevelopment.

2. Quality Materials and Traditional Detailing

The applicant are committed to delivering a dwelling of character and quality that enhances the amenity of Highfields. The design employs traditional proportions and detailing, combined with high-quality materials, to create a dwelling that is both functional and attractive. This approach reflects the client's desire for a home that will age well and contribute positively to the setting of the development.

3. Sustainable Site Layout

The location, site layout, and orientation of the dwelling have been determined by the natural topography of the site and the position of existing buildings at Highfields. The proposed location makes efficient use of available land, minimises disruption to existing residents, and allows for generous garden amenity space. The layout has been optimised to maximise natural light and passive solar gain, reducing energy demand and supporting sustainable living.

Architectural Character

The proposed dwelling features:

- **Roof Form:** A pitched & flat roof with gentle slopes, reflecting traditional residential design and facilitating natural drainage. The roof pitch is consistent with vernacular styles appropriate to the West Sussex context.
- **Materials:** The dwelling will be constructed with high-quality materials selected to complement the existing Highfields setting. These include; stained timber cladding, Aluminium windows & Aluminium standing seam roof finish, chosen to weather well and integrate naturally with the landscape.
- **Fenestration:** Windows and doors are proportioned to provide excellent natural light and ventilation whilst maintaining privacy from neighbouring properties. The glazing is positioned to maximise passive solar gain on south-facing elevations, reducing heating requirements and supporting thermal comfort. Smaller north-facing windows minimise heat loss. This careful orientation supports both occupant well-being and energy efficiency.
- **Boundary Treatment:** The dwelling sits within defined boundaries, with existing fencing and landscaping providing visual separation from adjoining properties and the surrounding countryside. The boundary treatment is designed to maintain privacy whilst not creating an oppressive or fortress-like appearance.

The overall design is contemporary in execution but traditional in proportion and detailing, creating a dwelling that will sit comfortably within the established Highfields community for many decades to come.

1.05 Scale and Volumetric Considerations

The proposed dwelling is proportionate to the site and sits comfortably within the pattern of development at Highfields. The single-storey form is consistent with the predominant built form in the immediate area and avoids any visual dominance or impact on neighbouring amenities.

The dwelling's footprint and massing have been carefully calibrated to:

- Provide adequate internal accommodation without unnecessary bulk or scale
- Maintain separation from existing buildings and boundaries
- Preserve views and visual amenity for neighbouring properties
- Leave substantial garden space for the occupiers of both the new and existing dwellings
- Avoid any demonstrative impact on the setting or character of Highfields, Brighton Road

The proposal represents a logical and proportionate addition to the residential community, not a change in character or intensity of use.

1.06 Landscape Strategy and Site Integration

Existing Landscape Features

The site is well established as residential land, benefiting from mature boundary screening, particularly along the northern and eastern boundaries where woodland provides effective visual containment. These existing features are retained.

The close-boarded fencing on the western, eastern & northern boundaries provides effective privacy screening whilst creating a defined and managed garden environment. These boundaries will be maintained and will continue to provide visual separation between the new dwelling and its neighbours.

Landscape Design Strategy

The landscape design for the application site follow these principles:

Garden Layout and Soft Landscaping

The dwelling is set within a well-landscaped garden environment, with both private garden space for the occupiers and effective screening towards neighbouring properties. The garden layout will include:

- Planting strips along key boundaries to enhance screening and visual softness
- Mixed native planting to provide habitat value and biodiversity benefits
- Retention of existing vegetation where it provides screening or environmental value
- A balance between hardstanding (for practical use and maintenance) and soft landscaping (for visual amenity and wildlife benefit)

Surface Treatments and Drainage

The site works include appropriate surface treatments for access drives and parking areas, designed to:

- Provide safe, practical access whilst minimising visual impact
- Incorporate sustainable drainage principles where feasible, reducing runoff and supporting groundwater recharge
- Use materials that weather naturally and integrate with the rural setting

Ecological and Biodiversity Enhancement

The planting strategy will prioritise native species with food and shelter value for local wildlife. Where practical, the design will include features supporting biodiversity, such as:

- Native hedge and shrub planting
- Gaps left in boundary fencing to allow small animal movement
- Retention of mature trees where present

1.07 Fenestration, Materials and Aesthetic Quality

Window Design and Strategy

The fenestration strategy balances multiple considerations: natural light provision, occupant well-being, energy efficiency, and visual character.

Natural Light and Ventilation

Windows are positioned to provide excellent natural light to all main living spaces. The open-plan kitchen and living areas benefit from south-facing glazing maximizing daylight and solar gain. Bedrooms receive generous morning or afternoon light depending on orientation. All spaces are cross-ventilated, with windows on at least two façades where possible, supporting passive ventilation and reducing reliance on mechanical systems.

Energy Efficiency

The glazing strategy supports energy efficiency through:

- Minimising glazing on north-facing elevations (heat loss risk)
- Maximising south-facing glazing (passive solar gain in winter)
- High-performance double-glazed units reducing fabric heat loss
- Careful targeting of windows to occupied spaces, avoiding unglazed circulation areas

Privacy and Neighbouring Amenity

Windows are positioned to provide privacy for the dwelling occupiers whilst avoiding direct overlooking of neighbouring gardens. Where necessary, landscaping or boundary treatments provide additional screening. Ground-floor windows benefit from garden fencing and planting, and first-floor windows are carefully placed to respect neighbours' amenity.

Materials and Detailing

The dwelling will be constructed with high-quality, durable materials selected for:

- **Aesthetic Quality:** Materials complement the vernacular context and age naturally over time, developing character and patina rather than requiring frequent replacement or maintenance.
- **Durability:** All materials have been specified with a lifespan of 50+ years with minimal maintenance, ensuring the dwelling remains in good condition for occupants and contributes positively to the neighbourhood.

- **Thermal Performance:** Materials contribute to the overall thermal envelope, supporting energy efficiency and occupant comfort. The specification includes robust insulation and air-tightness measures in accordance with Building Regulations.
- **Sustainability:** Where feasible, materials were selected from responsibly managed or recycled sources, reducing embodied carbon and supporting environmental objectives.

Typical Material Palette [update with actual specification:]

Element	Material	Rationale
Walls	Timber Framed with Stained timber cladding	Durable, local, fits vernacular context
Roof	Aluminium standing seam	Contemporary finish, excellent durability
Windows	High-performance Aluminium double-glazed	Energy efficient, low maintenance
Doors	High-performance Aluminium double-glazed	Energy efficient, low maintenance

Architectural Detailing

The design includes traditional architectural features that add character and visual interest:

- Pitched roof with modest eaves overhang, providing weather protection and visual softness
- Window and door surrounds with subtle emphasis timber surround
- Modest entrance feature creating a defined threshold and sense of arrival
- Careful proportioning of solid to void, avoiding blank or over-glazed elevations

These details are not decorative appliqué but integral to the dwelling's design, supporting both functionality (weather protection, thermal performance) and visual quality.

2.01 Access and Visibility

Existing Access Arrangements

The application site benefits from established legal rights of access via a private access drive serving Highfields, which connects to the public highway (Brighton Road). This access arrangement has been in use for many years and is well-proven.

Visibility and Safety

The application site is accessed and exited with excellent visibility in both directions along Brighton Road. Visibility in both forward and reverse gear is achieved comfortably, meeting standards for residential access in rural locations. The drive is of sufficient width to accommodate vehicles entering and leaving without conflict. Where the access joins the public highway, visibility is unobstructed and complies with visibility splay requirements.

Visibility Splays: The proposed access achieves visibility splays, which exceed the requirements for residential development in this location. This ensures safe sightlines for both vehicles exiting the site and traffic travelling along Brighton Road.

Drive and Parking Arrangements

Access Drive

- **Width:** 3.7m
- **Surface:** Gravel providing adequate permeable drainage
- **Gradient:** Follows natural topography, avoiding excessive slopes whilst providing adequate permeable drainage
- **Maintenance:** The access drive is privately maintained by residents. A management plan will be agreed with the Council if required.

Parking and Turning

The site provides dedicated parking for two vehicles in on-plot spaces located adjacent to the dwelling. The parking spaces are sized to current standards (2.4m x 4.8m) and are surfaced with permeable material. The layout allows vehicles to enter and exit without requiring reversal onto the public highway.

An additional turning area adjacent to the parking bays allows vehicles to turn and depart in forward gear, minimizing the need for reversals and enhancing safety and amenity.

2.02 Highways and Traffic Impact

The development does not generate significant traffic impact. The single dwelling adds minimal vehicle movements to Brighton Road (estimated 4-6 vehicles per day). The private access arrangement and good visibility ensure that these movements will be undertaken safely and without impact on the public highway.

The development is consistent with the established residential use of Highfields and does not introduce a new traffic-generating use or unusual access arrangements. It therefore has negligible impact on the existing highways network.

2.03 Public Transport and Connectivity

The application site is served by local public transport. A local bus route operated by Compass Travel connects Haywards Heath, Cuckfield, Warninglid and Horsham, passing close to the site. This provides a reasonable level of public transport connectivity for occupants, supporting sustainable travel and reducing reliance on private vehicles.

The site is within cycling and walking distance of Warninglid village centre, which provides local facilities including a shop, school, and community spaces. Whilst the site is not in a highly accessible location, the availability of public transport and local facilities supports sustainable occupancy and reduces the environmental impact of the development.

2.04 Sustainable Transport and Movement

The proposal encourages sustainable transport and movement through:

- **Proximity to Public Transport:** The site is accessible to the local bus route, providing an alternative to private vehicle use.
- **Walking and Cycling:** The private access drive is suitable for walking and cycling, with good visibility and safe gradients.
- **On-Plot Parking:** Generous parking provision (two spaces) accommodates household vehicles without overspill onto the public highway or neighbouring land.
- **Future Flexibility:** Should electric vehicle charging become a standard requirement, the parking layout can accommodate future installation.

2.05 Accessibility and Movement (Building Regulations Part M)

The dwelling complies with all requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations (latest edition), ensuring accessibility and independent living for occupants of all ages and abilities.

Design Approach

The dwelling design incorporates accessibility from initial conception, not as an afterthought. Key features include:

External Access

- **Level or Ramped Approach:** The rear access entrances provide compliant access (gradient 1:12 max).
- **Accessible Surface:** The approach is finished with a non-slip, permeable surface suitable for all weather conditions and ages of occupant.

Internal Layouts

- **Level Internal Floors:** All main living spaces are on a single level with smooth transitions and no internal steps.
- **Accessible WC:** One WC is designed to accessible standards, with provision for future grab rails and adequate space for wheelchair maneuvering.
- **Door Widths:** All main doors are minimum 838mm, allowing passage for wheelchair users or those with mobility aids.
- **Kitchen Design:** The kitchen includes accessible work surfaces and is arranged to allow movement and use by occupants of all abilities.
- **Bedrooms:** The principal bedroom is designed to accessible standards with adequate floor space for movement and future positioning of mobility aids or care equipment.

Circulation and Independence

The single-storey form is inherently accessible, avoiding the complexity and expense of lifts or stairs required in multi-storey dwellings. All main habitable spaces are on one level, connected by a logical, unobstructed circulation route. This layout supports independent living and reduces reliance on care assistance or external support.

3.00 CONCLUSION

This Design & Access Statement demonstrates that the proposed single-storey, 3 bedroomed dwelling at 8A Highfields represents a high-quality, well-designed addition to the existing residential community.

The scheme:

Responds sensitively to the established pattern of development at Highfields, respecting the single-storey form and character of recent additions

Provides generous, high-quality accommodation exceeding Technical Housing Space Standards

Is positioned and oriented to maximize natural light, passive solar gain, and energy efficiency

Incorporates quality materials and traditional detailing, ensuring the dwelling will age well and contribute positively to its setting

utilizes the site efficiently, with landscape integration and effective boundary screening

Benefits from established legal access with good visibility and minimal traffic impact

Incorporates full accessibility in accordance with Building Regulations Part M, supporting independent living for occupants of all ages and abilities

Supports the Council's planning policy objectives for Gypsy & Traveller accommodation provision

The proposal represents a logical and proportionate extension to Highfields, delivering a high-quality dwelling that enhances the residential community and remain fit for purpose over the long term.

GRM/0926.CO1/June 2026