



Planning Statement

**for the proposed development at:
Land at 19 Estcots Drive, East Grinstead**

July 2025

Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Kona Planning Consultancy Ltd on behalf of the Applicant for the development of a pair of semi-detached houses, with associated parking and new shared vehicular access on land adjacent to 19 Estcots Drive, East Grinstead.

Site Description

The application site is currently a side garden serving a residential property that is screened from the highway.

The existing dwellinghouse will retain its rear garden and therefore is not included within this application.

Estcots Drive is a residential road that is made up from an eclectic mix of property styles that vary considerably both in age and architectural merit.

The site is located adjacent to a Conservation Area. The LPA have produced a document dated August 2018 which lists all of the Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex. In this instance the Conservation Area listed within East Grinstead is detailed as follows:

Land at East Court and Estcots, College Road, was designated as a Conservation Area in 2003. The boundaries are shown on the Proposals Map. The area includes East Court mansion and its parkland, East Court Lodge at the entrance to East Court and the area of Estcots Farmhouse, Estcots Barn and Estcots Cottage. The following features in particular contribute to the character of this Conservation Area:

- Its open rural quality on the edge of the town
- East Court, a Grade II listed building, its attractive and extensive grounds, landscaped gardens and extensive views across the High Weald
- The attractive sunken lane leading to Estcots and
- The attractive grouping of Estcots Farmhouse, Estcots Barn (both listed) and Estcots Cottage.

No Relevant Planning History

Planning Constraints

The relevant constraints relating to this site are as follows:

- Adjacent to Estcots and East Court Conservation Area

- Adjacent to Grade II listed buildings (Estcots Farmhouse and Estcots Barn)
- Ashdown Forest SPA

Policy

In addition to the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance, the following local policies and guidance are relevant to the determination of this application:

Mid Sussex District Plan

DP4 – Housing
 DP5 – Planning to Meet Future Housing Need
 DP6 – Settlement Hierarchy
 DP17 – Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area
 DP21 – Transport
 DP26 – Character and Design
 DP27 – Dwelling Space Standards
 DP34 – Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
 DP35 – Conservation Areas
 DP37 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
 DP38 – Biodiversity
 DP39 – Sustainable Design and Construction
 DP41 – Flood Risk and Drainage

East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan

Policy EG3 – Promoting Good Design
 Policy EG5 – Housing Proposals
 Policy EG12 – Car Parking

Supplementary Planning Documents

Mid Sussex Design Guide
 Parking at New Developments

Planning Considerations

The main considerations material to the determination of this application are:

- Principle of Development;
- Design and its impact upon the views from within the street scene and on the character of the area;

- Impact upon the Conservation Area and Heritage Assets;
- Impact on neighbouring residential amenity;
- Quality of the living accommodation for future occupiers;
- Highway safety;
- Ecology and Biodiversity; and
- Drainage

Principle of Development

As the proposed development is within the built-up area of East Grinstead, the principle of additional windfall housing development is considered acceptable under Policy DP6 of the District Plan which states:

'Development will be permitted within towns and villages with defined built-up area boundaries. Any infilling and redevelopment will be required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale (with particular regard to DP26: Character and Design), and not cause harm to the character and function of the settlement.'

Policy EG5 of the 'made' East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan relates to housing development and states *'as a result new housing development on land defined as 'previously developed,' where the site is predominantly previously developed or is green infrastructure that can be demonstrated to be surplus to requirements will be supported'*. It lists various criteria including that *'a) The proposed development contributes to sustainable development'*. Policy EG5 is a permissive policy for housing development in this location provided it complies with other policies within the plan.

It is considered that Policy EG5 is in conflict with the DP6 District Plan in respect of development proposed outside the built up area boundary, as it supports in principle, subject to a number of criteria, development anywhere within the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, the site is within the built up area of East Grinstead and therefore this conflict is not considered to be an issue.

In addition to the above, East Grinstead is classed as category 1 settlement in the settlement hierarchy listed under MSDP policy DP6. As such, the application site can be considered to be a sustainable location for residential development.

It should also be noted that the LPA do not have a 5-year housing land supply and therefore paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF is engaged.

As a result, the principle of this type of development is an acceptable one owing to the sites sustainable location.

It is however also necessary to consider other planning issues to determine the overall planning balance.

Design and impact upon the character of the area

Prior to the submission of this proposal careful consideration was given in relation to the proposed design features in conjunction with the prevailing character and appearance of the area.

In this regard, the proposal has incorporated numerous features that can be found within numerous other properties within the locality.

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design considerations and states:

'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- *is of high-quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- *contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- *creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- *protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- *protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- *does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29);*
- *creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- *incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high-density housing is proposed;*
- *positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- *take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- *optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'*

This is also the case within Policy EG3 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan.

Moreover, the Design Guide which is a material consideration in the determination of this proposal identifies the need for quality designs across all of the Mid Sussex District.

In line with the above it is considered that the proposed siting and design of the proposal as submitted addresses all of the relevant issues outlined above.

As such it is considered that this proposal will not result in any adverse impact being created upon the views from within the street scene or create any adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area.

Impact upon the Conservation Area and Heritage Assets

This application has been accompanied with a Heritage Statement prepared by Asset Heritage Consulting dated March 2025.

The assessment identifies two Grade II listed buildings – Estcots Farmhouse and Estcots Barn – which are in reasonable proximity to the site such that they may have the potential to be affected, and the Estcots and East Court Conservation Area, part of the southern boundary of which is coincident with the northern boundary of the application site.

In terms of the potential impact upon the setting of the adjoining listed buildings, the Statement concludes that *'it is clear that the setting of the listed former farm buildings has changed very substantially and that the aspects of it which make a positive contribution to an appreciation of the significance of the listed buildings are now very closely-defined, and do not include any part of Estcots Drive. The application site, while within the physical setting of the buildings and formerly associated with them, does not contribute to the ability to appreciate their significance.'*

In terms of the potential impact upon the Conservation Area, the Statement concludes that *'the application site, as experienced from Estcots Drive, does not contribute to the conservation area as there is no ability to experience, or appreciate the character and appearance of, the conservation area from here, and therefore no legible relationship between the two.'*

In light of the above, it is considered that this proposal will have no adverse impact upon the setting of the listed buildings or harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Impact on neighbouring residential amenity

Careful consideration has been given to ensure that the internal layout creates no adverse impact upon the occupiers of the properties located adjacent to the application site.

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design of proposals. Within this there is a requirement that proposals do *'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'*.

The test as set out under policy EG3 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan states that proposals should 'not harm' adjoining neighbours amenity.

The siting of this proposal ensures that there is no breach of the 45-degree angle from any habitable room window within any of the neighbouring (including the host dwelling) residential properties. As such, this proposal will not create any adverse loss of light.

It is accepted that this proposal does include upper floor side facing windows. However, these windows serve the stairwell and therefore, if necessary, can be obscurely glazed if and fixed closed. In this regard, the Applicant would be more than happy to accept a suitably worded condition.

In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed development will not lead to any adverse impact being created upon the living conditions of any of the occupiers of the neighbouring (including the host dwelling) residential properties.

Quality of the living accommodation for future occupiers

The replacement dwellings exceed the requirements laid out within the nationally described space standards.

The proposed design and internal layouts ensure that no adverse impact in terms of loss of light, privacy or amenity created upon the living conditions of the future occupiers.

The proposed development ensures that a sufficient amount of private amenity will be provided for the future occupiers of both dwellings.

The proposal includes a suitable number of off-street parking spaces. This accords with the requirements of the Parking SPD.

Highway safety

Policy DP21 of the District Plan relates to transport and requires proposals to be sustainably located and provide adequate parking.

Policy EG12 of the Neighbourhood Plan seeks parking provision in accordance with County Council

adopted standards, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

In this regard, the proposal requires a new vehicular access to be created via Estcots Drive. This will be a shared access that will allow for 4no. off-street parking spaces to be created.

Given the low level of vehicle movements that are expected for dwellings of this size, it is considered that this proposal will not create any adverse impact upon highway safety and capacity.

It should be noted that the Highway Authority have raised no objection to this proposal subject to suitably worded conditions being imposed.

Ecology and Biodiversity

This application has been accompanied with two separate documents prepared by Darwin Ecology.

The first of which is an Ecological Impact Assessment dated April 2025. This Assessment confirms that subject to the mitigation measures proposed, no adverse impact will be created upon any protected species.

The other relates to a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment which includes a matrix. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric demonstrates a -47.73% (-0.07 units) net loss for habitats and -100% (-0.01 units) for linear features. At least 0.09 habitat units and 0.02 hedgerow units will need to be purchased through an off-site scheme to achieve 10% net gain for this project.

It is therefore considered that subject to the relevant mitigation measures and purchasing of off-site credits this proposal will not create any ecological or biodiversity concerns.

It should be noted that Nature Safe have raised no objection to the submitted documents.

Drainage

A Drainage Strategy has accompanied this application. This has been prepared by WestShore Engineering and issued in June 2025.

This strategy identifies that sustainable drainage features, such as a permeable driveway is proposed to ensure the management of runoff on-site and reduce pressure on the sewer network.

In addition, the proposed strategy provides a sustainable and regulation compliant approach to foul and surface water management, ensuring that the development will not increase flood risk on-site.

It should be noted that a consultation responses have been received from MSDC Flood Risk Team and Southern Water, no objections have been raised, subject to suitably worded conditions and informatives being imposed.

Summary

In conclusion and for the reasons mentioned above the proposed siting and design does not impact upon setting of the adjoining listed buildings, the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, the views from within the street scene or harm the wider character and appearance of the area.

In addition, this proposal will not impact upon the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring residential properties.

The future occupiers of the new dwellings will benefit from suitable living space in line with the national space standards, with more than sufficient private amenity space along with a policy compliant amount of off-street parking provision.

The Applicant will ensure that a suitably worded Unilateral Undertaking is provided prior to the determination of this application in order to make the financial contribution towards SAMM.

The proposal as submitted addresses all of the other material planning considerations in respect of ecology, biodiversity and flood risk.

Overall, this proposal ensures that no adverse impact would be created that would outweigh the benefits of the development in this case having regard to the tilted balance required by the Framework. The key benefits of this proposal include the provision of additional residential units in a relatively sustainable urban location which will contribute towards the serious housing land supply shortfall in the Borough.