

Planning Statement

Land at South View, Sharpthorne Road, Sharpthorne, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 4HU
Proposed detached dwelling with attached double garage, access, parking, landscaping and associated works

Applicant	Peter Pomfrett
Local planning authority	Mid Sussex District Council
Application type	Full planning permission for one detached market dwelling
Prepared	April 2026

Prepared to accompany the submitted plans and technical reports.

Application Summary

In summary, the application seeks permission for a single detached five-bedroom dwelling with an attached double garage on a vacant garden parcel associated with South View. The supporting evidence demonstrates that the site is technically capable of accommodating the proposal without unacceptable arboricultural, ecological, drainage or lighting effects, while also delivering an on-site biodiversity net gain in excess of the statutory 10% requirement.

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of one detached dwelling with an attached double garage, access, parking, landscaping and associated works at land forming part of South View, Sharpthorne Road, Sharpthorne, East Grinstead, RH19 4HU.

The purpose of the statement is to describe the site and the proposal, identify the relevant planning policy context, summarise the findings of the supporting technical work, and explain why planning permission should be granted.

The application is supported by, among other documents, the submitted plans and the following technical material: the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan, Preliminary Ecological Assessment, Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Surface Water Drainage and SuDS Strategy, and Lighting Technical Report.

2. The Site and Its Surroundings

The application site extends to approximately 0.12 hectares and relates to a vacant parcel of land currently recorded as being in residential garden use. There are no existing buildings within the application site itself. The land is associated with South View and sits within a semi-rural residential context in Sharpthorne.

The site is enclosed by existing residential development, domestic boundary treatments, hardstanding and tree cover. The wider context includes South View itself, the Coach House, the Middle House, Little Cookhams and other nearby dwellings along Top Road. A small area of woodland lies immediately to the west of part of the site, but the ecological reporting confirms that this off-site woodland will not be affected by the proposed development.

The site lies within the High Weald National Landscape (formerly the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). That designation is a very important material consideration and the application has therefore been designed and supported by evidence with landscape sensitivity, dark skies and the protection of ecological receptors firmly in mind.

3. The Proposal

The application seeks permission for the construction of one detached five-bedroom dwelling. The submitted scheme includes a pitched roof with dormer elements, an attached double garage, associated driveway and parking provision, private rear garden and landscaping works.

The external materials proposed are brick and rubble stone walling, a natural slate roof with white timber fascia and soffits, white-painted sash windows with stone sills, and white-painted timber garage and entrance doors. These materials have been selected to reflect the local vernacular and to ensure that the building reads as a high-quality domestic form appropriate to its setting.

Foul drainage is proposed to connect to the mains sewer. Surface water is to be managed through a sustainable drainage strategy based on infiltration-led measures including permeable paving, rainwater harvesting and a cellular soakaway, subject to the final site verification testing identified in the drainage report.

4. Planning Background and Pre-Application Engagement

Pre-application advice was sought from Mid Sussex District Council under reference DM/26/0021. The Council's officer advised on 9 January 2026 that the site lies within the countryside but is in a location close to the settlement and may, in principle, represent an acceptable addition subject to detailed assessment of the scheme and its impacts. The officer further advised that the proposal would be considered under the presumption in favour of sustainable development and that any application would need to demonstrate that the scheme is sustainable overall when assessed against relevant planning policies and material considerations.

The pre-application response identified the principal matters requiring attention: the scale, design and appearance of the proposed dwelling; its relationship to surrounding development; arboricultural matters; ecology and biodiversity net gain; drainage and flood risk; and lighting in the context of the High Weald National Landscape and dark skies considerations.

The current submission has been assembled specifically to respond to those points. It is therefore accompanied by the contextual drawings and technical reports requested through the pre-application process.

5. Development Plan and Material Considerations

Planning law requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the relevant policy framework comprises the National Planning Policy Framework, the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031, the adopted Site Allocations DPD, and the made West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in December 2024 and amended on 7 February 2025. The Mid Sussex District Plan Review 2021–2039 remains under examination and therefore attracts only limited weight at this stage. The Council's own published Position Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development in Mid Sussex is also a material consideration.

That Position Statement confirms that, because the adopted strategic policies are more than five years old and the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites using the standard method, the tilted balance in NPPF paragraph 11d is engaged and policies affecting the supply of housing attract reduced weight. It also confirms that the West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan remains part of the development plan, but that the additional protection in NPPF paragraph 14 is not engaged. Pending adoption of a new plan, the Council explains that it will positively consider sites that align with the vision and objectives of the adopted District Plan, protect the High Weald National Landscape and direct growth to the most sustainable settlements.

Policy position	Weight	Why it matters here
National Planning Policy Framework	Full weight	Current national policy for England, revised December 2024 and amended February 2025.
Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031	Policy-by-policy basis	The adopted development plan remains central to decision-making.
District Plan Review 2021–2039	Limited weight	Still under examination and not yet adopted.

West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan	Material; policy-by-policy	Forms part of the development plan, but paragraph 14 of the NPPF is not engaged.
DP6: Settlement Hierarchy	Limited weight	Housing-supply related, but still relevant in identifying Sharpthorne as a sustainable Category 3 village.
DP12: Countryside	Moderate weight	Protects countryside character, but must be considered alongside the current housing land supply position.
DP15, DP16, DP26, DP29, DP37, DP38, DP39, DP41	Full weight	Key full-weight policies dealing with countryside housing exceptions, the High Weald, design, lighting, trees, biodiversity, sustainability and drainage.

6. Principle of Development and Sustainable Development

The site is not an isolated parcel of open countryside divorced from settlement. It is a vacant garden site associated with an existing residential property and sits within a recognised cluster of dwellings in Sharpthorne. The Council's own pre-application advice expressly acknowledged that, notwithstanding the countryside designation, the location is sufficiently close to the settlement to be capable of being acceptable in principle, subject to detailed assessment. That is an important starting point when considering whether the proposal amounts to sustainable development overall.

Sharpthorne is identified in the adopted settlement hierarchy as a Category 3 medium sized village. Although the Council's current Position Statement makes clear that policy DP6 now carries limited weight because the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, the settlement hierarchy remains relevant in showing that Sharpthorne performs an acknowledged role in the district's pattern of villages and that this site is not divorced from a sustainable settlement context.

It is recognised that there remains some policy tension with the countryside-based housing restraint in the adopted plan, particularly because the proposal is for a market dwelling on land outside the built-up area. That tension should be acknowledged openly. However, it is not determinative. In the current policy context, the central question is whether the scheme is sustainable overall when assessed through the planning balance, with particular attention to its actual environmental effects, its relationship to the settlement, and the contribution it makes to housing delivery in a district where the Council confirms it does not presently have a five-year housing land supply.

The proposal is for one additional dwelling only. It does not prejudice the delivery of allocated or preferred strategic sites elsewhere, nor does it amount to sporadic or intrusive countryside sprawl. Rather, it is a modest edge-of-settlement proposal whose acceptability turns on whether the detailed impacts are acceptable. The submitted evidence demonstrates that they are.

Assessed in the round, the proposal is sustainable development. Socially, it contributes one additional dwelling in a district with an acknowledged housing shortfall. Economically, it would support construction activity and local spending. Environmentally, the submitted evidence identifies a contained form of development with no unacceptable arboricultural or ecological harm, a SuDS-led drainage strategy, carefully controlled lighting and biodiversity net gain above the statutory minimum.

7. Landscape, National Landscape and Visual Considerations

The site lies within the High Weald National Landscape and great weight must therefore be given to conserving and enhancing its landscape and scenic beauty. That duty has been central to the evolution of the scheme.

Importantly, the application site is not an exposed agricultural field. It is a contained parcel associated with an existing residential property, enclosed by domestic boundaries, nearby dwellings, hardstanding and surrounding vegetation. The proposal would therefore be perceived in the context of existing built form rather than as a freestanding incursion into open countryside.

The scale of the proposal is limited to a single domestic building. Its form and materials are explicitly derived from the local vernacular: pitched roof form, dormer elements, brick and rubble stone walling, slate roofing and painted sash windows. Together with the proposed landscaping and controlled lighting strategy, this reduces the risk of the development appearing visually discordant or harmful to the character of the area.

While any development on a currently open parcel inevitably introduces some change, the change here would be localised and contained. The proposal is not of a scale or character that would undermine the wider landscape qualities of the High Weald National Landscape. On the contrary, the evidence indicates that it can be absorbed without material harm to the designation's special qualities.

8. Design, Character and Residential Quality

The design approach is deliberately traditional and domestic in character. The house is intended to read as part of the established residential cluster around South View rather than as an alien or over-engineered insertion. The use of familiar local materials is central to that objective.

The pre-application advice highlighted the need to demonstrate an appropriate relationship with neighbouring development and to include street scene information showing comparative heights. The submitted drawings have been prepared accordingly and enable the Council to assess the proposal against the established character of the lane and the surrounding dwellings.

In functional terms, the scheme provides a good quality family home with associated parking, storage and private amenity space. It is a single-dwelling proposal on a spacious plot and there is nothing inherent in its design or disposition that gives rise to an unacceptable relationship with neighbouring residential occupiers. Specific matters of outlook, privacy and scale can be assessed by reference to the submitted plans, but the proposal is, in planning terms, a conventional and appropriate domestic form of development.

9. Trees, Ecology, Biodiversity Net Gain and Lighting

The arboricultural evidence confirms that the surveyed tree stock comprises two individual trees and two tree groups. Three items are Category B (moderate quality) and one off-site tree is Category U. No tree removals or pruning are proposed as part of the current scheme. The only identified root protection overlap relates to the off-site Category U tree in terminal decline, while the retained Category B trees and groups can be protected through the submitted Tree Protection Plan and construction exclusion measures. The arboricultural conclusion is that the proposal is viable with negligible impact on retained trees.

The ecological evidence is equally clear. The Preliminary Ecological Assessment found no protected species interest and no natural habitats of nature conservation significance within the development footprint. The site is dominated by short-mown grass and pea gravel, with only two very small conifers and a metal container of

negligible ecological value. No active bird nests, bat roosting features, badger setts, reptile habitat or great crested newt habitat were identified within the footprint. The small woodland to the west lies outside the development footprint and will not be affected.

The scheme also secures measurable biodiversity enhancement. The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment identifies a baseline of 0.12 habitat units and a post-development position of 0.13 units, equating to a net gain of +0.01 habitat units or +11.12%. The statutory 10% requirement is therefore exceeded on-site. The uplift is primarily secured through the planting of four small urban trees, offsetting the removal of two small conifers of negligible value, together with ongoing habitat management and monitoring.

Further ecological enhancements are available and have been identified through the ecological work, including wildlife-friendly planting, bat and bird boxes, insect habitat features and hedgehog access points. Those recommendations reinforce the conclusion that the scheme is not only acceptable in ecological terms but capable of delivering a net environmental improvement.

The lighting strategy has been prepared with the High Weald National Landscape and bat-sensitive boundaries in mind. It provides for warm white 2700K lighting, downward-directed fittings, motion controls to dwelling access points and controlled bollard lighting to the driveway. The lighting report concludes that the scheme complies with the stated ecological lux limits and with the post-curfew human amenity thresholds, such that adjacent dwellings and ecological receptors would not experience unacceptable obtrusive light.

10. Access, Parking, Drainage and Other Technical Matters

The proposal is served from Top Road and provides on-site parking associated with the attached double garage and driveway. Given the scale of the proposal, the transport effects are inevitably modest. There is no suggestion in the supporting material that the scheme would create highway impacts of a severity that could justify refusal.

Flood risk and drainage have been fully considered. The drainage report confirms that the site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is not identified as being at significant risk from fluvial or surface water flooding. No ordinary watercourse affects the site and the proposal is not expected to increase flood risk elsewhere.

The report concludes that the local ground conditions indicate potential for infiltration, subject to site-specific testing. The proposed drainage strategy therefore adopts sustainable drainage principles through permeable paving, rainwater harvesting and a cellular soakaway. Foul drainage is proposed to connect to the existing mains sewer. In short, the submitted strategy demonstrates that the development can be drained appropriately and in accordance with local and national policy expectations.

11. Planning Balance, Sustainable Development and Conclusion

This application must be judged on the basis of the development plan read as a whole and the wider material considerations. The starting point is that the site lies outside the built-up area and therefore there is some conflict with the adopted countryside and housing restraint policies. That conflict should not be ignored.

However, the planning balance does not end there. The Council has confirmed through both its pre-application advice and its more recent published Position Statement that it does not currently have a five-year housing land supply and that decision-making must therefore focus on whether proposals amount to sustainable development in the round. In that context, housing delivery carries substantial weight. The proposal would provide one additional market dwelling in a location that is closely related to a recognised village, within an established residential cluster, and without prejudice to the delivery of larger strategic sites.

The environmental evidence is favourable. The arboricultural report identifies no unacceptable tree impact. The ecological work identifies no protected species constraint. The BNG assessment shows an on-site net gain above the statutory minimum. The drainage strategy demonstrates a suitable SuDS-led solution. The lighting report addresses both dark skies and ecological sensitivity. The design itself is modest, vernacular-led and capable of being absorbed into its immediate context without material harm to the character of the area or the wider High Weald National Landscape.

Set against those findings, the limited policy conflict arising from the site's countryside status is not sufficient to outweigh the proposal's benefits. The scheme is sustainable overall when assessed against the development plan, the Council's current decision-making framework and the National Planning Policy Framework. The adverse effects of granting permission would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole. For these reasons, planning permission should be granted.

Appendix A. Supporting Technical Material

The following documents have informed this Planning Statement and are intended to be read alongside the application drawings and forms:

- Draft Application for Planning Permission, South View, Sharpthorne Road, Sharpthorne, RH19 4HU.
- Arboricultural Survey / Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan, reference RF25769, dated 19 March 2026.
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment, ASW Ecology Ltd, report ASW/LEL/146/29/2026, March 2026.
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, reference 26_BNG_03_77, first issued 1 April 2026.
- Lighting Technical Report, reference 4566-DFL-ELG-XX-RP-EO-13001-S3-P01, dated 1 April 2026.
- Surface Water Drainage and SuDS Strategy Report, reference EX2020912, dated 19 March 2026.
- Submitted site location, survey and architectural drawings referred to in the application form.