

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/3028	Case Officer:	Katherine Williams
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Proposed demolition of modern farm buildings. Extension and conversion of existing barn to dwelling house. Conversion of existing stable building to ancillary accommodation. Construction of replacement stables, games room outbuilding, and a bike, bin and storage outbuilding'.		
Site:	West House Farm, Henfield Road, Albourne, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9DE, ,		
Validation Date	27 Nov 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	28 Sep 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	1 Oct 2026
Target Date:	22 Jan 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	Katherine Williams

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	5 Oct 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/3028

West House Farm, Henfield Road, Albourne, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9DE, Proposed demolition of modern farm buildings. Extension and conversion of existing barn to dwelling house. Conversion of existing stable building to ancillary accommodation. Construction of replacement stables, games room outbuilding, and a bike, bin and storage outbuilding'.

Mr Edward Owens

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

MSDC Tree Officer - no objection, recommend condition

WSCC Highways Authority - no objection, recommend condition

Ecologist - No objection, recommend conditions

MSDC Flood Risk and Drainage Team - No objection, recommend condition

Conservation Officer - No objection, recommend conditions

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No objection

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of modern farm buildings. Extension and conversion of existing barn to dwelling house. Conversion of existing stable building to ancillary accommodation. Construction of replacement stables, games room outbuilding, and a bike, bin and storage outbuilding.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/25/2998 - Construction of rear single-storey extension, external and internal alterations, general repair and conservation works to main house. Demolition of existing outbuilding and construction of replacement carport building. Granted

DM/25/2998 - Construction of rear single-storey extension, external and internal alterations, general repair and conservation works to main house. Demolition of existing outbuilding and construction of replacement carport building. Granted

DM/25/3040 - Proposed demolition of modern farm buildings. Extension and conversion of existing barn to dwelling house. Conversion of existing stable building to ancillary accommodation. Construction of replacement stables, games room outbuilding, and a bike, bin and storage outbuilding'. Under Consideration

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application property is located off the western side of Henfield Road, within the countryside, and is accessed by an extended private driveway.

The property consists of a collection of barns and equestrian buildings and facilities. The main barn is a 18th century Grade II listed weather boarded barn with open barns on either side and an enclosed paddock to the rear.

The access to the property extends to the northern side of a Grade II listed building which dates back to the late 18th early 19th century and consists of a brick-built farmhouse.

There are a number of footpaths within the locality which provides public views of the proposal, including a footpath that runs parallel with the access drive from Henfield Road, crosses the driveway and extends along the northern boundary of the site and then along the northern side of the haybarns at the far west of the site.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The proposed conversion of the existing barn would create a 4-bed 8 person dwellinghouse. This would be created by the demolition of the existing barns and stables to either side of the barn and the construction of two single storey extensions to create wings to accommodate the proposed bedrooms along with a mezzanine area to the western side of the original barn. The extensions to the barn would largely follow the footprint of the buildings that would be replaced, with pitched hipped roof forms. The alterations to the barn would also include new and altered openings.

The existing block of 3 No. stables would be converted to form an annexe to be used in association with the proposed barn conversion. This conversion would also include replacement of the stable doors for 2 No windows and doors and with the removal of the front roof canopy.

The stable and barn building to the west would also be replaced by building to be used a gym/games, office and shower rooms incidental to the proposed dwelling. The building would have a depth and length of some 4.7 metres and 11.4 metres with a pitched hipped roof form.

To the north of this building would be a bike and bin store which would have an open front design with a pitched hipped roof.

The barn adjacent to the western boundary of the site would be replaced by a stable block to contain 4 No. loose boxes, a tack and feed room and external store. This building would have a depth and length of some 5.3 metres and 23.2 metres with a pitched hipped roof.

The proposed extensions, proposed games building and replacement stables would have a timber frame, brick plinth, weatherboarding and clay tiles.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Specifically Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states:

'In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to:

- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to application,*
- b) And local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and*
- c) Any other material considerations.'*

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides:

'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'

The requirement to determine applications "in accordance with the plan" does not mean applications must comply with each and every policy, but is to be approached on the basis of the plan taken as a whole. This reflects the fact, acknowledged by the Courts, that development plans can have broad statements of policy, many of which may be mutually irreconcilable so that in a particular case one must give way to another.

Under section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 if a policy contained in a development plan for an area conflicts with another policy in the development plan, the conflict must be

resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to be adopted, approved or published.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocation DPD and Albourne Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance) does not form part of the development plan, but is an important material consideration.

Mid Sussex District Plan

The District Plan was adopted at Full Council on 28th March 2018.

Relevant policies:

DP4 - Housing

DP5 - Planning to Meet Future Housing Need

DP6 - Settlement Hierarchy

DP12 - Protection and Enhancement of Countryside

DP15 - New Homes in the Countryside

DP17 - Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

DP21 - Transport

DP26 - Character and Design

DP27 - Dwelling Space Standards

DP34 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

DP37 - Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

DP38 - Biodiversity

DP39 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DP41 - Flood Risk and Drainage

Site Allocations DPD

The SADPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

No relevant policies.

Albourne Neighbourhood Plan (made September 2016)

Relevant policies:

ALC1 - Conserving and enhancing character

ALH1 - Housing Development

Other Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 - Submission Draft (Regulation 19

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 is currently at Examination with initial hearings held in February/March 2026. The Council has consulted on Main Modifications which are required to ensure the plan is legally compliant and sound with further Hearings taking place in November 2026. The District

Plan remains at Examination until the Inspector has published his report, until that time only minimal weight can be given to the Plan and this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

Relevant policies:

DPS1: Climate Change
DPS2: Sustainable Design and Construction
DPS4: Flood Risk and Drainage
DPS5: Water Neutrality
DNP3: Green and Blue Infrastructure
DNP6: Pollution
DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery
DPN2: Biodiversity Net Gain
DPN3: Green and Blue Infrastructure
DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
DPN7: Noise Impacts
DNP9: Air Quality
DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
DPC3: New Homes in the Countryside
DPC6: Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC
DPB1: Character and Design
DPB2: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
DPT3: Active and Sustainable Travel
DPT4: Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
DPH1: Housing
DPH2: Sustainable Development - Outside the Built-up Area
DPH7: Housing Mix
DPH11: Dwelling Space Standards
DPH12: Accessibility

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

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.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (August 2026)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's policies for plan-making and for making decisions on development proposals in England. Paragraph 15 states that 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. Paragraph 17 identifies the three overarching objectives of sustainable development, which are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across all three objectives. These are the economic, social and environmental objectives.

Paragraph 18 of the NPPF states:

'These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of development plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every development proposal can or should be judged. Development plans and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.'

With specific reference to decision-taking, paragraph 3 confirms that planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, with the national decision-making policies of the Framework being an important material consideration in that process.

National Planning Policy Guidance

National Design Guide

Published in 2021, the National Design Guide illustrates how the government consider well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.

Technical Housing Standards

ASSESSMENT

It is considered that the main issues that need to be considered in the determination of this application are as follows;

- Principle of Development;
- Design, Impact on the Listed Building and Setting
- Impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties
- Impact on future occupants of the development
- Impact on the Highway
- Impact on Trees
- Ecology
- Ashdown Forest
- Sustainability
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Planning Balance and Conclusion

Principle of Development

As noted above, planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In terms of policy designations, the starting point for this assessment is that the application site falls outside of the built-up area of Albourne as defined by the District Plan. As such the site is located within the defined Countryside.

The policies contained within the NPPF are material considerations which must be taken into account in the determination of this application. This is confirmed by paragraphs 1 and 3 of the NPPF, with paragraph 1 stating that *'The National Planning Policy Framework 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.'*

Annex A of the NPPF further confirms that development plan policies (or parts of those policies) which are materially inconsistent with the national decision-making policies in the Framework should be given very limited weight, unless they have been examined and adopted (or made) against this Framework. Other development plan policies should not be given reduced weight simply because they were adopted prior to publication of the Framework.

Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. 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.'*

Policy ALC1 of the Albourne Neighbourhood Plan echos the ethos of this policy.

Policy DP15 relates to new homes in the countryside, including the re-use of rural buildings for residential use, and states:

'The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings for residential use in the countryside will be permitted where it is not a recently constructed⁸ agricultural building which has not been or has been little used for its original purpose and:

o the re-use would secure the future of a heritage asset; or

o 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.'

These policies of the District and Neighbourhood Plans are materially inconsistent with policies S3, S5 and HO11 of the NPPF and are given very limited weight.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development is set out in Policy S3 which states that decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means:

'1. Policy S4 in this Framework should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements;

2. Outside settlements, policy S5 should be applied; and

3. 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.'

For development proposals outside of settlements, National decision-making policy S5(3) in the NPPF states that development proposals comprising isolated homes, which lay outside settlements or groups of houses should not be approved other than in accordance with policy HO11.

Policy HO11 states:

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

a. There is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;

b. The development would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets in accordance with policy HE4;

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);

d. The development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or

e. The design is of exceptional quality, in that it:

i. Is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and

ii. Would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.'

In light of the above, this development needs to be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in Policy S3. Where development accords with the relevant provisions of Policies S5 and HO11, this weighs strongly in favour of granting planning permission. The Local Planning Authority must undertake an overall planning balance, assessing the benefits of the proposal against any adverse effects having regard to the national decision-making policies contained within the Framework as a whole.

As part of this process, the weight to be given to development plan policies will need to be assessed against the degree of conformity with the NPPF. Policies that are materially inconsistent with the Framework should be afforded very limited weight, whilst policies that remain consistent with the Framework continue to attract significant weight irrespective of their age.

It is considered that policies DP4, DP6, DP12 and DP15 of the District Plan and policy ALC1 of the Neighbourhood Plan are materially inconsistent with the national decision-making policies within the NPPF and should be given very limited weight.

Therefore, the key tests that must be undertaken when assessing this application is as set out within policies S3, S5 and HO11 of the NPPF.

The following sections of the report will consider the relevant matters associated with the proposed development in the context of the development plan and other material considerations, including the NPPF in order to undertake the necessary tilted balance assessment outlined above.

Assessment

Design, Impact on the Listed Building and Setting

S.66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:

'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'

Policy HE4 of the NPPF relates to the key principles of securing the conservation of heritage assets, and in part states:

'Heritage assets, as an irreplaceable resource, should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. To achieve this, development proposals which would affect the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting should:

a. Maintain or secure a use consistent with their conservation, taking into account the importance of maintaining the assets, the positive contribution they can make to sustainable communities including local economies, and the positive contribution they can make to local character and distinctiveness; and

b. Avoid (or if that is not possible, minimise) harm to the significance of heritage assets, and instead conserve this significance.

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (including from development within its setting) should have a clear and convincing justification in accordance with the policies in this chapter.'

Policy HE5 relates to assessing the effects on heritage assets and states:

'Assessments of the potential effects of development proposals on the significance of heritage assets (including through effects on their setting) should identify whether proposals would be likely to:

a. Have a positive effect, which is where the significance of a heritage asset would be enhanced, or better revealed; or

b. Have no effect on the significance of a heritage asset; or

c. Result in harm to the significance of a heritage asset, either from work affecting the asset itself or from development within its setting. The degree of harm should be identified: substantial harm would occur where the development proposal would seriously affect a key element of the asset's significance; or

d. Cause the total loss of the significance of a heritage asset. In making this assessment it is the effect on a heritage asset's significance rather than the scale of the development which should be considered.

Decision-makers should be satisfied that assessments accurately reflect the effects on heritage assets caused by development proposals.'

Policy HE6 relates to impact of proposals on designated heritage assets, and states:

1. When considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more

important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of its significance.

2. Development proposals which would have a positive effect on a designated heritage asset should be supported.

3. Any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight, which should be dealt with in accordance with paragraphs 4 to 6 of this policy.

4. Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed.'

Policy DP34 of the District Plan relates to listed buildings and other heritage assets, however this policy is materially inconsistent with the policies of the NPPF and therefore has very limited weight.

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design. However, this is considered to have very limited weight as it is materially inconsistent with the NPPF, and greater weight should be given to policy DP3 of the NPPF.

Policy DP3 of the NPPF sets out the key principles for well-designed places. This sets out in part that proposals should respond to their context, 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.

Principle DG11 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide states in part:

'new development should generally reflect the scale of adjacent areas and the settlement context within which it is located to deliver a coherent and consistent urban fabric.'

The Council's Conservation Officer has been consulted on the application and following amendments and additional information raises no objection to the proposal and has made the following final comments:

'A further statement has been provided by the applicant which seeks to set out more clearly the costings relating to the development, and also responds to the changed policy context in light of the recent publication of the new NPPF. The further explanation of the costings is helpful in aiding understanding of the table previously provided. In addition, and importantly in the consideration of these applications, the new NPPF removes the concept of 'optimum viable use' in favour of securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building. In my opinion, in light of the further information and this changed policy context the proposed conversion of the barn to a separate residential use can now be supported.

Revised plans have also been received which include further amendments to the design of the scheme, and further information on the design and placement of the insulation to the walls and roofs of the historic buildings forming part of the site. The amendments made include reductions in the number and scale of new window openings to the barn, making better use of the existing openings as suggested in previous comments. The proposed insulation detail confirms that the framework to the walls and roof of the barn, and to the roof of the stables, will remain partly exposed to view, preserving this important aspect of the internal character of the buildings concerned.

Subject to detail which can be reserved by condition the proposal is therefore considered to meet the requirements of the new NPPF and of District Plan Policy DP34.'

The proposal would result in the change of use of the existing barn to form an independent residential property along with accompanying outbuildings, by the replacement of conversion of existing buildings. The barn would be extended as part of the proposal, the extensions would be located in a similar position to barns and stables which are positioned adjacent to the listed barn. These extensions would accommodate the bedrooms, bathrooms and utility room for the proposed dwelling which would allow the original open layout and form of the listed barn to remain and to be appreciated.

The proposed conversion and replacement outbuildings would retain the rural setting of the barn and adjacent farmhouse and would retain overall open character between the barn properties and the contribution it makes to the settings of the listed buildings.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would preserve the significance of the listed barn, and the contribution it makes to the setting of the farmhouse in accordance with policy DP34 of the District Plan and policies HE4, HE5 and HE6 of the NPPF.

Impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties

Policy DP26 in part seeks to ensure that new development does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings. Policy DP29 seeks to protect residents from unacceptable levels of noise and light pollution. It is considered that these policies have very limited weight as they are materially inconsistent with the NPPF and greater weight should be given to policies L2 and P3 of the NPPF.

Policy L2 of the NPPF relates to making effective use of land. Part L2(1dii) requires proposals to have 'acceptable living standards for residents and neighbours in terms of access to daylight, sunlight, privacy and external amenity space'.

Policy P3 of the NPPF relates to living conditions and pollution. Part 2(b) of this policy requires proposals 'Not give rise to, or contribute to, an unacceptable level of access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residents and occupiers, or unacceptable levels of air, noise, artificial light, water, soil or other forms of pollution on or beyond the site'.

The closest neighbouring property is the farmhouse of West House Farm, which would be some 12 metres from the proposal. Beyond is Little Copyhold, Henfield Road which is some 200 metres from the application property. Given the separation distance it is considered that the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring residential properties.

Accordingly, it is considered that the scheme would comply with policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, and policies L2 and P3 of the NPPF.

Impact on future occupants of the development

The Government's Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards document was published in March 2015 and replaced the Council's adopted Dwelling Space Standards Supplementary Planning Document on 1st October 2015. It sets out space standards for all new residential dwellings, including minimum floor areas and room widths for bedrooms and minimum floor areas for storage, to secure a satisfactory standard of accommodation for future residents.

Policy DP27 of the Mid Sussex District Plan requires residential development to meet the minimum nationally described space standards, and is consistent with policy PM13 of the NPPF.

The proposal is to provide a four bed, eight person dwelling which from Officer calculations indicate would meet the floor space standards and therefore comply with policy DP27 of the District Plan and the National Dwelling Space Standards.

Impact on the Highway

Policy DP21 of the District Plan relates to transport, however, these are considered to have very limited weight as they are materially inconsistent with the NPPF, and greater weight should be given to policies TR3, TR4 and TR6 of the NPPF.

Policy TR3 of the NPPF relates to locating development in sustainable locations and sets a number of principles proposals should reflect.

Policy TR4 of the NPPF relates to street design, access and parking and sets out that to contribute to well-designed places, transport considerations should be integral to the design of the development. This should include giving priority first to walking, wheeling and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas and also providing a suitable number of parking spaces for a range of transport modes where appropriate, reflecting the location and nature of the development (including its

connectivity), and including adequate provision of spaces and infrastructure that allow for the charging of electric vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

Policy TR6 of the NPPF relates to assessing transport impacts and part 4 of this policy states that *'Development proposals should be refused if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts), or an unacceptable impact on highway safety; taking into account any mitigation measures proposed as well as any wider network improvements, including measures to support sustainable patterns of movement. This applies both during the construction phase and following completion.'*

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) was consulted on the application and raise no objection to the proposal. The application site is located off Henfield Road, a B-classified road subject to national speed limit in this location. The site is accessed by an existing private road onto the public highway.

From the collision data provided to WSCC by Sussex Police there has been one recorded collision within the vicinity of the site within the last five years, however this was not attributed to the use of the site access or site operations. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest the site access has been operating unsafely or that the continued use would exacerbate an existing safety concern. The LHA does not anticipate that the proposed development would give rise to a significant material intensification of movements to or from the site.

Sufficient parking for the site of the proposed dwelling would be provided with sufficient space for on-site turning. The proposal would also provide cycle storage.

The LHA therefore considers that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is no contrary to the NPPF and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal. Your planing officer agrees with this assessment.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policies DP21 of the District Plan, and policies TR3, TR4 and TR6 of the NPPF.

Impact on Trees

Policy DP37 of the District Plan relates to trees, woodland and hedgerows. However, this is considered to have very limited weight as it are materially inconsistent with the NPPF, and greater weight should be given to policy N2 of the NPPF.

Policy N2 of the NPPF sets out the key principles for improving the natural environment. In terms of this application this policy requires proposals to conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value, including established trees and hedgerows.

The Tree Officer has been consulted on the application and raised no subject to a condition to comply with the tree protection measures provided. It is therefore considered that the proposal would be acceptable in terms of policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan subject to a condition.

Ecology

Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) lists species of animal (other than birds) which are provided special protection under the Act. Under Section 13 of the Act, all wild plants are protected from being uprooted without the consent of the landowner. In addition to the protection afforded by the Act, certain species are also covered by European legislation. These species are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, 7c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended).

Policy DP38 of the District Plan relates to biodiversity. However, this policy is materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies and should be given very limited weight and greater weight should be given to policy N2 of the NPPF.

Policy N2 of the NPPF seeks to improve the natural environment. Part 1f of this policy requires proposals to minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Part 2 of this policy sets out that *'If significant*

harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then the development should be refused.'

The Council's Ecologist has been consulted on the application and has provided the following comments:

'We have reviewed the Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecosupport Ltd., November 2025) to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and identification of appropriate mitigation measures.

We have also reviewed the information submitted relating to mandatory biodiversity net gains, including the BNG Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan (Ecosupport Ltd., November 2025) and Statutory Biodiversity Metric (August 2024). We note that the BNG Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan (Ecosupport Ltd., November 2025) contains the Condition Assessments, Appendix 1 Baseline Habitat Plan and Appendix 2 Post-development Habitat Plan.

We note from the Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecosupport Ltd., November 2025) that a licence for bats will be required before commencement of any works and recommend that a copy of this is secured by a condition of any consent. This is because the three bat emergence surveys in May and June 2025 confirmed a single Soprano Pipistrelle bat day roost in Building B4 (timber barn). We support the outline mitigation measures in Section 6.3 of the Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecosupport Ltd., November 2025).

We also note that the three bat emergence surveys on Buildings B1 (stable) and B2 (stable) in May, June and July 2025 and the single emergence survey on Buildings B3 (stable) and B5 (small timber structure) confirmed no emergences of bats from these buildings; and that Buildings B6 (small storage facility) and B7 (small storage facility) have negligible bat roost potential. We understand from the Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecosupport Ltd., November 2025) that the hedgerow and individual tree on site to be removed have negligible bat roost potential. We therefore agree that no further surveys for bats are required.

We understand from the Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecosupport Ltd., November 2025) that there are three records of Hazel Dormouse within 2km of the site and there are suitable hedgerows within the site for this species. However, as Hazel Dormouse surveys have been undertaken on the surrounding habitat for a separate planning application and no evidence of this species was found, we agree that no further species for Hazel Dormouse are required.

We support the Precautionary Method Statement for reptiles and mobile protected and Priority species (including Hedgehog, which is a Priority and threatened species) in Sections 6.4 and 6.5 of the Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecosupport Ltd., November 2025). This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

We are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application. However, please note that we have no comments on Great Crested Newt as we have been instructed to leave comments on this European Protected Species to the NatureSpace Partnership.

This provides certainty for the LPA of the likely impacts on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and, with appropriate mitigation measures secured, the development can be made acceptable.

The mitigation measures identified in the Preliminary Ecological Assessment (Sylvatica Ecology, August 2024) should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. This is necessary to conserve and enhance protected and Priority species particularly those recorded in the locality, including bats and mobile protected and Priority species.

We also support the recommendation that a Wildlife Friendly Lighting Strategy is implemented for this application (Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecosupport Ltd., November 2025)) to avoid impacts from light disturbance. This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

Therefore, technical specification should be submitted prior to occupation, which demonstrates measures to avoid lighting impacts to foraging / commuting bats, which are likely to be present within the local area. This should summarise the following measures recommended by Guidance Note:08/23 (Institute of Lighting Professionals) will be implemented:

- o Do not provide excessive lighting. Light levels should be as low as possible as required to fulfil the lighting need.
- o All luminaires should lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, compact fluorescent sources should not be used.
- o Warm White lights should be used at <2700k. This is necessary as lighting which emits an ultraviolet component or that has a blue spectral content has a high attraction effect on insects. This may lead in a reduction in prey availability for some light sensitive bat species.
- o Where appropriate, external security lighting should be set on motion-sensors and set to as short a possible a timer as the risk assessment will allow.
- o Luminaires should always be mounted horizontally, with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt.
- o Only if all other options have been explored, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed. However, due to the lensing and fine cut-off control of the beam inherent in modern LED luminaires, the effect of cowls and baffles is often far less than anticipated and so should not be relied upon solely.

With regard to mandatory biodiversity net gains, it is highlighted that we support the submitted BNG Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan (Ecosupport Ltd., November 2025) and Statutory Biodiversity Metric (August 2024). Biodiversity net gains is a statutory requirement set out under Schedule 7A (Biodiversity Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and we are satisfied that submitted information provides sufficient information at application stage. As a result, a Biodiversity Gain Plan should be submitted prior to commencement, which also includes the following:

- a) A Biodiversity Gain Plan form (Ideally using the Government's template: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-gain-plan>)
- b) The completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations of the pre-development and post-intervention biodiversity values.
- c) Pre and post development habitat plans.
- d) Legal agreement(s)
- e) Biodiversity Gain Site Register reference numbers (if using off-site units).
- f) Proof of purchase (if buying statutory biodiversity credits at a last resort).

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 187d and 193d of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). Reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures are a separate matter to mandatory biodiversity net gains and the finalised details should be outlined within a separate Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy to be secured as a condition of any consent.

We are generally satisfied that the post-intervention values are realistic and deliverable. We agree that the 0% gain in watercourse units is acceptable as there will be no adverse impact on the condition of the stream and there is no scope to enhance the stream within the site.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended in the Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecosupport Ltd., November 2025) to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 187d and 193d of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). Reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures are a separate matter to mandatory biodiversity net gains and the finalised details should be outlined within a separate Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy to be secured as a condition of any consent.

This will enable LPA to demonstrate its compliance with its statutory duties including its biodiversity duty under s40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and delivery of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain.

Impacts will be minimised such that the proposal is acceptable, subject to the conditions below based on BS42020:2013.'

Nature Space have not been consulted on the application as it does not meet the criteria for consultation.

It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable on ecology terms subject to conditions. It is therefore considered that this proposal would also comply with the aims of policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex Plan and the NPPF.

Ashdown Forest

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the competent authority - in this case, Mid Sussex District Council - has a duty to ensure that any plans or projects that they regulate (including plan making and determining planning applications) will have no adverse effect on the integrity of a European site of nature conservation importance. The European site of focus is the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The potential effects of development on Ashdown Forest were assessed during the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process for the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031. This process identified likely significant effects on the Ashdown Forest SPA from recreational disturbance and on the Ashdown Forest SAC from atmospheric pollution.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken for the proposed development.

Recreational disturbance

Increased recreational activity arising from new residential development and related population growth is likely to disturb the protected near-ground and ground nesting birds on Ashdown Forest.

In accordance with advice from Natural England, the HRA for the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, and as detailed in District Plan Policy DP17, mitigation measures are necessary to counteract the effects of a potential increase in recreational pressure and are required for developments resulting in a net increase in dwellings within a 7km zone of influence around the Ashdown Forest SPA. A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) mitigation approach has been developed. This mitigation approach has been agreed with Natural England.

The proposed development is outside the 7km zone of influence and as such, mitigation is not required.

Atmospheric pollution:

Increased traffic emissions as a consequence of new development may result in atmospheric pollution on Ashdown Forest. The main pollutant effects of interest are acid deposition and eutrophication by nitrogen deposition. High levels of nitrogen may detrimentally affect the composition of an ecosystem and lead to loss of species.

The proposed development was modelled in the Mid Sussex Transport Study as a windfall development such that its potential effects are incorporated into the overall results of the transport model, which indicates there would not be an overall impact on Ashdown Forest. This means that there is not considered to be a significant in combination effect on the Ashdown Forest SAC by this development proposal.

Conclusion of the Habitats Regulations Assessment:

The Habitats Regulations Assessment concludes that there would be no likely significant effects, alone or in combination, on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC from the proposed development.

No mitigation is required in relation to the Ashdown Forest SPA or SAC.

A full HRA (that is, the appropriate assessment stage that ascertains the effect on integrity of the European site) of the proposed development is not required.

Sustainability

Policy DP21 of the District Plan in part it requires schemes to be 'sustainably located to minimise the need for travel'. Policy DP39 of the District Plan relates to sustainable design and construction. Both these DP policies are considered to be materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies in the Framework and should be given very limited weight.

Policy CC2 of the NPPF relates to the mitigation of climate change. It sets out the requirements for proposal in order to contribute to climate change mitigation and the transition to net zero. This includes the prioritisation of sustainable patterns of movement and the use of design approaches to conserve energy and other resources.

A Sustainability Statement has been submitted with the application which states that the scheme proposes a number of energy efficiency measures to be incorporated within the development. This includes:

- Re-use and recycling of existing materials on site
- locally sourced materials where possible
- reduced water flow appliances
- low energy lighting
- Air Source Heat Pump
- EV charging point

The site is located within the countryside and some distance from Albourne. The proposal would convert the existing rural building to a residential property, which is supported in principle. It is therefore considered that although the site is not located within a sustainable location the proposal does comply with the objectives of DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy CC2 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy DP41 relates to flood risk and drainage. This policy has very limited weight as it is materially inconsistent with the NPPF and greater weight should be given to policies CC3 and F8 of the NPPF.

Policy CC3 of the NPPF relates to the adaptation to climate change and requires proposals to take into account the current and potential impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the scheme. In part this requires proposals to be located where the risk of flooding is minimised and incorporate sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water flow rates and reduce volume of runoff.

Policy F8 of the NPPF relates to sustainable drainage systems and watercourses. Part 1 of this policy states 'Development proposals which could affect drainage on or around the development site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, in ways which are proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal.'

The site is located within an area at low risk of fluvial flooding and surface water flooding, however the access onto the public highway crosses an area at high surface water flood risk. Further information has been provided which includes updated hydraulic modelling to demonstrate that safe access and egress can be maintained during a flood event.

The Council's Flood Risk and Drainage Team have been consulted on the application and raise no objection to the application subject to condition.

The proposal is thereby considered to comply with policy DP41 of the District Plan, and policies CC3 and F8 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain this application is deemed to have been granted subject to the biodiversity net gain condition for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.

The biodiversity net gain condition is set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Schedule 7A, Part 2, 13 (2). It states:

'The condition is that the development may not be begun unless—

(a) a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to the planning authority (see paragraph 14), and

(b) the planning authority has approved the plan (see paragraph 15)'.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of modern farm buildings. Extension and conversion of existing barn to dwelling house. Conversion of existing stable building to ancillary accommodation. Construction of replacement stables, games room outbuilding, and a bike, bin and storage outbuilding.

Planning legislation requires the application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is therefore necessary for the planning application to be assessed against the policies in the Development Plan and then to take account of other material planning considerations including the National Planning Policy Framework. The Development Plan in this instance consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and the Albourne Neighbourhood Plan.

Courts have confirmed that the Development Plan must be considered as a whole, not simply in relation to any one individual policy. It is therefore not the case that a proposal must accord with each and every policy, or with every aspect of an individual policy, within the Development Plan.

The NPPF states that planning should be genuinely plan-led.

Policy S3 of the NPPF relates to the presumption in favour of sustainable development and sets out that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Policy S5 of the NPPF relates to the principle of development outside settlements. It lists a number of reasons on the certain forms of development which 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. Policy S5 (3) states that development proposals comprising isolated homes, which lay outside settlements or groups of houses should not be approved other than in accordance with policy HO11.

Policy HO11(c) supports development which 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.

As the proposal complies with the development plan and policies S5 and HO11 of the NPPF, the application should be approved without delay as set out in policy S3 (1c) of the NPPF.

The proposal is of an appropriate design and scale which would maintain the rural character of the area, and would preserve the significance of the listed barn and would retain the setting of the adjacent listed farmhouse.

The proposal would utilise the existing access onto the public highway which is considered acceptable and would not result in highway safety issues. There would be an acceptable level of on-site car and cycle parking to serve the development.

Due to the position of the proposed dwelling and the relationship with surrounding residential properties, the proposal would not result in an unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties.

The neutral impacts relate to highways, neighbouring amenities, impact on Ashdown Forest, trees, ecology and drainage and flood risk.

In weighing up these issues, when taken together, it is not considered that the benefits of approving the development would be substantially outweighed by the adverse effects.

There are no other material considerations that would alter the above planning balance.

Accordingly, it is considered that the application complies with Mid Sussex District Plan policies DP4, DP12, DP15, DP21, DP26, DP27, DP29, DP34, DP37, DP38, DP39 and DP41, Albourne Neighbourhood Plan policies ALC1 and ALH1, and policies CC2, CC3, D3, E2, F8, HE4, HE5, HE6, L2, N2, P3, TR3, TR4, and TR6 of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Katherine Williams