

Batcheller Monkhouse



PLANNING APPLICATION

**Planning Application for change of use of part of an
existing building used as a builder's merchant (B2) to self-
storage (B8) including associated parking**

at

**79 Railway Approach
East Grinstead
West Sussex
RH19 1BY**

On Behalf of:

Mid Sussex Timber LTD

Prepared by

**Batcheller Monkhouse
No.1 London Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN1 1DH**

November 2025

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	SITE AND SURROUNDINGS	4
3	PLANNING HISTORY.....	5
4	DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL	6
5	PLANNING POLICY	7
6	DEVELOPMENT APPRAISAL	9
7	CONCLUSION.....	14

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Batcheller Monkhouse on behalf of Mid Sussex Timber Ltd in respect of a proposal for change of use of part of the building currently used as a builder's merchant to self-storage with associated parking at 79 Railway Approach, East Grinstead
- 1.2 The statement includes a description of the site and its surroundings, relevant planning history, details of the proposed development, a summary of the planning policy context, and an appraisal of the scheme in the context of relevant planning considerations.
- 1.3 The following documents have been submitted alongside this Statement:
- Location and Block Plans
 - Proposed Floor Plan
 - Transport Statement (prepared by TTP Consulting)

2 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

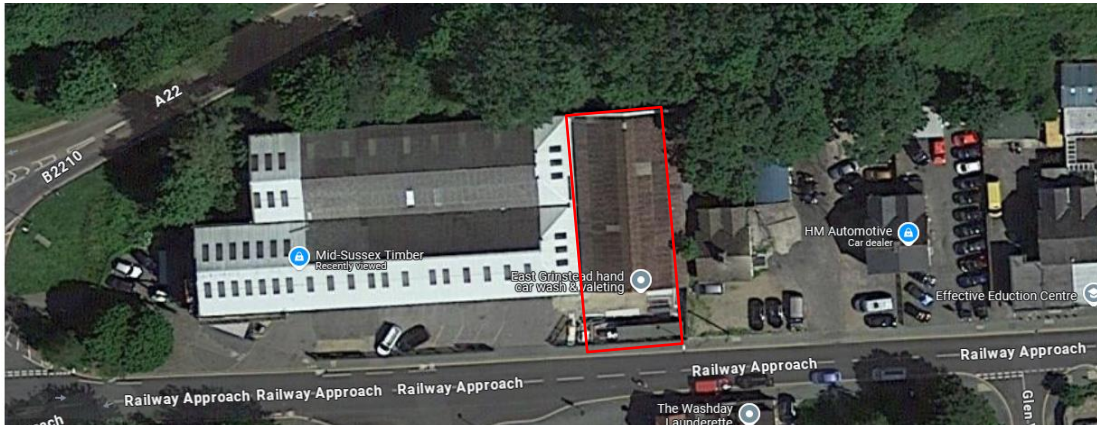


Figure 1 Site Location Source Google Maps

- 2.1 The premises at 79 Railway Approach includes an existing industrial type building on the northern side of Railway Approach. The building is currently occupied by Mid Sussex Timber Ltd and is split into two distinct areas. The majority of the unit operates as a builder's merchant and this will continue to operate as existing. A smaller section of the unit (to the eastern side) has until recently been used for the storage of a sheet cutter for materials and used as extra storage for the timber yard. However, due to a decline in demand, this part of the unit has become surplus to demand and the whole operation of Mid Sussex Timber Ltd is being consolidated into the remainder of the unit.
- 2.2 The building is constructed from a mix of brick and grey metal cladding typical of many industrial units. The site is enclosed by green security fencing with three access points onto Railway Approach, two of which operate as an in and out arrangement.
- 2.3 The site backs onto the A22 to the north and the surrounding area is a mix of commercial and residential development. In terms of architectural style 79 Railway Approach is a standalone industrial unit with other commercial units in the vicinity primarily being formed from the conversion of residential buildings and being of a smaller scale.
- 2.4 There are no listed buildings within the vicinity of the site nor does it lie within a conservation area.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The site lies within the local planning authority area of Mid Sussex District Council. Table 1 below sets out the planning history for the site.

Application	Proposal	Decision
GR/249/85	Removal of existing timber fencing and gates along Railway Approach frontage and erection of replacement 7ft high security fencing and gates with concrete and steel posts and 2ft chain link fencing.	Approved 1 November 1985
GR/328/98	Relocation of trade counter and showroom. Replacement of roof sheeting and wall cladding.	Approved 12 January 1999
GR/319/99	Demolition of redundant showroom building, extend timber shed roof over demolished building and recladding elevation.	Approved 17 December 1999

Table 1 Planning History For Site

4 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This application relates to the proposed change of use of a redundant part of the existing building at 79 Railway Approach for self-storage. The use would be for up to 90-self storage rooms which would be a mix of sizes to cater for a range of customer needs. The proposed use will require internal refurbishment only with no external alterations required to the building or grounds. Replacement signage will be pursued under deemed consent rules where required as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007.
- 4.2 The self-storage units are intended to be operated on a self-service basis with a key code system for the external entrance door. The intended opening hours for the self-storage units are to be the same as the existing opening hours for the builder's merchant see below.
- Monday – Friday 7:30 am–5 pm
 - Saturday - 8 am–1 pm
 - Sunday -Closed
- 4.3 Users will not be able to access the self-storage units outside of these hours as the main entrance gates to the site will be shot and locked. The management and operation of the self-storage units will be handled by an intermediary company on behalf of the applicant and will be done on a remote basis.
- 4.4 In order to ensure sufficient parking on site for the proposed self-storage use as well as the existing builder's merchant two additional parking spaces will be created in an area of existing hardstanding previously used for storage to the front of the building.

5 PLANNING POLICY

5.1. Planning Policy Overview

5.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the site comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan 2018, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2022, Saved Policies of the Local Plan 2004 and the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan 2016. Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

5.1.2 This following section sets out the relevant Development Plan policies for this site and other material considerations which may be taken into account in the determination of the application.

5.2. Development Plan

5.2.1. Tables 2-5 below set out the relevant policies of Mid Sussex District Plan 2018, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2022, Saved Policies of the Local Plan 2004 and the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan 2016.

Policy	Summary
DP1	Sustainable Economic Development
DP2	Town Centre Development
DP21	Transport
DP26	Character and Design
DP29	Noise, Air and Light Pollution

Table 2: Relevant Mid Sussex District Plan Policies

Policy	Summary
SA34	Existing Employment Sites

Table 3: Site Allocations Development Plan Policies

Policy	Summary
B3	Residential Amenities
B9	Crime Prevention and Design
E3	Storage and Warehousing
E4	Proximity of Residential Property to Established Business Areas
T5	Parking Standards

Table 4 Saved Local Plan Policies

Policy	Summary
EG10	Employment Provision
EG12	Car Parking

Table 5 East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan Policies

5.3. Other Material Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.3.1. The NPPF came into force in 2012 and was updated in 2024. It is the overarching government policy for England in relation to the assessment and determination of planning applications. Table 6 below sets out the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Paragraph	Summary
11	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
38	Positive decision making
85	Support of local business needs
131	Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development

Table 6 Relevant NPPF Paragraphs

6 DEVELOPMENT APPRAISAL

6.1. Principle of Development

- 6.1.1 The starting point for the consideration of applications is Section 38 (6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which states that proposals should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.1.2 In respect of the principle of the proposed change of use there are several policies which provide support for the proposed change of use. District Plan Policy DP1 permits intensification, conversion, redevelopment and/ or extension for employment uses providing it is in accordance with other policies in the plan. District Plan Policy DP2 supports development of a range of development in the District's Town Centres provided it is appropriate in scale and function to its location including the character and amenities of the surrounding area. As will be discussed in more detail below it is considered that the proposed self-storage use would respect the character of the area and would not disrupt the amenities of local residential occupiers.
- 6.1.3 Policy SA34 of the Site Allocations DPD requires existing employment sites to be retained in use classes B2, B8 or E(g). A builder's merchant is most commonly considered to be a Sui Generis use encompassing and element of all of the above. The proposed change of use of part of the building to a single B8 use would retain the mixed Sui Generis use of the remaining parts and so is not considered to be contrary to aims of policy SA34.
- 6.1.4 Saved Policy E3 of the Local Plan 2004 states that proposals for storage and warehousing development on existing industrial land or in suitable existing buildings will be permitted where they are of an appropriate scale and character, and where access and highway criteria can be met. The access and highways considerations are covered further at 6.4 of this statement. In respect of scale and character the proposed change of use will not require any extension to the existing building and minimal external alterations and so in this respect is considered to be of an appropriate scale and character.

6.1.5 Neighbourhood Plan Policy EG10 states that planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment, extension or alteration of existing B use category business premises where they:

1. Are on a site defined as previously developed land - *The site is previously developed land.*
2. Meet the parking requirements of the adopted Development Plan - *As will be set out below, the site provides the necessary parking for the development*
3. Provide a high-quality landscape setting - *The site will retain its existing landscape setting*
4. Demonstrate that the residual cumulative impacts of development on the transport network are not severe - *The submitted transport report concludes that the impact of the development on the local road network will not be severe*
5. Meet their own infrastructure needs - *The proposal will give rise to no need for additional infrastructure*
6. Are in a location and of a scale, form and design which is in character with its surroundings - *The proposal is considered to retain the existing character of the building and requires no extension to the building.*

6.1.6 In addition to the above criteria Policy EG10 states that proposals for mixed-use redevelopment of 'previously developed' business sites will be permitted providing the proposal includes a qualitative enhancement in the business floorspace being provided. The proposals will enable the existing unit to be utilised for a wider range of services and in this respect will represent an enhancement of the business floorspace.

6.2. Sustainable Development

6.2.1 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out the three tenants of sustainable development as being:

Economic – the conversion of this part of the building will enable the applicant to have another income stream to their business which will strengthen their economic base. It will also provide some indirect employment through the company that is going to

manage the operation of the self-storage units. The change of use of this part of the building will not bring about any direct loss or gain of employment at the site.

Social – The proposed use is considered to be capable of being accommodated on site without adverse impact on residential occupiers in the area.

Environmental – The minimal external changes required to the building are considered to be in keeping with the existing appearance of the building.

6.3. Impact upon Streetscene/Character of the area

6.3.1 Local Plan Policy DP26 sets out a number of design considerations and seeks to secure high quality design.

6.3.2 As set out above the proposed change of use requires minimal external alterations to the building and the proposed parking will be created on an area of existing hardstanding as such it is considered that the proposal will not adversely affect the streetscene or character of the area.

6.4. Impact upon Highways

6.4.1 District Plan Policy DP21 sets out a number of criteria relating to the transport impacts of proposals including the provision of adequate car parking, avoiding severe additional traffic congestion and protecting the safety of road users and pedestrians.

6.4.2 Neighbourhood Plan Policy EG12 states that planning permission will only be granted where vehicle-parking provision, including cycle parking, is in accordance with West Sussex County Council adopted parking standards and it does not dominate the street scene.

6.4.3 The application is supported by a Transport Statement prepared by TTP Consulting which confirms that the existing accesses are operating safely with no accidents being reported within the vicinity of the site in the last five years. The report indicates that the site is in a location which could attract people by modes other than the private car, albeit sustainable transport may not be that attractive given the proposed use. Servicing of the site will continue as per the current time, and the proposed change of use will not affect this.

- 6.4.4 The report also includes an analysis of trip generation associated with the existing and proposed uses and concludes that there is likely to be a reduction in daily trips associated with the proposed use. Finally, the report confirms that in terms of parking demand when taking into account the demand arising from the retained builder's merchant, an additional two parking spaces should be provided on site. These are proposed to be provided in front of the proposed self-storage. Swept path analysis is included which indicates the proposed parking arrangements can accommodate both cars and small vans. The level of proposed parking is in accordance with policy.
- 6.4.5 Pre-application discussions were held with West Sussex County Council Highways which confirmed that they were generally supportive of the proposals subject to the provision of further details such as a detailed trip analysis. The full pre-application response from WSCC is included at **Appendix 1** of the submitted Transport Statement.

6.5. Impact upon Residential Amenity

- 6.5.1 District Plan Policy DP29 states that development will only be permitted where it is designed, located and controlled to minimise the impact of noise on health and quality of life, neighbouring properties and the surrounding area.
- 6.5.2 Saved Local Plan Policy B3 states that proposals for new development, including changes of use, will not be permitted if significant harm to the amenities of nearby residents is likely to be created due to noise and disturbance; loss of privacy; overlooking; reduction in sunlight and daylight; and reduction in outlook. Saved Policy E4 states that when considering applications for the alteration or change of use of business premises on established industrial estates, full account will be taken of the implications of the proposed development on the residents of neighbouring dwellings. Planning permission will not normally be granted for the change of use of premises close to residential properties from B1/B8 to B2 or other industrial uses. In considering applications which may result in additional disturbance, appropriate planning conditions will be imposed to protect residential amenity.
- 6.5.3 The proposed self-storage use is considered to be a low impact, relatively inert commercial use that will not generate adverse conditions for those occupiers living in surrounding residential properties. Indeed, as set out in the submitted Transport Statement it is anticipated that the proposed change of use of part of the building will lead to a reduction in traffic associated with the site so in this respect the proposal will

reduce the impact on the amenity of residential occupiers in comparison to the existing use.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This planning statement has been prepared to support a planning application for the change of use of part of an existing builder's merchant premises to self-storage facility for up to 90 storage rooms with associated parking.
- 7.2 The proposed use requires no external alterations to the existing building and is considered to be a low impact commercial use that will operate without disturbance to nearby residential occupiers. The submitted Transport Statement indicates that the forecasted traffic levels from the proposed use can be accommodated on site through the provision of 2no additional parking spaces - a view shared by West Sussex County Council as Highway Authority.
- 7.3 The proposed use will continue to ensure a commercial use of this part of the building that will contribute towards strengthening the economic base of the existing business.
- 7.4 The proposal is considered to comply with the policies of the Development Plan in all respects.
- 7.5 The proposal is therefore recommended to Mid Sussex District Council for approval.