



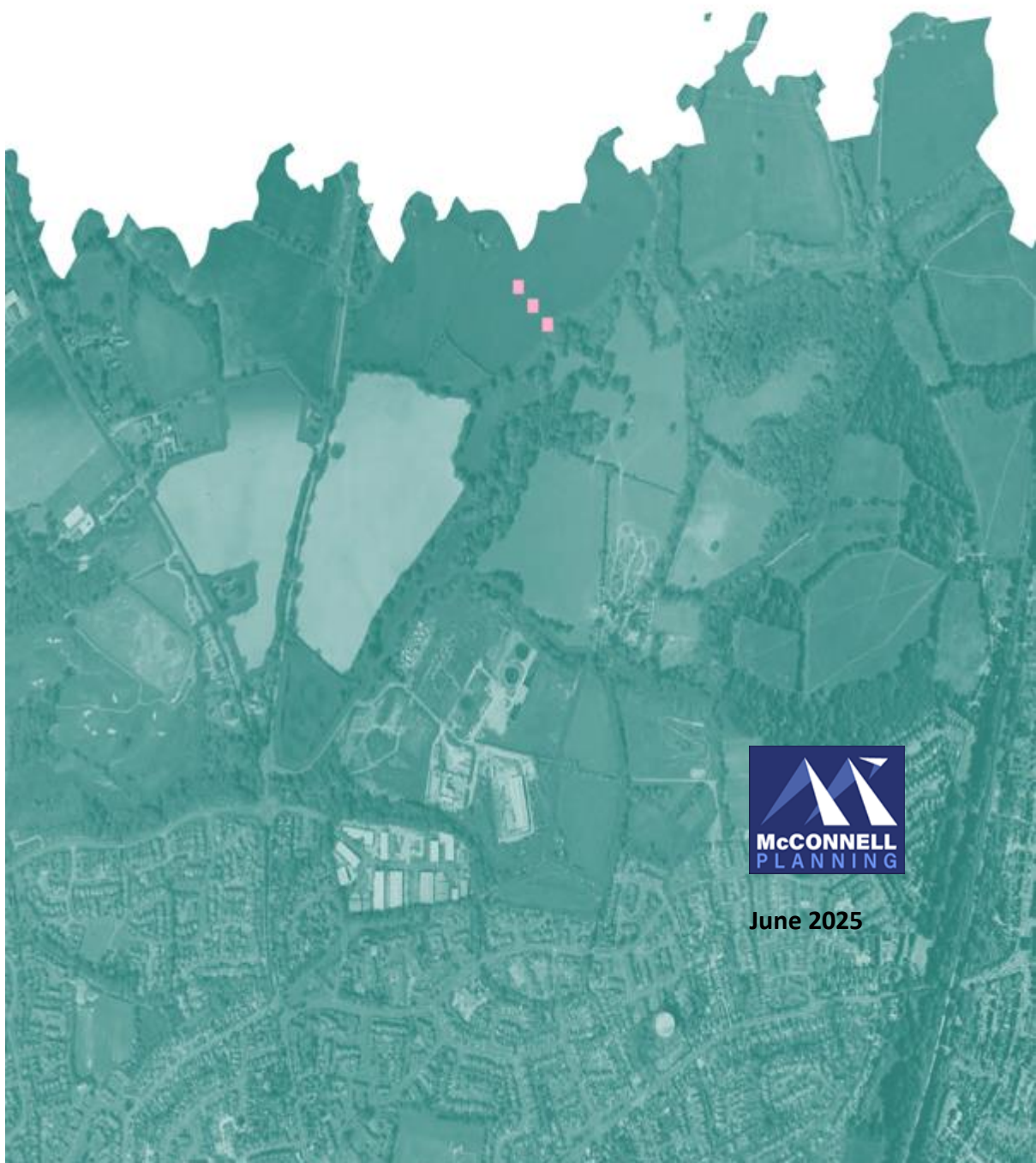
Homes
England

Bellway

Brookleigh, Burgess Hill

Phase 1 East: Former Lowlands Farm barn site

Planning Statement



June 2025

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 McConnell Planning has been appointed by Bellway Homes to submit a reserved matters application (RMA) jointly by Bellway Homes and Homes England to Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) for the construction of two dwellings on the former Lowlands Farm Barn site pursuant to the outline planning permission (OPP) ref DM/18/5114, as amended by planning application ref DM/21/3279, granted for a mixed-use development on land to the northwest of Burgess Hill, now known as Brookleigh.
- 1.2 This Planning Statement sets out the details of the proposed development and how this complies with national planning policy, local planning policy and the parameter plans and design documents approved under the OPP.

2.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 This RMA seeks approval for the following development:
- “Reserved matters application pursuant to outline planning permission ref DM/18/5114, as amended by planning application ref DM/21/3279, for the construction of two dwellings on the former Lowlands Farm Barn site within Sub-Phase P1.3 at the Northern Arc development (now Brookleigh) on land north and north-west of Burgess Hill”.
- 2.2 A pair of 3-bed semi-detached dwellings are proposed. Each dwelling will be provided with two car parking spaces and cycle storage sheds. The following information is submitted with the application:
- Site location plan
 - Site layout plan
 - Layout comparison plan
 - Proposed elevations
 - Proposed floor plans
 - Cycle stores details

- Landscape plan
- Drainage layout plan
- EIA Statement of Conformity & Addendum

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The site, which measures 0.1ha in area, is located to the east of Freeks Lane, a public right of way on the northern edge of the built-up area of Burgess Hill, approximately 250m to the north of the junction of Freeks Lane with Eastbridge Avenue. The site lies within sub-phase P1.3 of the Brookleigh development.
- 3.2 The site accommodates Lowlands Farm Barn, a 19th Century barn with modern additions. This barn suffered extensive fire damage in 2024 with the roof and internal timbers destroyed, leaving only the northern wall and the lower plinth of all other walls remaining.
- 3.3 The site lies within Flood Zone 1.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1. Outline Planning Permission (ref DM/18/5114) on land to the north and north-west of Burgess Hill was granted by MSDC on 4th October 2019 for:

“Comprehensive, phased, mixed-use development comprising approximately 3,040 dwellings including 60 units of extra care accommodation (Use Class C3) and six permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, including a Centre for Community Sport with ancillary facilities (Use Class D2), three local centres (comprising Use Classes A1-A5 and B1, and stand-alone community facilities within Use Class D1), healthcare facilities (Use Class D1), and employment development comprising a 4 hectare dedicated business park (Use Classes B1 and B2), two primary school campuses and a secondary school campus (Use Class D1), public open space, recreation areas, play areas, associated infrastructure including pedestrian and cycle routes, roads, car parking,

bridges, landscaping, surface water attenuation, recycling centre and waste collection infrastructure with associated demolition of existing buildings and structures, earthworks, temporary and permanent utility infrastructure and associated works.”

The OPP approved a number of parameter plans, which are listed below:

- Land Use
- Green Infrastructure
- Access and Movement
- Density (Max/Min)
- Building Heights (Max)
- Demolition and Retention
- Phasing

The relevant parameter plan to this RMA is the Demolition and Retention parameter plan, which initially identified Lowlands Farm Barn as a building to be retained.

The OPP also approved the following documents:

- Revised Development Specification and Framework August 2019
- Revised Design Guide August 2019

- 4.2 An application for reserved matters approval (ref DM/21/3870) for Phase 1 East of the Brookleigh development was granted in May 2022 for:

“Reserved Matters Application pursuant to Outline Planning Permission DM/18/5114, to consider access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale with respect to the erection of 247 dwellings and associated car parking, open space and infrastructure, including an extension to Bedelands Nature Reserve and provision of the Green Circle and pedestrian/cycle route for Sub-Phases P1.3, P1.5, P1.6, OS1.1a, OS1.1b, OS1.2N, OS1.5 and OS1.6) to the east of Isaacs Lane and Lowlands Farm at the Northern Arc development on land north and north-west of Burgess Hill”.

This application included the conversion of Lowlands Farm Barn into two dwellings.

- 4.3 An application under S73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (ref DM/21/3279) for a modification to conditions 5, 6, 7, 11, 22 and 35 of the outline planning permission was approved on 9 December 2022.
- 4.4 An application under S73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (ref DM/23/0747) for a modification to conditions 4 (approved plans) and 5 (parameter plans) is currently under consideration. This application seeks, inter alia, to amend the Demolition and Retention parameter plan to show Lowlands Farm Barn as a building to be demolished. The application remains undetermined at the time of writing.
- 4.5 An application under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) – Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B (ref DM/25/0843) was submitted for the demolition of the barn at Lowlands Farm. The Council determined on 22 April 2025 that prior approval was not required for this demolition.

5.0 PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 Extensive pre-application discussions have taken place with the Council following the fire damage to the barns. These discussions initially concerned the principle of the replacement of the fire damaged buildings. Once the principle had been agreed, the discussions then focussed upon the process through which the replacement buildings could be considered. It was agreed that this could be pursued via a further reserved matters application. Discussions then took place about the design of the proposed replacement buildings. The Plans that are submitted with this RMA are the plans presented to the Council, with the Council supporting the proposed design. Finally, there were discussions on the scope of the RMA with agreement reached on the scope, which is as per the submitted application.

6.0. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The Outline Planning Application (OPA) was subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which was reported in an Environmental Statement (ES) and an ES Addendum (ESA) in 2018 and 2019 respectively. An EIA Statement of Conformity & Addendum is submitted with this application and presents a review of the current proposal to replace the fire damaged barn with two new dwellings against the parameters assessed in the Statement of Conformity submitted with RMA DM/21/3870, alongside the conclusions of the ES and ESA.

The report concludes that the proposals do not result in any additional environmental effects so that the residual effects and conclusions of the ES and ESA remain valid. This application is therefore in compliance with OPP DM/18/5114 as well as the current live S73 application DM/23/0747.

7.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 7.1 This section of the Planning Statement sets out a brief summary of planning policy relevant to the proposed development.
- 7.2 In accordance with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for MSDC currently comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 adopted in March 2018 (MSDP).
- 7.3 The Council is currently reviewing and updating the MSDP, which will be replaced with the District Plan 2021-2039. The Submission Draft District Plan was published for consultation in December 2023. Stage 1 of the Examination Hearings into this Plan took place in October 2024 with the Inspector advising that the Duty to Cooperate had not been met. The Council has launched a legal challenge against the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in response to the Inspector's letter. This will delay progress with the Stage 2 Examination Hearings.

- 7.4 This Plan review currently carries limited weight in the decision making process and given that there is likely to be considerable delay before the second stage hearings are completed and the inspector's Report published, this plan will not be taken into consideration in this Planning Statement.

National Planning Policy

- 7.5 At the national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides an overarching context for the determination of planning applications. The current NPPF was published in December 2024 and acts as guidance for making decisions about planning applications. At the heart of this document is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The relevant chapter of the NPPF applicable to the assessment of this RMA is chapter 12 regarding design.

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

- 7.6 At the local level, the following policies are considered relevant:

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (MSDP)

Policy DP26: Character and Design

Policy DP27: Dwelling Space Standards

Policy DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage

West Sussex County Council Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Sep 2020)

8.0. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Design

- 8.1 Section 3 of this statement identified that the site previously accommodated Lowlands Farm Barn, a 19th Century barn with modern additions and that the barn suffered extensive fire damage in 2024 with the roof and internal timbers destroyed and only the northern wall and the lower plinth of all other walls remaining.

8.2 In preparing the design of the two replacement dwellings, both the external appearance of the barn prior to the fire damage and the design for the proposed conversion approved through reserved matters approval ref DM/21/3870 have been taken into consideration. The potential significance of the barns and their component parts as they stood prior to the fire damage alongside assessing the weight which should be placed upon replication is an important consideration in determining a suitable design. This matter is discussed in further detail below.

8.3 The following images show the barn as it stood prior to the fire damage:



West elevation from Freeks Lane



North elevation



Southern elevation illustrating alterations



Kennels and northern annex

8.4 The approved plans for the conversion of the barns into two dwellings under application ref DM/21/3870 are shown below:





Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan

These plans for conversion broadly reflect the overall form of the original barns, although there was a degree of departure from the barns as they stood. Notably, the utilitarian single storey modern additions to the main barn that could not practically be included in the conversion were to be removed and replaced with a new single storey component. The main element of the barn was also to be subject to some adaptation with the 20th Century extension to the front altered in order to provide

practical internal accommodation. Overall, the approved change would have introduced a domestic character to the buildings.

- 8.5 The design of the proposed replacement barns has taken into consideration the form, relative significance and history of the original barn and the design of the proposed conversion. It has also considered how any residential building would be viewed in the context of the emerging residential development at P1.3, as well as applying the residential design guidance principles within the Street Design and Adoption Manual.
- 8.6 The principal objective has been to design a building that is respectful of the form and appearance of the original barn. In this regard, the plans seek to extend the principle two storey component of the original barn whilst removing the single storey element of the proposed conversion. It is considered that this retains both the agricultural character of the original barn and understanding of the former agricultural use of this part of the site, whilst also facilitating the provision of practical internal accommodation.
- 8.7 The front elevation depicts the extended roof form of the original barn with minimal and discreet new openings so that it portrays a simple agricultural appearance. Indeed, the principal elevation as now proposed can be considered to be less domestic in character than the previous approved conversion, and to retain a greater sense of the history of the site. More significant new openings are confined to the less prominent rear elevation. This arrangement allows for practical living conditions to be provided in a manner which facilitates a less domestic appearance to the principal elevation.
- 8.8 Dutch hips are provided at either end of the building thereby providing a nod to the form of the original barn, and whilst the proposed built form has been elongated when compared to the original barn, this is not considered inappropriate given that this is a new building in a residential setting where the main objective is to create a building that retains the agricultural character of the former barn. It should also be noted that the building is on a new footprint with a strong street presence that enables the building to integrate effectively within the surrounding residential development, and

in a more effective manner than would have been achieved via the approved conversion.

- 8.9 Overall, it is considered that the design of the proposed dwellings achieves a good balance that respects the agricultural form of Lowlands Farm Barn whilst also integrating well with the adjacent residential development and providing practical living accommodation. As such, the proposed development accords with MSDP Policy DP26.
- 8.10 Condition 6 of the OPP states that the detailed design of the development proposed through Reserved Matters applications shall have regard to, and broadly accord with, the principles and specifications set out in the Revised Development and Specification Framework (August 2019) and the Revised Design Guide (August 2019).
- 8.11 Although the detailed design of the two dwellings has been heavily informed by the character and form of Lowlands Farm Barn, there are nevertheless various elements of the Revised Development and Specification Framework and the Revised Design Guide that have been applied to the design. Notably, the dwellings front the street with a clear distinction between the front and back of the property in order to create a secure and coherent street form. There is a clear definition between public and private space with an opportunity for landscaping that will allow for a sense of enclosure and contribute to the street scene.
- 8.12 The dwellings exhibit harmonious vertical and horizontal rhythms to provide variety and interest with window and door openings arranged sensitively to create practical accommodation that also respects the historic agricultural character that is integral to the design. The proposed materials further support this character. These design features ensure that the proposed dwellings accord with the principles and specifications set out in the Revised Development and Specification Framework and the Revised Design Guide.
- 8.13 Each dwelling is provided with 2 car parking spaces and cycle storage sheds are positioned within each rear curtilage. This meets the West Sussex County Council

Guidance on Parking at New Developments, which requires a car parking provision of 1.7 spaces per dwelling for a 3 bed dwelling in Parking Behaviour Zone 4 (which is the PBZ applied to RMA DM/21/3870). Finally, it is clarified that the proposed dwellings are NDSS compliant, thereby satisfying MSDP Policy DP27.

Landscaping

- 8.14 A landscaping plan is submitted with the application. The front gardens and all other perimeter areas are to be planted with the mix of plants specified on the plan.

Biodiversity

- 8.15 The S106 agreement supporting the OPP includes a biodiversity objective, which is a requirement to secure a site net gain of 10% in biodiversity compared with the baseline biodiversity value. The S106 requires a Baseline Biodiversity Assessment to be prepared prior to commencement of the development with a Biodiversity Progress Report to be submitted at various stages of the development to monitor progress against the biodiversity objective.
- 8.16 BNG calculations were prepared for RMA ref DM/21/3870 to support the Biodiversity Progress Report. The baseline biodiversity value for the reserved matters application site covering Phase 1B, which included Lowlands Farm Barn within P1.3 as well as sub-phases P1.5 and P1.6, was 224 habitat units with the proposed development increasing the biodiversity value of the site to 271 habitat units. The baseline biodiversity value of P1.3 was calculated at 1.45 units and the post development value being 2.07 units, thereby forming a very small component of the overall biodiversity value of Phase 1B.
- 8.17 It was agreed with Officers at pre-application stage that given the small size of the site and the low biodiversity value, which is likely to have been reduced following the fire damage, that rather than producing further biodiversity calculations for the application site, the biodiversity calculations prepared for reserved matters application DM/21/3870 for the Biodiversity Progress Report required by the S106 agreement would be of sufficient accuracy.

Drainage

- 8.18 A Drainage Layout plan is submitted with the application. This plan identifies that both the foul and surface water drainage will link into the wider foul and surface water drainage network that is to be provided for phase P1.3 of the Brookleigh development.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 With Lowlands Farm Barn effectively destroyed through fire damage, this presented an opportunity to provide a replacement building with an agricultural character that is respectful of the original barn, yet also provides for high quality residential accommodation appropriate to the residential setting that these dwellings will integrate within. This has been successfully achieved thereby meeting both the relevant policies within the Development Plan as well as the principles and specifications set out in the Revised Development and Specification Framework and the Revised Design Guide for the Brookleigh development.