



APPLICATIONS & APPEALS SERVICES

**REMOVAL OF EXISTING OUTBUILDING AND
HOLIDAY LET BUILDING. ERECTION OF
DETACHED DWELLING WITH ASSOCIATED
LANDSCAPING AND ACCESS**

**LAND REAR OF STUMBLE RIDGE, OLDLANDS
AVENUE, BALCOMBE, WEST SUSSEX RH17 6LP**

PLANNING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

NOVEMBER 2024



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of a self-build detached dwelling with associated landscaping and access.

1.2 This supporting Planning, Design and Access Statement sets out the detail of the proposal which is described and appraised having regard to the following aspects.

- **Physical Context** – explains the physical context of the site and its surroundings;
- **Planning Context** – relevant planning history of the site and broad policy requirements;
- **Use** – the purpose of the proposed development;
- **Amount** – the extent of development on the site;
- **Scale** – details of the physical size of the proposed development;
- **Layout** – the relationship of the proposed development to the site and its setting;
- **Appearance** – details of materials, style and impact upon the existing and neighbouring properties;
- **Landscape** – impact of the proposal on the existing landscape and proposed planting and surfacing;

- **Access** – access to the proposed development and associated parking.

1.3 The Statement will demonstrate that the proposed development accords with the relevant planning policies and is acceptable in all respects.

2.0 PHYSICAL CONTEXT

2.1 Stumble Ridge is a detached two-storey dwelling to the south side of Oldlands Avenue (also a public right of way) opposite the junction with Stockcroft Road. It is within a deep and spacious L-shaped plot extending to the south and east. The garden is largely managed lawn but the southernmost section of the site is wooded with mature trees.



Figure 1 - Site location plan

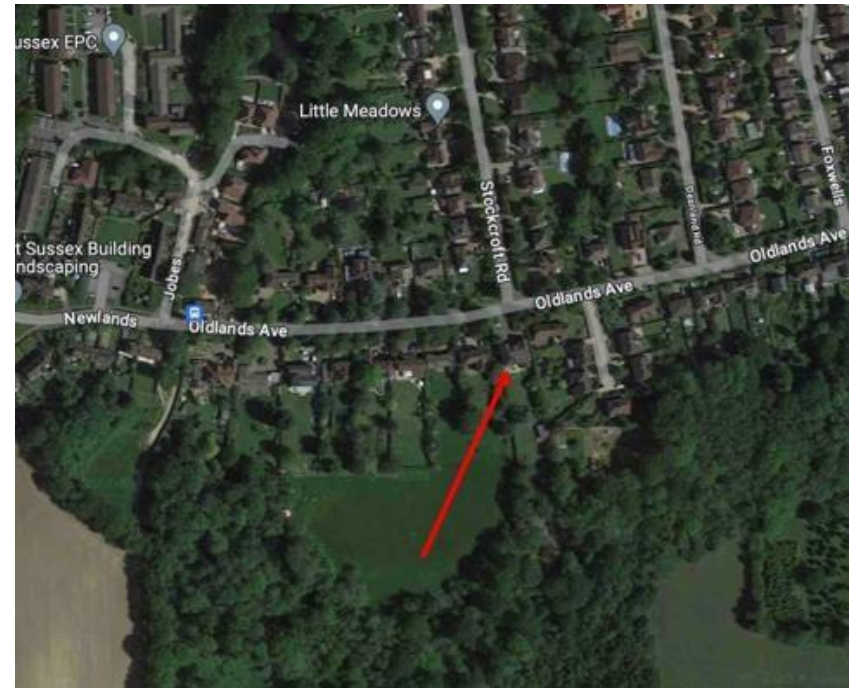


Figure 2 - Aerial view of site

2.2 The application site comprises the shared access track between Stumble Ridge and Lamb Cottage to the west and the residential garden land to the south of Stumble Ridge. It excludes the wooded areas to the south and southeast which form part of Upper Stumble Wood. Within the site are two outbuildings, one of which is a single storey holiday let building with timber decking wrapping around the south and west elevations.

- 2.3 The land slopes down from Oldlands Avenue. The garden slopes down gently overall, but it banks steeply level at the point of the holiday let before levelling off again. This produces an informal visual terracing of the land.
- 2.4 The northern portion of the site, including the holiday let building, is situated within the boundary of the Built Up Area of Balcombe and the Balcombe Conservation Area. The whole of the site is situated within the High Weald National Landscape (formerly referred to as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).
- 2.5 To the south of the site is Upper Stumble Wood which is a designated Ancient Woodland and Priority Habitat (deciduous woodland).
- 2.6 The following are photographs of the application site:



Figure 3 – View from Stockcroft Road (Left-right - Stumble Ridge, access & Lamb Cottage © Google Maps



Figure 4 - View of existing outbuildings from the south



Figure 6 - Existing holiday let and decking



Figure 5 - Garden to south of outbuilding and wooded area beyond



Figure 7 - South elevation of Stumble Ridge (taken from north of outbuildings)

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a self-build detached dwelling to the rear of Stumble Ridge. Two existing outbuildings, including a holiday let building and associated decking, would be removed. The dwelling and its associated curtilage would occupy only the managed portion of the existing residential garden.
- 3.2 The proposed dwelling would be of contemporary design providing three bedrooms with integral garage. External materials would include vertical timber cladding at upper level with render below with a flat grass/sedum roof above. The dwelling would be set into the slope, and the lower level would not be visible from the north and considerably screened from views from the east and west.
- 3.3 The subdivision of the garden would be demarcated by a timber close boarded fence with hedges planted to either site. The garden for the proposed dwelling would extend southwards towards but not including the adjoining woods.
- 3.4 Access to the dwelling would be via the existing drive/track situated between Stumble Ridge and Lamb Cottage to the

west. A small section of an existing hedge would be removed to provide access into the proposed parking/turning area and the integral garage.

- 3.5 With the exception of the removal of the hedge at the access, existing trees and planting would be retained.



Figure 8 - Proposed site layout plan



Figure 9 - South elevation



Figure 12 - East elevation



Figure 10 - North elevation



Figure 13 - Proposed site section (Stumble Ridge to left)



Figure 11 - West elevation

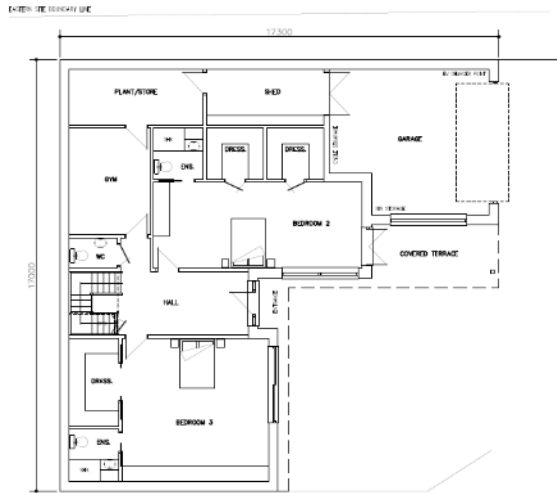


Figure 14 - Lower level



Figure 15 - Upper level



Figure 16 - Proposed view of dwelling from southwest.

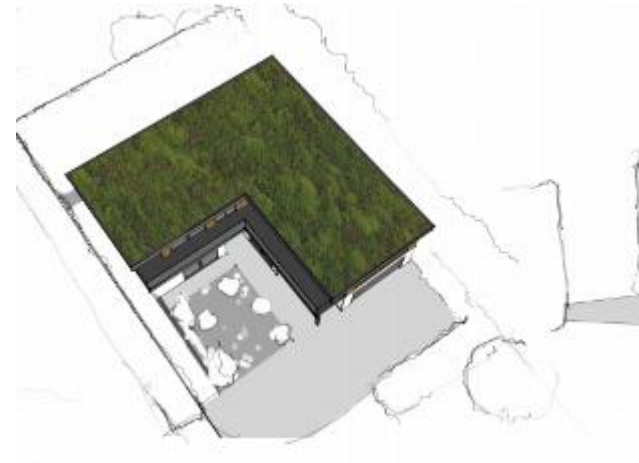


Figure 17 - Proposed green roof



Figure 18 - West elevation, showing land levels and planting

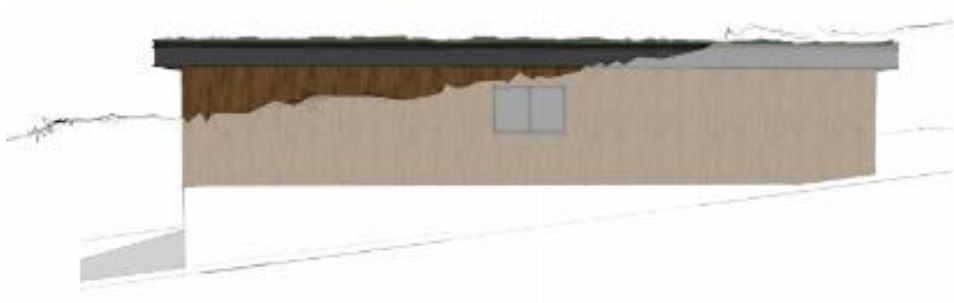


Figure 19 - Proposed view from east showing land levels and planting



Figure 20 - Proposed north elevation and screening

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 The relevant planning history for the application site is as follows:

- DM/20/2508 – Change of use of outbuilding to holiday let accommodation (amended description 03/11/2020). Permitted. 25/11/20
- DM/17/0221 - Single storey side extension to existing outbuilding to be used as annexe accommodation. Withdrawn.
- DM/15/1832 - Retrospective application for the decking area surrounding the garden office. Permitted. 20/07/15.
- 13/01221/FUL – Erection of a detached garden office/gym. Permitted. 06/06/13
- 13/02113/FUL – Replacement of an existing detached garage with a new detached garage. Permitted. 20/08/13
- 12/04280/CON - Re-submission: Demolition of existing substandard 2 storey house and replacement with 4 bedroom house with accommodation in the attic. Permitted 12/02/13
- 12/04196/FUL – Re-submission: Demolition of existing substandard 2 storey house and replacement with 4

bedroom house with accommodation in the attic. Permitted 10/07/12

- 12/01666/FUL - Demolition of existing substandard 2 storey house and replacement with 4 bedroom house with accommodation in the attic. Permitted 10/07/12

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 National planning policies are detailed in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the “NPPF”). In addition to the NPPF, the following documents and guidance are material considerations:
- National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
 - National Design Guide
 - Technical Housing Standards
- 5.3 The Development Plan for the District includes the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan 2018 and the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan 2016.
- 5.4 Set out below is a summary of all relevant national and local development plan policies, which have been considered in the preparation of this application.

National Planning Policy Framework (the “NPPF”) 2023

- 5.5 The NPPF sets out the Government’s key objectives for the planning system, confirming the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF seeks to ensure that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan. The NPPF should be read as a whole.
- 5.6 Paragraph 2 of the NPPF sets out that ***‘Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements’.***
- 5.7 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has the following three overarching objectives which are independent but need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:

- a) *'an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) *a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) *an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, helping to improve*

biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy'.

- 5.8 Paragraph 10 states **'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).** For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.
- 5.9 Where there are no relevant development plan policies or the relevant policies are out of date, the NPPF states that planning permission should be granted unless the policies of the Framework indicate otherwise or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework considered as a whole (paragraph 11 d).
- 5.10 Paragraph 12 of the Framework states that **'The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting**

point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed’.

- 5.11 In terms of decision-making, the Framework states at paragraph 38 that **‘Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible’.**
- 5.12 Paragraph 60 states **‘To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land**

can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay’.

- 5.13 Paragraph 70 sets out that **‘Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built out relatively quickly’.** It notes that authorities should support small sites for community-led development for housing and self-build and custom-build housing.
- 5.14 Paragraph 83 states **‘To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.’**
- 5.15 Paragraph 84 states that **‘Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the**

countryside unless 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 represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;*
- c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;*
- d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or*
- e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:*
 - is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would*

help raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and

- would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area’.*

5.16 Paragraph 108 requires transport issues to be considered at the early stages of plan-making and development proposals. This is to ensure that (inter alia) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed.

5.17 Paragraph 109 acknowledges that ***‘opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making’.***

5.18 Paragraph 111 states that if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account the accessibility of the development, its type, mix and use, the availability of land and opportunities for public transport, local car ownership levels and the need to ensure that adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles. Maximum parking standards

for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport.

- 5.19 In assessing development proposals, paragraph 114 states that it should be ensured that there are appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes, that there is safe and suitable access to the site (for all road users) and that any significant impacts on the transport network or on highway safety terms can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
- 5.20 Paragraph 115 makes it clear that **'Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe'**.
- 5.21 Paragraph 123 of the Framework states that **'Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and**

ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.' Paragraph 118 (a) encourages multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes.

- 5.22 Paragraph 124 confirms that planning policies and decisions should (inter alia) **'promote and support development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure).'**
- 5.23 Paragraph 125 states that **'Local planning authorities should take a positive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs.'** Whilst paragraph 126 notes that **'Planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in demand for land.'**
- 5.24 When considering land which is developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in the local plan, local planning authorities should take a positive approach to application for alternative uses including using **'retail and employment land**

for homes in areas of high housing demand, provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and viability of town centres, and would be compatible with other policies in this Framework...' (paragraph 127).

5.25 In terms of design, Section 12 seeks to achieve well designed places sets out that **the 'The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'** (paragraph 131).

5.26 As such, the paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that development functions well and adds to the overall quality of the area; is visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate landscaping and is sympathetic to local character and history whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

5.27 Paragraph 139 states that **'Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:**

a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes: and/or

b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit with the overall form and layout of their surroundings'.

5.28 Paragraph 180 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (inter alia) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity; and preventing new and

existing development form contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air water or noise pollution or land instability.

5.29 Paragraph 182 states that “Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.” The protection of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations, and development should be limited and sensitively located and design to minimise the adverse impact upon these designated areas.

5.30 If development results in significant harm to biodiversity which cannot be avoided, paragraph 186 states that planning permission should be refused unless this can be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

5.31 Development should plan for climate change, and paragraph 159 states that new development should be planned in ways that:

- a) *avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and*
- b) *can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government’s policy for national technical standards.*

5.32 Paragraph 162 continues and sets out that, in determining applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to a) comply with development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply (unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible or viable) and b) take into account landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

5.33 Development should also not be directed towards areas at high risk of flooding. (paragraph 165), and local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere (paragraph 173).

- 5.34 In addition to the NPPF, National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), Written Ministerial Statements and other policy documents, such as the National Design Guide, are material planning considerations.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2018 (the “MSDP”)

- 5.35 The following policies are relevant to this application site and proposal:

- DP1: Sustainable Economic Development
- DP4: Housing
- DP6: Settlement Hierarchy
- DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- DP15: New homes in the Countryside
- DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- DP21: Transport
- DP26: Character and Design
- DP27: Space Standards
- DP28: Accessibility
- DP35 Conservation Areas
- DP37: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
- DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction

- DP38: Biodiversity
- DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage
- DP42: Water Infrastructure and the water environment

- 5.36 In addition to the MSDP, the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan 2016 has been adopted and includes the following relevant policies:

- Policy 1: Built Up Area Boundary
- Policy 3: Design
- Policy 11: Renewable Energy

- 5.37 Other material considerations are detailed below:

- Mid Sussex Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) 2022
- Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- Development Infrastructure and Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024
- West Sussex County Council Guidance on Parking at New Developments 2020

Emerging local plan – Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Consultation Draft

5.38 The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) was published for public consultation on 12th January 2024, and was the subject of consultation for six weeks. Stage one examination hearings recently took place at the October.

5.39 Although advanced, the strategies and policies put forward are at the stage of initial review. As such, this planning application has had regard to the following policies of the adopted District Plan but little weight can be attached.

- DPS1 - Climate Change
- DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction
- DPS4 - Flood Risk and Drainage
- DPN2 - Biodiversity Net Gain
- DPN4 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- DPC1 - Protection and enhancement of the countryside
- DPC3 - New homes in the countryside
- DPC4 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- DPB1 - Character and Design
- DPB2 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
- DPT1 - Placemaking and Connectivity

- DPT3 - Active and Sustainable Travel
- DPT4 - Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
- DPH1 - Housing
- DPH7 - Housing Mix
- DPH11 - Dwelling Space Standards
- DPH12 - Accessibility
- DPI7 - Water and Wastewater Infrastructure.

6.0 APPRAISAL

Principle of development

- 6.1 Policy DP6 of the MSDP states the development will be permitted within towns and villages within the defined built-up area boundaries. Infilling and redevelopment should be of appropriate nature and scale and not cause harm to the character and function of the settlement. This is reflected in Policy 1 of the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.2 Balcombe is a category 3 settlement defined as a medium sized village providing essential services for the needs of residents of the village and the immediate surrounding communities. There is public transport available within the village, including train station. As such, it is a sustainable location suitable for residential development.
- 6.3 Although the southern portion of the site extends outside the built-up area into the countryside, the dwelling would be situated within the boundary of the built-up area of Balcombe. The proposed development would occupy land which was developed and cleared following the removal of two existing outbuildings, one of which is a holiday let property. Any

potential extension into the countryside would be minimal and largely limited to the formation of the parking/turning area. Such hard surfacing could be formed at present under permitted development rights subject to appropriate construction to ensure permeability. The continued use of the land to the south of the proposed dwelling as residential garden land would not alter the character or appearance of the land and would therefore not be contrary to the provisions of Policies DP12 or DP15 of the Mid Sussex District Plan which relates to development in the countryside.

- 6.4 As such, the proposal would accord with policies seeking to direct development to sustainable locations and within the built-up areas, and there should be no objection in principle to the development.

Housing land supply

- 6.5 Paragraph 77 of the NPPF requires that local planning authorities should identify a supply of specific deliverable sites to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing. In October 2023, it was established at an appeal that the Council can demonstrate a 5.04-year housing land supply.

6.6 The proposal would ensure that the Council can continue to meet its housing needs. Given the very slight margin in housing land supply and the anticipated increase to housing delivery targets suggested by the Government in its consultation on reform of the planning system in July 2024, the contribution of small sites to overall housing supply should be afforded modest weight.

Design and impact on visual amenity and National Landscape

6.7 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF sets out “the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.” Paragraph 135 continues and requires that planning decisions should ensure that developments inter alia add to the quality of the area; are visually attractive in relation to architecture, layout and design; are sympathetic to local context whilst not preventing innovation or change; and offer a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

6.8 Policy DP26 of the MSDP accordingly requires that development should be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages whilst being

sensitive to the countryside. Development should incorporate landscaping, protect trees and gardens which contribute to the character of the area.

6.9 Policy DP12 of the MSDP states the: 'countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty.'

6.10 The site is within the High Weald National Landscape, and Policy DP16 of the MSDP states that development would only be permitted where it conserves enhances natural beauty of the designated area. This aligns with paragraph 182 of the NPPF.

6.11 Policy 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan similarly requires the development should reflect the character and scale of surrounding buildings and avoid significant detrimental effect upon the landscape, the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB and the Balcombe Conservation Area. The proposal should accord with the principles of the Balcombe Village Design Guide which encourages smaller dwelling (up to three bedrooms).

6.12 The Council's adopted Design Guide sets out design principles to ensure that development is high quality, responds

appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. Design Principle DG31 seeks to focus development in sustainable locations. Within the Design Guide there is support for innovative and inventive designs that responds to the sustainability agenda within DG37. In addition, design principle DG39 requires the scale of new buildings to relate to their context.

- 6.13 The building is of contemporary design and appearance and would incorporate high quality materials, including vertical timber cladding and a grass/sedum roof. The design responds positively to the site topography, utilising the steep drop in land levels to set the building into the slope.
- 6.14 The proposed dwelling would be situated some 30m to the south of Stumble Ridge and would replace an existing structure of similar height in this location. Although larger in footprint than the existing holiday let building, there would be sufficient spacing around the dwelling to ensure that it does not appear cramped within this plot.
- 6.15 The bulk and massing of the building would be screened from the surrounding area by virtue of its position to the rear of the host dwelling, the setting of the dwelling into the slope of the

land and the boundary planting and woods to the south. Very limited views of the development would be possible from the modest gap in the hedge to the west leading to the access and from neighbouring dwellings to the north. The planting along the proposed boundary with Stumble Ridge, the grass/sedum roof and the setting of the building to the slope would ensure that the dwelling effectively blends into the landscape. As such, the proposal would not have an impact upon the street scene or visual amenity of the surrounding area.

- 6.16 Similarly, there would be very limited views of the proposed dwelling within the wider landscape. The land is already developed, features a quasi-residential use as a holiday let and is closely related to existing development to the north and east. Therefore, the proposal would be viewed in the context of existing development within the built-up area. In light of the high quality design, its response to the topography and the setting of the dwelling, the proposal would conserve and enhance the National Landscape.
- 6.17 Although the rear section of the site is within the countryside, the land is residential garden land associated with the dwelling and the holiday let. The proposal would retain this function as residential garden land, and there would be no material

change to the character and appearance of the land at this edge of the built-up area which would affect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

6.18 The setting of the dwelling to the rear of Stumble Ridge would not appear incongruous in relation to the pattern of development in this specific context. The proposed dwelling would be roughly aligned with 7-10 Stumblemead directly adjoining the site as well as dwellings along Glebe View further to the east. As such, the position and layout of the dwelling and its gardens would not look out of place within this wider residential setting.

6.19 Moreover, the existing garden for Stumble Ridge is uncharacteristically large and deep relative to that visible in surrounding area. Thus, the subdivision would allow for a more efficient use of the land whilst retaining a plot size for the existing and proposed development which would not be out of keeping in this area.

6.20 With respect to landscaping and trees, although a small section of hedging would be removed to the west to facilitate the access, the proposal would not remove any significant trees or hedges/planting. The application includes an

arboricultural assessment and method statement which sets out the measures to protect existing mature trees around the site, and these may be secured by condition should the Council deem it necessary. In addition, the proposal would incorporate additional hedges/planting to the north of the new dwelling to define the new boundary with Stumble Ridge.

6.21 The proposal therefore accords with Policies DP12, DP16 and DP26 of the MSDP, Policy 3 of the BNP and the provisions of the NPPF.

Residential amenities

6.22 Policy DP26 of the MSDP states that development should 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.” This echoes the requirements detailed in paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

6.23 The proposed dwelling would be over 40m from Lamb Cottage to the northwest and some 35m from Stumble Ridge and the nearest dwellings at Stumblemead to the east (no. 6-8). Having regard to the scale of the dwelling, its setting within the

slope of the land and the proposed and retained planting to the site boundaries, the proposed development would not result in harm to the amenities of neighbouring dwellings in relation to overbearing effect, outlook or light.

- 6.24 The windows within the north and east elevations of the dwelling would face towards Stumble Ridge and 6-8 Stumblemead respectively. However, this upper level is essentially single storey in form due to the higher ground level to the north and east, and the windows would serve non—habitable rooms (ensuite, cinema and utility rooms). Given the proposed boundary screening and separation distance between the development and neighbouring dwellings, the proposal would not lead to harmful overlooking of the neighbouring dwellings or gardens and conditions to require obscure or fixed glazing would not be necessary.
- 6.25 The scale of the development and the residential use would not generate significant levels of noise, disturbance or light disturbance within this residential section of the built-up area of Balcombe. As a holiday let, there is already a degree of residential use taking place, albeit linked to tourism, and the permanent residential use would not result in a significant change upon the existing use of this portion of the site.

Although the proposal would result in more regular vehicular movements along the drive, the level of additional movements associated with the residential use would not result in significant harm to the amenities of occupiers of Lamb Cottage or Stumble Ridge given the existing screening and use.

- 6.26 Therefore, the propose would not cause significant harm to the amenities of neighbouring residents.

Amenities of future occupants

- 6.27 The dwelling would provide suitable living conditions and internal habitable accommodation. The dwelling would exceed the minimum standards detailed in the Technical Guidance: Nationally described space standards, which 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. Polic DP27 of the District Plan supports this. The design of the building would ensure that living areas and bedrooms benefit from satisfactory levels of natural light.

6.28 The external space would be spacious and appropriate to a development of this size, and there would be sufficient distance from the wooded area to the south to ensure that there is an appropriate level of light to this external amenity space.

6.29 Thus, the proposal would provide for satisfactory residential amenity for the existing neighbouring residents and future occupants of the dwelling in accordance with Policies DP25 and DP27 of the MSDP and paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

Impact on the Conservation Area

6.30 The site is located at the edge of the Balcombe Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset. Paragraphs 205-8 of the NPPF state that great weight should be given to the conservation of such assets, and any harm should require clear and convincing justification in the form of public benefit, having regard to the scale of the harm and the significance of the asset.

6.31 The application includes a Heritage Statement which sets out the historic significance and features of the Conservation Area. The proposed development would not be readily visible

from the surrounding area due to its position to the rear of existing development and the land levels, which slope down to the rear. The most visible part of the development would be its access, which is existing. As such, views of the proposed development would be very limited from neighbouring dwellings within the Conservation Area.

6.32 The proposal would replace existing development within the site, and although larger than the existing holiday let building, the proposed dwelling would remain subservient in appearance to the development to the north. Given the hedging along the proposed boundary with Stumble Ridge, the grass/sedum roof and the single storey appearance of the north elevation, the proposed dwelling would blend into the landscape as viewed from the north and the conservation area. Therefore, the proposal would not have a discernible impact upon the significance or special historic interest of the Conservation Area. As such, the proposal would accord with Policy DP35 of the MSDP.

Impact upon highways and parking

6.33 Paragraph 114 of the NPPF encourages development to consider appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable

transport modes and to ensure that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. Any significant impacts upon the transport network or on highway safety should be mitigated. Paragraph 115 states that development should not be refused unless there is unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.'

- 6.34 Policy DP21 of the District Plan seeks to ensure that schemes are sustainably located to minimise the need for travel, and protect the safety of road users and pedestrians. It also seeks to ensure that adequate parking is provided.
- 6.35 The site is located on Oldlands Avenue, which is privately maintained and subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph in this location. Access to the new dwelling would be via an existing track between Stumble Ridge and Lamb Cottage, which provides access into the field to the south of the latter.
- 6.36 The proposed addition of a single, three-bedroom dwelling would not generate significant traffic movements to the detriment of the local highway network. The existing access is of suitable dimensions to accommodate the traffic associated with a single dwelling. In light of the parking and turning area

to be provided, vehicles could enter and exit the site in forward gear, and there would be suitable visibility at Oldlands Avenue. Pre-application advice was sought from West Sussex County Council as the highway authority, and no objection was raised in relation to highways safety or capacity considerations (see Appendix).

- 6.37 As noted, the proposal includes parking and turning areas as well as integral garaging. This would meet the adopted standards for off-road parking to the dwelling.
- 6.38 There is sufficient space within the site to accommodate secure cycle storage, which would comply with policies seeking to support and encourage sustainable transport. Details could be provided if required under condition.
- 6.39 For the above reasons, the proposal complies with policy DP21 of the District Plan and paragraph 114 of the NPPF.

Impact on the ancient woodland and biodiversity

- 6.40 Policy DP37 of the MSDP seeks to protect and enhance existing trees and hedges and seeks to encourage new planting. It also seeks to protect ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees. Similarly, paragraph 180 of the NPPF seeks

to ensure protect the natural environment and promote biodiversity net gain a. Paragraph 186 details the need to protect the irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland.

- 6.41 Policy DP38 of the District Plan relates to Biodiversity and seeks proposals to protect and enhance biodiversity. There is a requirement for no net loss to biodiversity. The policy does not, however, require a specified net gain to biodiversity from the resulting development.
- 6.42 The proposed development would not alter the character or use of the land as residential garden land linked to the dwelling and holiday let dwelling present on the site. The proposed development would be situated in excess of 15m from the boundary of the ancient woodland to the south, and this would ensure that there is sufficient buffering of the operational development to the irreplaceable habitat in accordance with relevant guidance.
- 6.43 Although the proposal would introduce a larger building within the site, the land upon which the dwelling and access would stand is currently developed or features managed grassland. As such, it is of low ecological value. The loss of the section of hedge would be mitigated through the additional planting to

the new north boundary of the site, which would incorporate native planting and hedges. Additional planting and ecological enhancement measures would be incorporated to provide ecological enhancements of the site. As such, although the proposal is exempt from statutory requirements for a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain (under the self-build exemption), the proposal would result in some positive net gain through the additional planting and other measures. This can be secured by condition.

- 6.44 Overall, it is considered that the scheme would not adversely affect any protected species and that conditions could be used to ensure wildlife mitigation and enhancements. The proposal is thereby considered to comply with Policy DP37 and DP38 of the MSDP and paragraphs 180 and 186 of the NPPF.

Sustainability

- 6.45 Policy DP21 of the MSDP requires that developments should be designed to incorporate facilities for electric vehicle charging, where 'practical and viable.'
- 6.46 Policy DP39 states that: developments should improve the sustainability of development and should, where appropriate

and feasible, seek to incorporate measures to improve energy efficient, minimise waste and water use and demonstrated how the risks associated with future climate change have been taken into account in the design proposal.

- 6.47 This is aligned with paragraph 157 of the NPPF which seeks to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change.' This is further supported in paragraph 162 which expects new development to comply with requirements for decentralised energy supply and to "take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption."
- 6.48 The accessibility and sustainable location of the site has already been established.
- 6.49 The proposed development conforms to a fabric first approach to the dwelling design and will incorporate the following measures:
- Heating via ASHP
 - Water Recycling
 - Sustainable Drainage Systems

- Zero Avoidable Waste (ZAW) strategy.

- 6.50 In addition, the proposal would include a dedicated electric vehicle charging point as required by Part S of the building regulations and 2 secure cycle parking spaces.

Drainage

- 6.51 Policy DP41 of the District Plan relates to flood risk and drainage seeks to ensure development is safe across its lifetime and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. Environment Agency data shows that the site is in flood zone 1 and is at low fluvial and very low surface water flood risk.
- 6.52 Surface water drainage will be addressed on site via appropriate drainage systems, including rainwater harvesting for water recycling and soakaways. Foul water drainage will be connected to the existing mains in the locality. This would accord with the drainage hierarchy and would ensure that the development is neither at risk of flooding nor would increase flood risk within the surrounding area. Therefore, the proposal accords with policy DP41 of the District Plan.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This planning statement supports the erection of a self-build dwelling within land to the south of Stumble Ridge. The proposed development would be in keeping with the context and character of the area having regard to the proximity of other built form and existing pattern of residential development within the locality. Due to the setting, design and layout of the proposed development and its current use, it would have no impact upon the street scene or the visual amenities or beauty of the countryside. It also conserves and enhances the High Weald National Landscape and would not result in harm to the heritage significance of the Conservation Area
- 7.2 It is further demonstrated that there will be no harm caused to neighbouring residential amenities, and the proposed vehicle access arrangement and car parking provision is appropriate to serve the new dwelling.
- 7.3 The development would result in modest enhancements to the ecological contribution of the site to the natural environment whilst respecting the irreplaceable habitats nearby. Measures to ensure that the development addresses climate change

considerations through appropriate drainage and energy efficiency/technology are also incorporated.

- 7.4 For these reasons, the proposal would accord with national and local planning policies and it is therefore hoped that the Council will support the proposal and grant permission.

APPENDIX – PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE FROM WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AS HIGHWAY AUTHORITY