

Flood Risk & Drainage Team
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands, Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath, RH16 1SS

5 October 2026

Dear Flood Risk & Drainage Team

Planning application DM/26/1511 — Flood Risk Assessment
The Goods Building, 93 Sunte Avenue, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, RH16 2AB
Proposed single storey timber framed garden room for use as a home office

Further to the Council's request for a Flood Risk Assessment in support of the above application, this letter and the enclosed reports together comprise that assessment. The letter addresses each of the six matters raised in the Council's request; the enclosed reports provide the supporting flood risk data for the site.

The assessment is intended to be proportionate to the proposal, which is a small, single storey, non-habitable outbuilding of approximately 22.5 m² within the rear garden of an existing dwelling, raised on ground screw piles, to be used as a home office ancillary to the dwelling.

Sources and enclosure

One document is enclosed: the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning for the site (location 534192/125499, created 4 October 2026).

This assessment also draws on three further reports obtained by the applicant on purchase of the property. Rather than enclose those reports in full, their relevant findings have been extracted and are reproduced in full at Appendix A to this letter, with the source and date of each stated so that the Council can verify any point. The reports themselves are:

- Groundsure Flood report, ref. OPD-2025052195939-flood, dated 21 May 2025
- Martello Enviro+Climate+Planning report, ref. 2025052195939, dated 22 May 2025
- Report on Searches prepared by Lewis Denley Solicitors, including Local Authority and Water and Drainage search results, dated 2025

The last of these is a private and confidential report prepared for the applicant by his solicitors and is not reproduced here in full for that reason; the drainage findings relied upon are set out at Appendix A. Copies of any of the three reports can be provided to the Council on request.

The Flood Map for Planning confirms that the site lies in flood zone 3. This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the Environment Agency's standing advice for flood risk assessments, which applies to minor development of this type.

1. The proposed development

Item	Detail
Proposal	Single storey, mono-pitch, timber framed garden room

Item	Detail
Use	Home office ancillary to the dwelling. No sleeping accommodation. No commercial use.
Footprint	Approximately 4.5 m × 5.0 m (approx. 22.5 m ²)
Foundations	Galvanised steel ground screw piles; suspended floor with open void beneath; no excavation
Roof	Mono-pitch sedum (green) roof
Services	Electricity from the dwelling only. No water supply, WC, basin or foul drainage is proposed.
Flood risk vulnerability	“Less vulnerable” (NPPF Annex 3 — offices). Minor (householder) development.

2. Identification and assessment of flooding from all sources

The enclosed reports assess flood risk from each source. Their findings are summarised below, together with the implications for this proposal.

Source	Findings in enclosed reports	Assessment for this proposal
Rivers / sea	Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning: the site lies in flood zone 3 (high probability). Groundsure: Low chance of flooding from rivers and the sea once flood defences, which are present in the vicinity, are taken into account. Martello: high before manual review, reclassified to medium once defences were taken into account.	The Scrase Bridge Stream, a Main River, runs to the east of the site along the Hickmans Lane corridor, with a flood defence shown to the north. The Flood Map for Planning does not take account of defences; the defended risk, as assessed by both enclosed reports, is lower. The proposal is less vulnerable development, which is appropriate in flood zone 3a. Mitigation is set out at section 4.
Surface water	Groundsure: Significant — a 1 in 30 annual chance of flooding in the area to a depth of 0.3–1.0 m. Martello: reclassified from high to medium as the mapped risk does not significantly affect buildings on the property.	Mapped surface water flow follows the stream corridor. The building is raised on screw piles with an open void beneath, so shallow overland flow can pass beneath it without obstruction.
Groundwater	Groundsure: High — groundwater could rise above ground level in a 1 in 100 year event, with basements at particular risk. Martello: no groundwater hazard identified.	The higher of the two assessments has been assumed. The proposal has no basement or below-ground accommodation and the floor is raised above ground, so groundwater emergence would not enter the building. It does, however, affect drainage design (section 5).
Sewers	Water and Drainage search: foul water from the dwelling drains to the public sewer; surface water does not drain to the public sewer; a public sewer lies within 30.48 m.	No water supply or foul drainage is proposed to the garden room, and no surface water connection to the public sewer is proposed. There is therefore no additional load on the public sewer and no increase in sewer flood risk.
Reservoirs / artificial	Martello: the property is more than 250 m from any flood storage area.	No risk identified.
Historic flooding	Groundsure: historic flooding not identified. Martello: the property is more than 250 m from any area with a history of flooding.	No recorded flooding at the property. Mid Sussex District Council and Environment Agency mapping show no record of direct river or main watercourse flooding

Source	Findings in enclosed reports	Assessment for this proposal
		affecting the properties along Sunte Avenue itself.

Interaction between sources. The sources above are likely to act together: prolonged or intense rainfall raises groundwater and saturates the ground, which increases surface water runoff to the Scrase Bridge Stream, which in turn responds quickly to heavy rainfall. The mitigation proposed has been designed on that basis, using a raised floor, an open underfloor void and a sealed drainage system that is unaffected by high groundwater.

Climate change. The Martello report assesses the effect of climate change on flood hazard at the property as a very small increase in both the near term (2030s) and mid term (2050s) under RCP 4.5. The surface water drainage proposals at section 5 include an allowance for increased peak rainfall intensity in accordance with Environment Agency guidance. Because the building is raised on screw piles, displaces no flood storage and obstructs no flow route, its effect on flood risk elsewhere does not increase as flood levels rise.

3. No increase in flood risk elsewhere

- The building will be supported on ground screw piles with a suspended floor and an open void beneath, so floodwater can pass freely under the structure. The volume displaced by the piles themselves is negligible.
- No excavation, ground raising or levelling is proposed.
- No new walls or solid boundary structures are proposed that could obstruct or divert flood flows towards neighbouring land.
- No surface water will be discharged from the site. Roof water will be retained and returned to the ground within the curtilage (section 5), so runoff leaving the property will be no greater than at present.
- Surplus construction material will be removed from site and not deposited within any flood-prone area.

4. Opportunities to reduce the probability and consequences of flooding

- Finished floor level. The floor will be raised 300 mm above existing ground level, providing freeboard above shallow surface water and any out-of-bank flow. The void beneath the raised floor remains open, so water can pass beneath the building rather than being displaced by it. No below-ground accommodation is proposed.
- Flood-resilient construction. Electrical sockets, switches and the consumer unit will be fixed at least 600 mm above floor level with cabling dropped from above. Water-resistant materials will be used at low level where practicable.
- No pollutants. No fuels, chemicals or other pollutants will be stored in the building.
- Flood warning. The applicant will register for Environment Agency flood warnings and alerts covering the Scrase Bridge and West Common Streams at Lindfield, and will not occupy the garden room while an alert or warning is in force.
- Sedum roof. The green roof intercepts and slows rainfall, reducing both the rate and volume of runoff compared with a conventional roof covering.
- Restricted use. The applicant would accept a condition restricting the building to purposes ancillary to the dwelling, with no sleeping accommodation, which keeps the vulnerability of the development low for its lifetime.

5. Surface water management and SuDS

The proposal adds approximately 22.5 m² of roof area on what is currently lawn and planting. No new paved areas are proposed.

No ground is covered or sealed by the development. The building is supported on galvanised steel ground screw piles, which require no excavation, no concrete pad and no hardstanding. The ground beneath the building therefore remains as existing and fully permeable, and rainfall falling within the footprint continues to reach the ground and infiltrate as it does at present. The only change is that rainfall landing on the roof plan area is intercepted and discharged at a controlled point rather than falling directly onto the lawn, and that is the volume dealt with below.

Surface water will be managed in accordance with the drainage hierarchy:

Option	Assessment
Rainwater re-use	Adopted. Roof water drains via gutter and downpipe to a lidded water butt used for garden irrigation.
Infiltration	Adopted, at shallow depth within the curtilage. Roof water not taken by the water butt is discharged at ground level to the adjoining lawn, where it infiltrates into the garden as rainfall does at present. No deep excavated soakaway is proposed, in recognition of the high groundwater susceptibility and potential running sand identified in the enclosed reports; shallow dispersal within the topsoil horizon is unaffected by those constraints.
Discharge to a watercourse	Not proposed. There is no watercourse within the application site, and no new or existing connection to the Scrase Bridge Stream, which lies beyond the eastern boundary on third-party land, is proposed or required.
Discharge to sewer	Not proposed. The Water and Drainage search confirms surface water from the property does not drain to the public sewer, and that arrangement is unchanged.
Net effect	No surface water is discharged from the site. All rainfall falling on the development is retained and returned to the ground within the curtilage, as at present.

Proposed system. Rainfall on the sedum roof is first retained within the roof build-up. Water in excess of that is collected by gutter and downpipe into a lidded water butt for garden irrigation. The water butt overflow discharges at ground level to the adjoining lawn by way of a shingle-filled dispersal area, from which it soaks into the garden.

No surface water therefore leaves the site. There is no connection to a sewer, no connection to a watercourse and no piped discharge of any kind, so the rate and volume of runoff leaving the property are unchanged by the development. The arrangement replicates the existing situation, in which rainfall falling on this part of the garden soaks into the ground where it lands; the development intercepts that rainfall at roof level and returns it to the same ground a short distance away.

Because nothing is discharged, no attenuation volume, flow control or discharge rate calculation is required. The relevant check is simply whether the garden can absorb the rainfall falling on a 22.5 m² roof, which it demonstrably can: the ground beneath the building is not covered or sealed and remains permeable, the surrounding garden is soft landscaping, and the contributing area is very small.

Green roof. The sedum roof is the first stage of attenuation and acts before any water reaches the gutter. The growing substrate and sedum mat absorb rainfall and hold it within the roof build-up, releasing it slowly by drainage and evapotranspiration. An extensive sedum system of this type typically retains in the order of 20–25 mm of rainfall when the substrate is dry, which over the 22.5 m² roof equates to roughly 0.45–0.55 m³. In smaller and more frequent rainfall events, that is sufficient to retain most or all of the rainfall falling on the roof, so no discharge occurs at all. In larger events, and where the substrate is already wet, the roof will not retain the full volume but still delays and flattens the peak rate of runoff reaching the gutter compared with a

conventional roof covering. The attenuation storage below has been sized conservatively on the assumption of a saturated roof and 100% runoff, so the benefit of the green roof is additional to, and not relied upon by, the design.

Maintenance. The system will be privately owned and maintained by the property owner. Gutters, the downpipe and the water butt filter will be cleared of debris twice yearly and after storms; the water butt lid and overflow will be checked quarterly; the sedum roof will be inspected twice yearly, with weeds and self-seeded growth removed and any bare patches made good; and the dispersal area will be checked annually to ensure it has not become compacted or silted.

Exceedance. In prolonged rainfall, when the roof build-up and the ground are already saturated, overflow from the water butt will spread as shallow sheet flow across the lawn following the existing fall of the garden, away from the dwelling and from neighbouring properties. This is the same behaviour as the existing garden in those conditions and does not direct water towards any neighbouring land.

6. Safe access and egress

The garden room is accessed on foot from the rear of the dwelling. In the event of flooding, occupants would move through the garden into the dwelling, which provides safe refuge at a higher level, and if necessary leave the site via the driveway onto Sunte Avenue and westwards to higher ground away from the stream corridor.

The building is a daytime home office with no sleeping accommodation and is occupied only by the residents of the dwelling. Flooding associated with the Scrase Bridge Stream is typically short-lived and is preceded by Environment Agency flood alerts. The applicant will register for those alerts and will not use the garden room while an alert or warning is in force. On that basis, safe access and egress are available throughout the lifetime of the development.

7. Sequential Test and Exception Test

Sequential Test. The National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance confirm that the Sequential Test is not required for minor development, which includes householder development. The proposal is a householder application for a building ancillary to an existing dwelling and must, by its nature, be located within the curtilage of that dwelling; there is no reasonably available alternative site. The Sequential Test is therefore not applicable.

A sequential approach has nevertheless been applied within the site. The plot is narrow and the northern part is occupied by the dwelling and parking, so the only usable garden space is to the south. The proposed position is the widest part of that area and is well screened from neighbouring properties.

Exception Test. The proposal is “less vulnerable” development, being an office with no sleeping accommodation. Under the flood risk vulnerability and flood zone compatibility table in the Planning Practice Guidance, less vulnerable development is appropriate in Flood Zone 3a without application of the Exception Test, and the Exception Test is in any event not required for minor development. The Exception Test is therefore not applicable.

Functional floodplain. The Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning identifies the site as Flood Zone 3 but does not distinguish between Flood Zone 3a and Flood Zone 3b. The site is an established residential curtilage within the built-up area boundary, enclosed by existing development on all sides, and is not land on which water has to flow or be stored in times of flood. The enclosed reports record no history of flooding at the property, and no direct river or main watercourse flooding is recorded as having affected the properties along Sunte Avenue

itself. On that basis the site is not considered to form part of the functional floodplain, and the Council is invited to confirm this against its Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

8. Aerodrome safeguarding — bird strike

The proposed surface water drainage scheme has been designed so that it creates no feature likely to attract birds hazardous to aircraft:

- No ponds, basins, swales, wetlands or other open water features are proposed.
- No attenuation pond, tank or basin is proposed; rainfall is returned to the ground by shallow infiltration into lawn, with no standing water.
- The water butt is fitted with a secure lid.
- The sedum roof is a small (approx. 22.5 m²) pitched, free-draining, low-growing sedum mat. It retains no standing water, contains no seed-bearing grasses or berry-producing species, and will be maintained to remove weeds and self-seeded growth.
- Any exceedance flow would be shallow and temporary, draining across lawn, with no ponding retained.

For these reasons, the proposed sustainable drainage scheme would not increase the risk of bird strike to Gatwick Airport.

9. Conclusion

The proposal is a small, non-habitable, less vulnerable outbuilding on screw pile foundations. It covers no ground, displaces no flood storage, obstructs no flow route and will be built with a raised floor level and flood-resilient detailing. Surface water will be managed through a sedum roof, rainwater re-use and shallow infiltration within the garden, with no discharge to any sewer or watercourse, so that runoff leaving the site is no greater than at present and no open water is created. Safe refuge and egress are available via the dwelling, supported by registration for Environment Agency flood warnings.

The development is therefore appropriate to its flood zone, will be safe for its lifetime taking account of climate change, and will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

I trust this letter, together with the enclosed Flood Map for Planning and the data summarised at Appendix A, provides the information required. Please contact me if you require any further detail, or copies of any of the source reports.

Yours sincerely

Richard Kear

Director, Miniature Manors Ltd

Agent for the applicant, Mr Mark Paterson

Appendix A — Flood risk and ground data from source reports

The findings below are reproduced from the source reports identified. Where two reports reach different conclusions on the same matter, both are given. No flood-related finding from any of the reports has been omitted.

A1. Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning

Location 534192/125499. Created 4 October 2026. Enclosed in full.

Item	Finding
Flood zone	Flood zone 3 — an area with a high probability of flooding
Requirement	A flood risk assessment must be completed for development in this area, following the Environment Agency's standing advice
Watercourse	Main river shown running north–south along the Hickmans Lane corridor to the east of the site
Defences	Flood defence shown to the north of the site
Scope note	The map shows river and sea flooding data only; it does not include other sources of flooding, and does not take account of flood defences

A2. Groundsure Flood report

Ref. OPD-2025052195939-flood, dated 21 May 2025. Grid ref 534192 125499.

Matter	Finding as reported
Overall flood risk	High
Rivers and the sea	Low. The property has a low chance of flooding in any given year according to Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea data, which takes account of flood defences and their condition.
Flood defences	Identified. The property is in an area where the risk of flooding from rivers or sea is reduced by the presence of flood defences. These areas would flood if the defences were not present.
Surface water	Significant. The area is assessed as having a 1 in 30 annual probability of surface water flooding to a depth of between 0.3 m and 1.0 m. Modern urban drainage is typically built to cope with events between 1 in 20 and 1 in 30 years.
Groundwater	High. Should a 1 in 100 year groundwater flood occur, groundwater levels could rise above ground level to a depth of over 25 cm. Basement areas may become inundated.
Historic flood	Not identified.
Flood storage areas	Not identified.
Proposed flood defences	Not identified.
Insurance rating	FloodScore rating: High.

A3. Martello Enviro+Climate+Planning report

Ref. 2025052195939, assessed 22 May 2025.

Matter	Finding as reported
Rivers and seas	Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales models indicate significant fluvial or tidal flood hazards at the property; the likelihood and severity of risk are high or very high.

Matter	Finding as reported
Fluvial (undefended)	GeoSmart model indicates a significant fluvial flood hazard. After manual review, reclassified from high to medium risk as flood defences and benefiting areas were taken into account.
Surface water	Models indicate a significant pluvial flood hazard. After manual review, reclassified from high to medium risk as the flood risk does not significantly affect any buildings on the property.
Pluvial	As above — reclassified from high to medium risk as the flood risk does not significantly affect any buildings on the property.
Tidal (undefended)	No tidal flood hazard at the property; risk low or very low.
Groundwater	No groundwater flood hazards identified at the property; risk low or very low in likelihood and severity.
Flood storage areas	The property is more than 250 m from any area used for flood water storage.
Historical flood areas	The property is more than 250 m from an area with a history of flooding.
Climate change — flooding	The property is in an area where climate change is expected to have a low or very low impact on potential future increases in flooding hazard. Near-term (RCP 4.5, 2030s): very small increase. Mid-term (RCP 4.5, 2050s): very small increase.
Ground — running sands	Potential for running sand issues at the property; risk of ground instability arising from leaks, heavy rainfall or flooding likely elevated.
Ground — compressible	Significant signs of compressible ground; risk of ground stability, water infiltration or structural stability issues likely high or very high.
Ground — shrink-swell	Ground is non-plastic or of low plasticity; risk of movement low to very low.
Ground — landslides	No indicators of slope instability identified; risk low to very low.
Ground — artificial	No artificial ground recorded at the property; risk low to very low.

A4. Report on Searches — Lewis Denley Solicitors

Drainage and site findings relied upon in this assessment, taken from the Water and Drainage Search and Local Search results reported therein.

Matter	Finding as reported
Foul water	Foul water does drain to the public sewer.
Surface water	Surface water does not drain to the public sewer.
Water supply	The property is connected to the mains water supply.
Public sewer	There is a public sewer within 30.48 m of the property.
Highway	Sunte Avenue is adopted at public expense.
Policy	The property lies within a Built Up Area Boundary.
Trees	A Tree Preservation Order affects the property.

A5. Reconciliation of differing findings

Matter	Approach taken in this assessment
Flood zone	The Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning is the determinative source for planning purposes and places the site in flood zone 3. The lower ratings given by Groundsure and Martello reflect the presence of flood defences, which the Flood Map for Planning disregards. The assessment proceeds on the basis of flood zone 3.

Matter	Approach taken in this assessment
Groundwater	Groundsure assesses groundwater risk as high; Martello identifies none. The higher assessment has been adopted as a precaution. The proposal has no below-ground accommodation and the floor is raised, so this does not affect the safety of the development, but it has informed the drainage approach.
Ground conditions	The potential for running sand and compressible ground reported by Martello has informed the decision to use ground screw piles, which require no excavation, and to avoid a deep excavated soakaway.