



APPLICATIONS & APPEALS SERVICES

Conversion of Hay Barn and erection of single storey extension to create a one bedroom dwelling; removal of mobile home

**Willowbrook, Danworth Lane, Hurstpierpoint,
Hassocks BN6 9LW**

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

August 2026

NJA/22/233



CONTENTS	PAGE
1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND	3
2.0 PHYSICAL & PLANNING CONTEXT	4
3.0 DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL: USE & AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT	19
4.0 LAYOUT, SCALE & DESIGN	25
5.0 ACCESS & PARKING	32
6.0 SUSTAINABILITY	33
7.0 ECOLOGY	35
8.0 CONCLUSIONS	37

APPENDICES

NJA-1	Details relating to the caravans at Willowbrook
NJA-2	Appeal decision APP/D3830/W/24/3340329
NJA-3	Details of allocated housing sites within the locality

1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the conversion and extension of the existing barn to create a one-bedroom dwelling at Willowbrook, Danworth Lane, Hurstpierpoint.

1.2 The proposal will be assessed under the following series of headings to demonstrate that it accords with relevant policies and is acceptable in all respects:

- **Physical Context** – explains the physical context of the site and its surroundings;
- **Planning Context** – the planning history of the site and broad policy requirements;
- **Use** – the purpose of the development;
- **Amount** – the extent of development on the site;
- **Scale** – details of the physical size of the proposed development;
- **Layout** – the location of the proposed development and its relationship to the existing building and any other properties;

- **Appearance** – details of materials, style and impact upon the surrounding buildings;
- **Landscaping** – details of proposed landscaping
- **Access** – access to the development and parking provision.

1.3 It is asked that this Planning, Design and Access Statement is taken into account in considering the proposal, together with the submitted drawings and supporting information.

2.0 PHYSICAL & PLANNING CONTEXT

(i) Physical Context

- 2.1 The site is located approximately 800m north of the boundary of Hurstpierpoint and 1km west of Burgess Hill. Danworth Lane runs south from Goddards Green to Hurstpierpoint and the application site lies on the western side of the road.
- 2.2 The site comprises several paddock areas used for grazing, a number of stables and yard area, as well as the application building.
- 2.3 The area is rural in character, with dwellings (many substantial in size) scattered along Danworth Lane, as well as agricultural and commercial premises. The landscape comprises open fields with mature hedgerows and wooded areas. The following are images of the application site and the surrounding area.



View from site entrance



Existing barn – east and north elevations, along with established enclosed area



Existing barn - north elevation



Existing barn – west elevation and enclosed area to north



South elevation



Paddock and stable range on southern boundary



Further view of stables and mobile home



Eastern-most stables



View west to rear of site



Full stable range



Internal view of application building

2.4 The applicant states that Willowbrook was purchased by her family in February 1995. It was originally part of a much larger farm which was broken up around 1989. Since then, the land has been used mainly for agriculture and the land has housed livestock and machinery. The land has also been used by the caravan club dating back to the 1970's. The Council agreed to the family retaining 2 caravans on site permanently in 2000, one for ancillary use to the stables and 1 for overnight stays up to 15 nights, which has always been fully utilised. This caravan was upgraded to a 2 bed mobile home over 10 years ago. Over the years the family

has made considerable improvements to the site, renovating the stables and barn, demolishing the run down shelters, and planting and rejuvenating the hedgerows. The applicant and her husband both work from home. Currently the applicant attends the various animals three times a day. One horse is elderly and has considerable veterinary requirements, and also from a security perspective it is important to visit regularly. The security of the site is a major consideration. The majority of the time the property is unattended overnight. Over the years there have been many, many break-ins. Animals, machinery and cabling have been stolen, and the site has been subject to fly tipping. There have been many similar conversions along Danworth Lane and into High Hatch Lane.

(ii) Planning Context

2.5 A search of the Council's online planning records has found the following planning applications (generally described as 'land at Danworth Lane'), considered to be relevant to the current proposal:

- HP/111/78 - Use of land as caravan site from Friday 25th May until 3rd June 1979 (8 days and 9 nights). No Objection
- HP/046/96 - extension to existing pole barn and erection of two additional stables. Withdrawn
- HP/065/96 - erection of two additional stables, refurbishment of existing stables and demolition of field shelter. Approved
- HP/056/98 – extension to existing barn. Refused, Appeal dismissed
- 01/02453/FUL - Retrospective application for temporary double stable block. Approved
- 02/02369/FUL - to extend expiry of permission granted for HP/01/02453/FUL until 25 January 2004. Permission
- 05/00073/FUL - Retention of existing stables on a permanent basis. Approved
- 05/00142/FUL - Replacing roof of barn. Permission (application building)
- DM/23/0746 - proposed conversion of hay barn to create 1 no. one bedroom single storey dwelling (with two proposed parking spaces) – Refused 27.10.23; Appeal dismissed 22.11.24

The caravans referred to above were investigated by the Enforcement Officer in 2000 (EF98446). It was established at that time it was confirmed by the Council in a letter dated 22 November 2000 that they explicitly accepted 2 caravans on site - 1 for overnight stays and 1 ancillary to the use of the stables. While the specific units mentioned in 2000 have been replaced, the current mobile home has been in situ for over 10 years, as confirmed by satellite imagery from 2012 to 2025 (Google Earth). The applicant has strictly adhered to the 15-night occupancy limit referred to in the letter. As such, the structure is a lawful permanent presence on site,

and its proposed removal is a material consideration. Details are attached at Appendix NJA-1.

2.6 Application DM/23/0746 was refused by the Council for the following reasons:

1. The site lies within the countryside where the principle of new dwellings is contrary to the development plan. No special justification exists for these dwellings. The Council can demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing, and as such the balance to be applied in this case is a non-tilted one. The proposal is considered contrary to Policies DP12 and DP15 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and Policies HurstC1 and HurstH1 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, the proposal is contrary to Policy DP6 of the Mid Sussex District Plan as the proposal is not contiguous with the existing built-up area boundaries of any settlements. There are not considered to be any other material considerations that would warrant determining the planning application otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. The development thereby conflicts with policies DP6, DP12 and DP15 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policies HurstC1 and HurstH1 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common

Neighbourhood Plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

- 2. The site is in an unsustainable location, where occupants would be reliant on the use of a private car to gain access to local services. There are not considered to be any other material considerations that would warrant determining the planning application otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. The development thereby conflicts with Policy DP21 of the District Plan and paragraphs 8, 11, 104, 105, 110 and 112 of the NPPF.**
- 3. The proposed use of the building for residential purposes will have a domesticating appearance on the building, not in keeping with any traditional barn vernacular, and will be accompanied by domestic paraphernalia externally. This would introduce a wholly different character to the existing equestrian use and would therefore not be sensitive to the countryside. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal would be harmful to the rural character of the area and fail to comply with Policies DP12 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the Mid Sussex Design Guide, in particular Design Principle DG38.**
- 4. The proposed dwelling falls significantly below the Government's Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards requirements**

and is therefore not considered to provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation for future occupiers. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate any factors preventing compliance with these requirements, and therefore it is not considered that there are any exceptional circumstances to justify a departure from development plan policy. Accordingly, the proposal fails to comply with Policy DP27 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

- 2.7 The subsequent appeal was dismissed but the Inspector only considered reason 4 to be an issue. A copy of the appeal decision letter is attached at Appendix NJA-2.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) August 2026

- 2.8 The new National Planning Policy Framework was published in August 2026. The new Framework has a different structure with National plan-making and decision-making policies using policy codes rather than the former paragraph-based approach. The NPPF sets out the government's policies for plan making and for making

decisions on development proposals in England. It is a material consideration of critical importance in both contexts.

- 2.9 The NPPF confirms that the planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Preparing and maintaining up-to-date development plans should be seen as a priority for providing housing and other development in a sustainable manner. The plan-making policies in the Framework must be taken into account in preparing any part of the development plan.
- 2.10 With regard to the new National planning policies, the NPPF confirms that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The national decision-making policies in the Framework are a material consideration in making these decisions and should be read alongside the policies in the development plan.
- 2.11 Annex A of the new NPPF confirms that the new national decision-making policies are material considerations from the date of publication. Development-plan policies materially inconsistent with those policies should be given

very limited weight, except where examined and adopted or made against the August 2026 Framework.

- 2.12 Chapter 1 – Introduction, refers to the purpose of the planning system, with paragraph 15 stating:

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, by managing the use and development of land in the long-term public interest.

- 2.13 Paragraph 17 confirms that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives in providing for the homes, commercial development, facilities and infrastructure which society needs. These objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. They comprise an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective. Paragraph 18 confirms that these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of development plans and the application of the policies in the Framework. However, it states that they

are not criteria against which every development proposal can or should be judged.

- 2.14 Chapter 3 specifically refers to Decision-Making Policies and gives guidance on preparing planning applications and on how to determine applications.

- 2.15 Chapter 4 relates to achieving sustainable development. In terms of decision-making policies, Policy S3 is particularly relevant. **S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development** states that:

Decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

- 2.16 It states that for developments situated outside a settlement, policy **S5** should be applied. In all locations, development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in the Framework should be approved without delay.

- 2.17 **S5: Principle of development outside settlements** states *inter alia* that:

1. Only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework

2.18 The list of acceptable forms of development includes:

c. The reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the existing building²⁵. In the case of proposals for a replacement building, it should be for the same use and not disproportionately larger than the one it replaces.

d. The redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed-use including residential)

j. Development which would address an evidenced unmet need (including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provision of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test), and where the development would:

i. Be physically well-related to an existing settlement (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure;

Footnote 25 clarifies that the 'existing building' is to be assessed as the property as existing on the date of the publication of the Framework ie 17.8.26.

2. In applying this policy, the circumstances in which the benefits of approving development proposals are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects include, but are not restricted to, situations where the development proposal would fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that

development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances.

3. Development proposals comprising isolated homes, which are those lying outside settlements or groups of houses, should not be approved other than in accordance with policy HO11.

2.19 Policy HO11 is contained within Chapter 6 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes. **Policy HO11: Isolated homes in the countryside** states *inter alia*:

1. Development proposals for isolated homes in the countryside should only be supported where one or more of the following circumstances apply:

c. The development would reuse a redundant or disused building and enhance its immediate setting, including proposals which would secure the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building (subject to taking into account any harm to its significance, as set out in policy HE6);

2.20 More generally, **Policy HO7: Meeting the need for homes** requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits of homes that contribute to the evidenced accommodation needs of the community. The proposed dwelling makes a modest but positive contribution to that need whilst reusing an existing building.

2.21 Annexe D of the new NPPF relates to sets out how housing need should be calculated using the standard method, how land supply should be assessed, and the Housing Delivery Test applied. It specifies at paragraph 8 that local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites. This should be sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing, assessed against their housing requirement in the development plan, or against their local housing need (calculated using the standard method) where the development plan housing requirement is more than five years old. Whilst MSDC has met the HDT, it still cannot demonstrate a five year supply of development land.

2.22 The new NPPF contains other relevant National Policies outlined below:

Climate change

CC2: Mitigation of climate change - development should contribute to climate change mitigation and the transition to net zero.

CC3: Adaptation to climate change - Development proposals should take into account the current and potential impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the scheme, attempt to minimise vulnerability to these impacts

Effective use of land

L2: Making effective use of land - Substantial weight should be given to the benefits where a development proposal would achieve *inter alia* making better use of vacant and underutilised land and buildings, such as by bringing back into residential use empty homes and other suitable buildings;

Achieving well-designed places

DP3: Key principles for well-designed places - sets the key principles for well-designed places, including a positive contribution to local character, safe and healthy environments, and development that is visually attractive, functional and sustainable.

Promoting sustainable transport

TR3: Locating development in sustainable locations - requires development to be located in sustainable locations, taking account of the scale and type of development, proximity and accessibility to services, facilities and employment, and the practical scope to use sustainable transport. It recognises that the assessment is context-specific.

TR4: Street design, access and parking - requires safe and suitable access for all users, suitable parking and servicing arrangements, and street design appropriate to place.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

N2: Improving the natural environment - requires development to consider environmental qualities, protect and enhance natural features where possible, use appropriate landscaping to integrate development into its surroundings and avoid, mitigate or compensate biodiversity harm.

New Homes Bonus

- 2.23 Part 6 of the Localism Act (enacted in January 2012) requires local planning authorities to have regard to local finance considerations (so far as material to the application) as well as the provisions of the Development Plan and any other material considerations. The New Homes Bonus started in April 2011 and will match fund the additional Council tax raised for new homes and empty properties brought back into use, with an additional amount for affordable homes. The New Homes Bonus is as such a consideration in determining this planning application.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.24 Local Planning policy is set out within the Development Plan which comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 - 2031 (MSDP) adopted in March 2018, and the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan, made March 2015.

- 2.25 The relevant policies of the MSDP are set out as follows:

- DP4: Housing
- DP6: Settlement Hierarchy
- DP12: Protection and enhancement of the countryside
- DP15: New homes in the countryside
- DP20: Securing Infrastructure
- DP21: Transport
- DP26: Character and Design
- DP27: Dwelling Space Standards
- DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- DP38: Biodiversity
- DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction
- DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage

- 2.26 Policy DP4 sets out the District's housing requirements for the lifetime of the Plan. Policy DP6 allows for new

development outside the defined boundaries of towns and villages, subject to certain criteria. Any redevelopment will be required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale (with particular regard to DP26: Character and Design).

- 2.27 Policy DP12 states that development will be permitted in the countryside provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District. The impact of development proposals on the quality of rural and landscape character will be assessed using evidence such as Landscape Character Assessments.
- 2.28 Policy DP15 allows for the re-use of rural buildings for residential use, subject to certain criteria.
- 2.29 Policy DP20 is intended to ensure that developers provide for, or contribute towards, the infrastructure and mitigation measures made necessary by their development proposals. This is to be done via the use of S106 legal agreements, Unilateral Undertakings and CIL payments. It is noted that MSDC have yet to adopt a CIL charging schedule.

- 2.30 Policy DP21 seeks to ensure that schemes are sustainably located to minimise the need for travel, and protect the safety of road users and pedestrians, and seeks to provide adequate parking in relation to development proposals.
- 2.31 Policy DP26 requires all development and surrounding spaces, including alterations to existing buildings, to be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside.
- 2.32 Policy DP27 confirms that all new dwellings should meet the minimum nationally described space standards.
- 2.33 Policy DP37 confirms that the District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected. Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.

- 2.34 Policy DP38 aims to protect and enhance biodiversity. Development proposals should be informed by local ecological and geological evidence and national guidance. Local ecological evidence should include protected and notable species as well as considering the potential effects of the development on habitats and species.
- 2.35 Policy DP39 required all development proposals to seek to improve the sustainability of development and should where appropriate and feasible according to the type and size of development and location incorporate a variety of measures to ensure sustainable design and construction.
- 2.36 Policy DP41 aims to ensure that development is safe from flooding, and will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 2.37 The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the

relevant policies, and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and stage 1 Hearings were concluded on the 31st October 2024. There are unresolved objections to the majority of policies in the draft District Plan and as such, only minimal weight can be given to the Plan.

- 2.38 One of the concerns with the emerging plan relates to housing provision. It is noted that on the Draft Proposal Map, land to the west of Burgess Hill and north of Hurstpierpoint is allocated under Policy DPSC1 for the provision of 1350 units. This site crosses Danworth Lane approximately 600m to the north of Willowbrook.
- 2.39 In order to meet the Inspector's concerns over the amount of housing provision, the Council has had to revisited the list of allocated sites. One such site being put forward as a Main Modification (MM60) in July 2026 was part of the 2023 SHELAA list (site 1105) and relates to land east and west of Malthouse Lane, Burgess Hill. This site has an allocation of 750 units. The western edge of the site abuts Danworth Lane approximately 75m north of Willowbrook.

2.40 Whilst it is acknowledged that this sites are part of the Draft Plan, which can only be afforded partial weight at this time, the inclusion of these sites indicates that firstly, the Council consider the area suitable for large housing developments, and secondly, the character of the area is likely to change considerably in the future. Details of the two sites are attached at Appendix NJA-3.

Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan

2.41 The Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan (HSCNP) has been formally 'made' as of March 2015.

2.42 The most relevant policies in the HSCNP are:

- HurstC1 - Conserving and enhancing character
- HurstH1 - Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common new housing development

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

2.43 The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

2.44 The merits of the proposal will be considered against relevant planning policies in the following sections of this Planning, Design & Access Statement.

3.0 DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL: USE & AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 As stated above, the previous proposal failed at Appeal on a single issue – the failure to meet the National Space Standards. This application therefore seeks to overcome that one objection and proposes the conversion and extension of the redundant barn to create a one-bedroom dwelling.
- 3.2 The existing building is of timber construction and is clad externally with black stained timber boarding. It has a shallow pitched, ridged roof over. The building has a footprint of 4 x 9.5m and has a maximum height of 4.625m (eaves height 3.8m). It is set back from the road frontage by some 20m. The north elevation of the barn directly adjoins an established enclosed storage area that has long formed part of the overall barn footprint and functional layout. This storage area features a hardstanding base and is defined along the full 9.5m length of the building by timber fence panels and three prominent vertical timber poles constructed from the same timber material as the main building. Access

between this storage area and the main building is provided via the entrances in the rear elevation. Together, these features establish a pre-existing structural framework and physical footprint utilised for storage associated with the site.

- 3.3 The current proposal includes an extension to the north elevation, which would be the full length of the structure, and project 3.5m. The existing roof ridge will be moved approximately 0.5m to the north, and increased in height to 4.76m (approximately 0.2m in height). The eaves height on the southern elevation will remain at approximately 3.8m. A catslide roof, with an eaves height of 2.3m, will extend to the north over the extension. The extension will incorporate the existing posts that mark the edge of the enclosure within the northern elevation.
- 3.4 The extension would be constructed to match the existing building in all respects. The barn, as extended, would provide an open-plan kitchen and living/dining area with a utility room off the kitchen (including built-in storage), a bedroom (with built-in storage) and a bathroom. The sitting/dining area would be open to the roof, with loft space provided over the remainder of the accommodation. All

rooms would meet the national space standards for a 2-person, one-bed unit, with sufficient storage space provided.

- 3.5 The proposal would see the existing double doors on the south elevation removed and replaced with a single timber front door. In addition, two windows would be provided at each end of the elevation. On the west elevation, the existing window would be removed and replaced with a timber/glazed door within the new extension. On the west elevation, a window would be provided within the extension. On the north elevation the doors at either end and the two central windows would be removed. The new north elevation would contain patio doors and a window. Two roof lights would be inserted into the new catslide roof, and solar panels would be provided either side of the ridge.
- 3.7 The modest extension has been carefully designed to retain the character and appearance of the barn, to cover only the area already hard surfaced and utilised as storage space ancillary to the use of the barn, and to allow the interior space to comply fully with the NDSS. The extension utilises the low-profile catslide roof (2.3m eaves) and remains subservient to the primary barn structure. It preserves the

overall agricultural form and character of the barn as required under Policy DP15.

- 3.8 The specified objective of Chapter 6 (Delivering a sufficient supply of homes) of the new NPPF is to support the delivery of a substantial increase in the supply of homes. National Policy HO7 states that in applying the policies in the NPPF, substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing homes which will contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of the community.
- 3.9 The site lies outside a settlement, and therefore National Policy S5 applies. This states that only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements. One such exemption is for the reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the existing building.
- 3.10 National Policy HO11 states that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes

in the countryside unless certain circumstances apply, including where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting.

3.11 The site lies approximately 800m to the north of the boundary of the Built Up Area of Hurstpierpoint, and 1km west of Burgess Hill where a full range of facilities are available, including shops and transport links. Considering the proximity of the site to these settlements, it is not considered that the proposal constitutes an isolated site.

3.12 When considering the recent appeal against the previous refusal of planning permission, the Inspector considered whether or not the appeal site was in a suitable location (paragraphs 13 – 18). Each of the Local Plan policies were discussed in turn.

3.13 Under Policy DP12 of the MSDP, development is permitted within areas outside defined built-up area boundaries. The Policy states:

Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries

on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

- it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or***
- it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.***

3.14 In this respect, the proposal maintains the quality of the rural and landscape character of the area. The resultant dwelling will retain the agricultural character of the barn. Proposed materials are appropriate to the agricultural style of the barn as well as the rural character of the area.

3.15 Furthermore, Policy DP15 states that new homes in the countryside will be permitted where special justification exists. It also allows for the re-use of rural buildings for residential use:

The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings for residential use in the countryside will be permitted where it is not a recently constructed agricultural

building which has not been or has been little used for its original purpose and:

- ***the re-use would secure the future of a heritage asset; or***
- ***the re-use would lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting and the quality of the rural and landscape character of the area is maintained.***

3.16 The existing barn has been present on the site for many years and has been used in the past for the storage of hay.

3.17 It is considered that the re-use of the barn would lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting by way of renovating the exterior of the barn, as well as tidying up the land immediately surrounding the barn. This in turn would enhance the rural and landscape character of the area. The proposal also includes the removal of a mobile home from the site at Willowbrook. As such it is considered that the principle of conversion is acceptable under policy DP15.

3.18 When considering the previous appeal, the Inspector stated:

The appeal site is not within a settlement boundary as defined in the District Plan. It is therefore in a countryside location for the purposes of planning policy. Policy DP12 of the District Plan sets out that the countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted within the countryside provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District and it is either necessary for the purposes of agriculture or supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the District Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy DP15 allows for the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings for residential use subject to various criteria including that the re-use would lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting and that the quality of the rural and landscape character of the area is maintained. There is no specific requirement for the converted building to be in a sustainable location. This approach is broadly in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which in paragraph 84, sets out that the development of isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless certain circumstances apply, including where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting. I acknowledge that the Framework promotes walking, cycling and the use of public transport, and the management of patterns of growth in pursuit of these objectives. However, given the specific allowances set out by the Framework for the re-use of rural buildings, the location

of the proposed development would be in line with its overall aims.

I recognise that the appeal site's location is somewhat isolated in terms of its proximity to shops, services and public transport. However, the conversions allowed under Policy DP15 would by their nature often be in isolated locations due to the types of building to which the policy refers. Although Policy DP21 requires schemes to be sustainably located to minimise the need for travel, I do not consider this policy to be directly determinative to the appeal proposal given that there is no specific locational requirement in Policy DP15.

3.19 The basic principles of the current proposal remain unchanged, and it is therefore considered that the Inspector's conclusion is applicable to the current proposal. The location of the site is not a barrier to the granting of planning permission. Similarly, whilst the NPPF has been updated, there is still an exception for the re-use of buildings in the countryside for residential purposes, subject to certain criteria. Whilst the details of these criteria will be addressed within this statement, it is considered that the principle of the proposed development remains acceptable.

3.20 Policy HurstC1 of the HSCNP relates to conserving and enhancing character. In part it requires development to

'maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the Parish area'. Given the above, it is considered that the proposal also complies with Policy HurstC1.

3.21 The Inspector continued:

As I have concluded in the previous main issue, the proposed conversion would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, particularly given the limited views of the barn from public vantage points. I note the Council's view that there is little evidence as to whether the foundations of the existing building would be capable of supporting the extra weight of new flooring, insulation and windows which they consider would lend weight against the use of the building for residential purposes. Although the appellant has provided an initial structural report about the barn, this is not a requirement of Policy DP15 in assessing the suitability of a building for conversion.

Given my findings regarding the location and effect on the character and appearance of the area, including its immediate setting, the proposal would be in line with the aims of District Plan Policies DP12 and DP15 and Policy HurstC1 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish 2031 Neighbourhood Plan, made in 2015 (NP). Taken together, and amongst other things, they allow for the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings for residential use, and require

development in the countryside to maintain or where possible enhance the quality of the rural and landscape character.

The Council also refer to Policy DP6 of the District Plan and Policy HurstH1 of the NP in their reason for refusal. I do not consider these policies are determinative. Although DP6 refers to development outside settlement boundaries, it does not address the re-use of rural buildings. NP Policy HurstH1 relates to new housing development in the neighbourhood plan area and has little direct relevance to the re-use or conversion of an existing rural building.

Again, these views are considered to be applicable to the current proposal.

3.22 The application is accompanied by the Building Survey previously submitted. This confirms that the building is in reasonable structural condition but would benefit from some repairs and maintenance. As quoted above, the previous Inspector was of the view that a survey was not required under National or Local policy. The Inspector was satisfied that the condition of the building was not a barrier to its conversion.

3.23 Having regards to the Inspector's previous conclusions, it is considered that the existing building meets the requirements of National Policy S5(1)(c), in that the barn is of permanent and substantial construction. The barn is lawful in planning terms. The extension proposed is subservient and modest in scale and design, and will not result in a disproportionate increase in size when compared to the existing building.

4.0 LAYOUT, SCALE & DESIGN

4.1 The stated objective of Chapter 14 (Achieving well-designed places) of the new NPPF is to promote high quality, healthy, inclusive and sustainable places, through setting clear expectations about design outcomes and the use of relevant tools and processes.

4.2 The first criterion of National Policy DP3: Key principles for well-designed places states:

Development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets.

4.3 District Plan policy DP26 is a general design policy relating to all new development. It states:

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 while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;***

4.4 The proposal is to convert an existing building. The carefully designed extension, and conversion scheme ensures that the rural character, appearance and style of the building will be retained. The development is small in scale and no public space is to be included.

- creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;***

4.5 The proposed development is of a scale appropriate to the character of the area. The proposed extension will match the character and appearance of the existing barn, and the traditional style of the resultant dwelling ensures it retains

the agricultural character of the barn, and the rural character of the area.

- ***protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;***

4.6 The proposal relates to an existing building. The proposed addition will be located within the existing enclosed area to the north of the existing building, which is marked by tall telegraph poles is unkempt and overgrown. There will be no encroachment into open spaces. The proposal includes the removal of a mobile home from the site, which will also improve its appearance. No trees will be harmed by the proposal.

- ***protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;***

4.7 The site does not lie within an area designated for any special character or historic value. The traditional style of the resultant dwelling will blend in with the rural character of the area.

- ***does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29);***

4.8 The site does not have any immediate neighbouring properties which would be impacted by the proposal. There will be no impact on outlook, daylight or sunlight. The creation of a single dwelling is unlikely to result in any material increase in terms of noise or general disturbance. There will be no air or light pollution.

- ***creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;***

4.9 This criterion is not relevant given the modest scale of the proposal.

- ***incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;***

4.10 There is already space within the front of the site that is used for parking when visiting the horses. It is not considered that the use of such space in association with the new dwelling will cause any harm to the street scene or the character of the area in general.

• ***positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;***

4.11 The building works will comply with the relevant Building Regulations to ensure that the proposal is energy and water efficient. Solar panels are to be provided on both roof slopes. An air source heat pump serving underfloor heating and radiators and to provide hot water is proposed. High levels of insulation will be provided. An EV charging point will also be provided. An Energy Statement is attached.

• ***take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300 unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;***

4.12 Given the small scale of the current proposal, this criterion is not considered to be relevant.

• ***optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.***

4.13 The re-use of this existing building is considered to make efficient use of the site. The proposal is in keeping with the NPPF which encourages the re-use of existing buildings, and the efficient use of land.

4.14 It is considered that the proposal meets all the requirements of policy DP26.

4.15 Design Principle DG53 of the adopted Mid Sussex Design Guide refers to building conversions. It states that '*The primary objective of all conversions of traditional buildings must be to retain the character and appearance of the original building, and its defining architectural characteristics.*' In addition, it advises that the '*introduction of conspicuous domestic features such as chimneys, satellite dishes, aerials, porches and additional window or door openings are often out of character with the original building*

and, wherever possible, such features may need to be avoided.'

4.16 The proposed conversion will retain the traditional rural and agricultural character of the existing barn. The proposed extension has been carefully designed to retain the character and appearance of the barn. It allows for the increase in floor area, but reduces the increase in built form through the use of the catslide roof. The character of the countryside will be maintained.

4.17 The Inspector, when considering the previous appeal, referred to the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area (paragraphs 7 – 12). The decision letter stated:

Danworth Lane is in a rural location between the settlements of Hurstpierpoint and Burgess Hill. The area is characterised by farmland interspersed with some areas of woodland and sporadic clusters of dwellings. The appeal site comprises a traditional hay barn located within an equestrian use, set off to one side of the equestrian arena. There is a grassed area next to the barn, which contains a seating area, picnic bench, shed and various pieces of children's play equipment. There is an existing vehicular access to the site, and two parking

spaces are proposed adjacent to this access. Although there is a substantial hedge next to the highway, the barn can be seen in limited views from the street through the entrance to the site.

4.18 The proposed extension will be located partially within this grassed area.

The black stained timber barn has high-set eaves and a shallow pitched roof. There are window openings in its north and west elevations. Although capable of functioning for storage purposes, the barn is somewhat dilapidated. I consider it makes a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The degree of alteration proposed to its external appearance visible from the street would be limited. The most significant extent of glazing would be confined to the west elevation, towards which there would be no public vantage point. Nevertheless, the extent of glazing proposed would be consistent with alterations necessary to convert to a residential use and would not harm the character or appearance of the surrounding area. I am satisfied that the repair and alteration of the barn would lead to an enhancement of its immediate setting.

4.19 The current proposal remains similar in terms of its character and appearance. The largest amount of glazing remains on the northern elevation, at the eastern end, and

comprises a four panel bifold door, with a height of approximately 2.3m, located within the wall of the extension under the catslide roof. As previously, it would not be easily visible from the street. The Inspector's view that *the extent of glazing proposed would be consistent with alterations necessary to convert to a residential use and would not harm the character or appearance of the surrounding area* is considered to remain valid. Moreover, the current proposal remains within an established footprint. The extension does not encroach onto open paddock land or expand the outer physical boundary contained by the poles. Instead, it infills the pre-existing storage area defined by the three established structural timber poles along the northern elevation. The built footprint of the proposed dwelling remains completely contained within this pre-existing envelope.

The extension, utilising the catslide roof with a low eaves height of 2.3m at the line of the existing posts, would keep the visual dominance of the barn to a minimum. Furthermore, the addition adopts the classic form of an agricultural lean to. This maintains a subordinate visual scale and preserves the traditional barn profile.

4.20 The Inspector addressed the Council's previous concern relating to residential curtilage and paraphernalia and stated:

The grassed area adjacent to the barn already contains seating areas and some play equipment typical of a residential garden. There would be minimal alteration to hardstanding and parking arrangements as a result of the proposed residential use. This area is largely screened from the street; I do not consider there would be a degree of change which would unacceptably harm the rural character of the area as a result of domestic paraphernalia within the grassed area.

Enclosing the storage area consolidates the building envelope which directly enhances the immediate setting of the barn and improves the rural landscape character, fulfilling the core criteria of MSDP Policy DP15

4.21 The Inspector concluded:

As set out above, the proposals would be an appropriate means of restoring the building and would be consistent with the rural character of the surrounding area.

For the reasons given above, the proposal would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the countryside, and would be in line with the aims of Policies DP12 and DP26 of the District Plan. Amongst other things, these policies require development to maintain or where possible enhance the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, be well designed and to address the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape.

The Council refer to principle DG38 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2020 in the reason for refusal. This relates primarily to the detailed design of new buildings and as such I consider it of limited relevance to the appeal scheme.

It is considered that the views of the Inspector remain valid for the current proposal.

- 4.22 Policy DP27 of the District Plan relates to space standards for new dwellings, and requires all new dwellings to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards. The current proposal for a single storey, 1 bedroom, two person property, meets the prescribed standards.

- The overall property has a gross internal floor area of 59m², which includes 1.92m² of built-in storage space. (The Standard requires 50m² and 1.5m² respectively).
- The bedroom has a floor area of 15.7m², and a width of 4.2m. This excludes the 0.96m² of built-in storage accessed from the bedroom, but includes possible built-in wardrobes etc. (The Standard requires a double room of at least 11.5m², and a minimum of 2.75m in width;
- A further built-in storage area of 0.96m² accessed via the utility room giving 1.92m² in total.

- 4.23 The layout has been designed to provide just one double bedroom, and the dwelling will be for two people only. The Space Standards relevant to this situation have been applied.

- 4.24 When considering the previous appeal, the Inspector expressed concern over the fact that the property fell short of the national standards. No other objections were raised against the proposal. As the current proposal now meets

these requirements, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in all respects.

5.0 ACCESS & PARKING

- 5.1 Development Plan policy DP21 refers to the sustainability requirements and traffic generation for all new development.
- 5.2 The proposal includes ample space for the provision of the two parking spaces required to meet the standards, as well as parking for bicycles. An EV charging point is provided.
- 5.3 The level of vehicle movements generated by a single dwelling is not considered material in terms of any impact on the traffic in the area.
- 5.4 No objections were raised in terms of traffic, highway safety or parking provision when the previous scheme was considered. There is no reasonable justification in raising an objection against this very-similar proposal. It is considered that the current proposal meets the requirements of Policy DP21.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY

6.1 Policy DP21 of the District Plan relates to transport and requires schemes to be *'sustainably located to minimise the need for travel' and take 'opportunities to facilitate and promote the increased use of alternative means of transport to the private car, such as the provision of, and access to, safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and public Transport, including suitable facilities for secure and safe cycle parking'*. In addition, it requires that where *'practical and viable, developments should be located and designed to incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.'*

6.2 Furthermore, Policy DP39 of the District Plan relates to Sustainable Design and Construction and requires development proposals to improve the sustainability of development and should where appropriate and feasible according to the type and size of development and location, incorporate measures including minimising energy use through the design and layout of the scheme; maximise efficient use of resources, including minimising waste and maximising recycling/re-use of materials through both

construction and occupation. The Council's Design Guide accepts that conversions allow for the re-use of existing buildings to preserve their contribution to their urban or rural context, whilst also contributing to the sustainability agenda through the capturing of embodied energy associated with the building's original construction, and avoiding the wider environmental costs linked with demolition and re-development.

6.3 A full Energy Report, compiled by Arcadian Architectural Services Ltd, accompanies this application. This states that:

The dwelling's thermal envelope will be designed to reduce the predicted energy load of the building using the improvement to the thermal element U values, air permeability and heating systems. The overall aim of the dwelling's design is to ensure maximum possible reduction in carbon emissions within the constraints set by the nature and form of the development and the individual site characteristics.

To seek to achieve compliance with the requirements of Local Authority, the detailed design of the development sought to achieve as its objective a minimum 20% reduction in the overall carbon emissions using renewable

technologies. Consideration has also been given to the overall appearance of the development.

6.4 It is acknowledged that the site is not in a fully sustainable location but Policy DP15 of the District Plan allows for the rural conversion of barns which would not necessarily be in sustainable locations. However, the proposal complies with Policy DP39 and also includes the provision of EV charging points and cycle storage to encourage other means of sustainable travel. These circumstances have been seen to be acceptable in other applications for conversion within the District.

6.5 When considering the location of the proposal as part of the previous proposal (paragraphs 13-15), the Inspector stated:

I recognise that the appeal site's location is somewhat isolated in terms of its proximity to shops, services and public transport. However, the conversions allowed under Policy DP15 would by their nature often be in isolated locations due to the types of building to which the policy refers. Although Policy DP21 requires schemes to be sustainably located to minimise the need for travel, I do not consider this policy to be directly determinative to the appeal

proposal given that there is no specific locational requirement in Policy DP15.

6.6 There would not appear to be any reason to take a different approach with regard to the current application, and therefore the proposal complies with Policies DP21 and DP39 of the District Plan. The new NPPF specifically allows for the re-use of buildings outside of settlement areas.

7.0 ECOLOGY

- 7.1 Accompanying the application is a Daytime Bat Potential Roost Assessment (PRA), compiled by Wychwood Environmental Ltd. The report also includes the results of an ecological walkover of the site.
- 7.2 A survey of the barn showed that, based on its features, the building had negligible potential to support roosting bats. Therefore, no further surveys in relation to bats are required. Whilst the site itself had limited potential to support foraging and commuting bats, precautionary measures in relation to lighting are provided within the report as the surrounding area had good quality foraging and commuting habitat present.
- 7.3 No evidence of any other protected species such as badgers, amphibians, reptiles or nesting birds were found during the site survey.
- 7.4 The building on site had low potential to support nesting birds. There were a few droppings present at the eaves where birds such as pigeons appear to occasionally roost. No further surveys are required.
- 7.5 No evidence was found during the survey, but the site may be suitable for foraging and commuting mammals. Precautionary mitigation measures are provided within the report.
- 7.6 The report notes that it is known from the desk study that great crested newts are present within the wider area with EPS mitigation licences issued within 2km and positive recorded held for great crested newts within 500m of the barn. However, the habitats present within the immediate vicinity of the barn which may be impacted during construction consisted of amenity grassland and hardstanding. These habitats do not have potential to support great crested newts and as such the proposals are not anticipated to have any negative impacts on this species.
- 7.7 As stated above, the report includes suggested mitigations in relation to lighting, protection of any trenches on site whilst works are carried out, and the timing of works with regard to the bird nesting season. In addition, enhancements are recommended with regard to landscaping, the provision of bird boxes and bat access tiles.

7.8 All such mitigations and enhancements can be achieved by way of conditions on any forthcoming planning permission. No previous objection has been raised on these grounds. The proposal meets the requirements of Policy DP38 of the District Plan.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 This application seeks planning permission for the conversion and extension of the existing barn to create a one-bedroom dwelling, and the associated removal of an existing mobile home at Willowbrook, Danworth Lane, Hurstpierpoint. .
- 8.2 Whilst the site is located within an area of countryside restraint, Policy DP15 of the District Plan allows for the rural conversion of barns. In determining the previous appeal (APP/D3830/W/24/3340329), the Planning Inspector determined that the re-use of this building and its countryside location is acceptable and fully accords with Policies DP12 and DP15 of the District Plan, Policy HurstC1 of the Neighbourhood Plan, and the new NPPF published in August 2026. Similarly, National Policies S5 and HO11 allow for the reuse of redundant buildings in areas beyond settlements, including more isolated locations.
- 8.3 The revised design incorporates a modest, subordinate extension under a catslide roof, specifically designed to overcome the sole issue identified by the previous Inspector

regarding internal living space. The proposal provides 59m², comfortably exceeding the 50m² requirement set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards for a 1-bed, 2-person dwelling, thus fully complying with Policy DP27.

- 8.4 The proposed development is entirely in keeping with the character and appearance of the area. By sitting the extension within an existing enclosed area and securing the permanent removal of the residential mobile home, the proposal will secure a net enhancement to the immediate setting. It will not result in any detriment to neighbouring residential amenity, adequate parking is provided, and access arrangements have previously raised no objection.
- 8.5 The proposal will meet targets for carbon dioxide reduction through high energy-efficiency measures and renewable energy, and will not cause harm to biodiversity. Enhancements to improve biodiversity form part of the proposal in accordance with Policy DP38.
- 8.6 The information and analysis in this statement demonstrates how the proposal accords with all relevant national and local planning policy. It has been shown that the proposal

overcomes the only outstanding objection to the proposed dwelling, and the proposal is now acceptable in all respects. It is respectfully requested that the Council view the application favourably and grant planning permission for the proposal.