

19 Estcots Drive, East Grinstead, RH19 3DA

Planning Statement

The proposal is for the construction of a pair of semi-detached dwelling at land to the west of 19 Estcots Drive East Grinstead RH19 3DA. The site is located within the East Grinstead built up area boundary, within the 7km buffer zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA/SAC, within the setting of the Estcots and East Court, College Conservation Area, within the setting of Estcots Farmhouse and Estcots Barn which are both Grade II listed buildings and the site is also located within the setting of Estcots Cottage which may be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset.

The proposal is assessed against the local development plan which in this area consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan. The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023), the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD, West Sussex County Council's Guidance on Parking at New Developments - September 2020, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the technical housing standards - Nationally described space standard - March 2015 are also considered to be material planning considerations.

For assistance we have identified the relevant policies from the local development plan below:

Mid Sussex District Plan

DP4 – Housing

DP5 – Planning to Meet Future Housing Need

DP6 – Settlement Hierarchy

DP17 – Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

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 EG4 – Heritage Assets
Policy EG5 – Housing Proposals
Policy EG12 – Car Parking

Principle

The proposal complies in principle with Policy DP6 of the District Plan and Policy EG5 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan as the proposal is for an infill residential dwelling within the existing built-up area of the settlement of East Grinstead. It is also considered to be within a sustainable location due to it being located within the built-up area boundary of East Grinstead and its proximity to public transport routes. As such the principle of development is considered acceptable provided the proposal can demonstrate it is appropriate in nature and scale in compliance with policy DP26 and policy EG3 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan.

Character and Design and Impact on Heritage Assets

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan requires development address the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape, is of high quality design and layout and protects open spaces, trees and gardens the contribute to the area. A similar ethos is contained within policy EG3 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan and principle DG38 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

The site is located within the setting of the Estcots and East Court, College Conservation Area, within the setting of Estcots Farmhouse and Estcots Barn which are both Grade II listed buildings and the site is also located within the setting of Estcots Cottage which may be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. Policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan requires development protect the setting of listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets. Policy DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan requires development protect the setting of the conservation area and in particular views into and out of the area. A similar ethos is contained with policy EG4 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan.

The surrounding area consists of predominantly residential properties which are characterised by a variety of external materials. Properties within the area are either semi-detached or detached properties with decent sized curtilages. There are several trees and hedgerows within the surrounding are which give a verdant appearance to the area.

In terms of the design of the dwelling principle DG14 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide it does state that spaces should provide adequate enclosure and are not dominated by roads or parking. A similar ethos is contained within principles DG18 and DG19 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD. There are dwellings within the surrounding area that do have parking spaces to the front of dwellings and para 6.3.5 to 6.3.8 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD set out advice for dormers:

“6.3.5 While dormer windows can sometimes be prominent features in the street scene, care needs to be taken with their design, proportions and position on the roof. The choice of design should be informed by the character and appearance of the local vernacular.

6.3.6 Dormer windows should be visually subordinate to the roof slope, enabling a large proportion of the main roof to remain visible. Excessively wide dormers are likely to look unsatisfactory as they will often be out of proportion with the existing roof.

6.3.7 Dormer windows should normally be positioned below the ridgeline, and above the eaves line.”

The proposal needs address the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape and it would need to be of a high-quality design and layout. As such the proposal to policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policies EG3 and EG4 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan and principles DG14, DG18, DG19, DG38 and paragraphs 6.3.5 to 6.3.8 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD. The proposal needs to protect the settings of Estcots and East Court, College Conservation Area, the setting of Estcots Farmhouse and Estcots Barn which are both Grade II listed buildings and the setting of Estcots Cottage which may be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. As such the proposal needs to follow policies DP34 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

The proposal is for the erection of 2 No. semi-detached dwellings with shared access from Estcots Drive. The proposed dwellings are one-and-a-half storeys in height, with the upper floor partially contained within the roof space. This design allows the buildings to respond to the topography in relation to No. 19 while ensuring they do not appear too tall compared to the bungalow at No. 17. Due to level changes within the site, further terracing will be required, including cutting into the western part of the site and replacing the existing retaining wall with a new one. Plot 1 will have a slightly higher ridgeline than Plot 2, reflecting the natural slope that descends to the east. Most of the existing garden features will be removed; however, the 1.5m-high stone retaining wall, which supports the gravel terrace where the boundary fence against Estcots Farmhouse

stands, will be preserved. This includes the semi-circular niche with steps that once led to a higher garden level, now separated. Retaining these elements will help preserve a sense of the site's historical connection to the land behind. The dwellings will be of high-quality design and will contribute positively to the surrounding area.

Neighbouring Amenities

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan seeks to ensure that development 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. We believe the proposal would not result in development that would cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings.

Biodiversity

Policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan seeks to ensure development:

“Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances)”

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to planning and land management that leaves the natural environment in a better state than it was before. BNG will deliver measurable improvements for biodiversity by enhancing or creating new habitats in association with development. The requirement for BNG does not alter the existing legal requirements and protections for the natural environment such as protecting important habitats and species.

Biodiversity net gain is already referenced in the NPPF para 186 d) and opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of the design of the scheme especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

The proposed development will deliver a minimum of 10% BNG under the Environment Act 2021. BNG is calculated using the approved Biodiversity Metric which measures the biodiversity value of habitats in ‘biodiversity units’ as a proxy for nature. The Biodiversity Metric is used to assess how a development might change the biodiversity value of a site. It can help to inform the design, layout and management of a site to support biodiversity.

Technical Space Standards

The proposed dwellings would have a gross internal floor area of some 175sqm each. The minimum gross internal floor area and storage for a dwelling of this size for 8 persons should be some 137.5sqm. This requirement is set out within the technical housing standards - Nationally described space standard - March 2015.

Highways access and Parking

The proposal seeks to create new access onto the site and as such we will seek approval from West Sussex County Council Highways teams.

The West Sussex County Council's Guidance on Parking at New Developments - September 2020 states that for a development of this size in this location some 2.2 off-street parking spaces should be provided.

Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in part states “Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area the proposed development will not have any adverse effect on existing trees.

Drainage

The site is not located within an area at risk of surface water flooding. We have submitted a drainage and flood risk information as part of this application to demonstrate that the proposal would be acceptable in this regard.

Sustainability

Details of sustainability measures have been submitted as part of this application and these measures accord with policy DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.