

Planning Statement – Mulberry House – Glamping Pod Site

Proposal and Site:

The application relates to land at Glamping Pod Site, Mulberry House, Copthorne Common, RH10 3JU. Planning permission is sought for the change of use from C1 (holiday accommodation) to C3 (residential) through the consolidation of two existing glamping cabins to form a single-storey three-bedroom dwelling, with the retention of a third cabin for ancillary use as a home gym.

The site lies outside the defined built-up area boundary but forms part of a small, established cluster of residential development. The site is visually contained by woodland, landscaping and boundary treatments and benefits from existing access, parking, services and nearby public transport links.

Relevant Planning History

Planning permission DM/22/3539 was granted in November 2022 for the siting and use of three glamping pods for C1 holiday accommodation. That permission has been implemented and therefore represents a lawful fallback position, which is a material consideration of significant weight.

Principle of Development

The site lies within the countryside where policies DP12 and DP15 of the Mid Sussex District Plan apply. However, the site contains existing lawful built form and infrastructure accepted in planning terms under the extant C1 permission.

The proposal would reduce the number of independent occupancies from three holiday units to a single dwelling and would not result in any increase in built footprint, height or encroachment beyond the approved site envelope. Compared with the fallback position, the proposal would result in reduced activity, reduced traffic movements and reduced visitor turnover.

The site is closely related to existing residential development and benefits from access to services and public transport. As such, it cannot reasonably be regarded as an isolated location for the purposes of Policy DP15 or paragraph 84 of the NPPF.

Design and Impact on the Countryside

The proposed dwelling would remain single storey with a low profile and would utilise materials and a design approach consistent with the existing approved cabins. The

development would be visually contained within the site and would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the countryside.

The consolidation of two cabins into a single dwelling would reduce visual clutter on the site and would not introduce additional massing or prominence. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy DP26 and the Mid Sussex Design Guide.

Ecology, Sustainability and Ashdown Forest

All ecological mitigation approved under the extant permission has been implemented and would be retained. The proposal would not affect the ancient woodland buffer and incorporates biodiversity enhancements and sustainable construction measures.

In relation to Ashdown Forest, the change from three C1 holiday units to a single C3 dwelling would result in a material reduction in trip generation and recreational pressure when compared with the lawful fallback position. The proposal would therefore give rise to no likely significant effects, in accordance with Policy DP17.

Planning Balance

The key material consideration is the lawful and implemented fallback position for three holiday units. When assessed against that baseline, the proposal would result in:

- A reduction in use intensity and traffic movements;
- Reduced activity during evenings, weekends and holiday periods;
- Consolidation of built form and reduced visual impact; and
- No increase in footprint, height or countryside encroachment.

The retained cabin would remain ancillary to the main dwelling and can be controlled by condition to prevent separate occupation or intensification.

Conclusion

When assessed against the Development Plan and all other material considerations, the proposal represents the consolidation and rationalisation of an existing lawful development. Any limited conflict with countryside policy is outweighed by the fallback position and the demonstrable reduction in impacts.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the Development Plan when read as a whole and planning permission should be granted, subject to appropriate conditions.