

PLANNING STATEMENT

Planning Application

24th July 2026

Retrospective conversion of the existing garage to ancillary residential accommodation (snug and utility), together with the widening of the existing driveway using reinforced permeable gravel surfacing.

11 Barnfield, Balcombe, RH17 6FW

Planning Permission Reference: DM/18/4541

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a retrospective planning application for the retention of the conversion of the existing garage at 11 Barnfield, Balcombe to ancillary residential accommodation comprising a snug and utility room, together with revised off-street parking provision within the front curtilage.

The application follows the refusal of a previous retrospective application, where the sole reason for refusal related to the perceived loss of an off-street parking space required by Condition 23 of planning permission DM/18/4541. No concerns were raised regarding the design of the conversion, its impact on neighbouring amenity, or its effect on the character and appearance of the dwelling.

This revised proposal has been prepared specifically to address that reason for refusal. It is supported by a revised parking strategy incorporating the widening of the existing driveway using reinforced permeable gravel surfacing, together with measured site plans, vehicle parking demonstrations and photographic evidence demonstrating that two off-street parking spaces can be accommodated within the residential curtilage without reliance on the converted garage **(Appendices 7 and 9)**.

The proposal makes use of the existing vehicular access and dropped kerb, retains a predominantly landscaped frontage through the use of reinforced permeable materials and requires no alterations to the public highway. No additional vehicle movements beyond those associated with the lawful residential use of the dwelling are anticipated.

Importantly, the garage conversion has been in place for almost five years without any identified highway safety concerns, parking complaints or demonstrable evidence of parking stress within the development. The proposal can therefore be assessed against an established period of actual operation rather than assumptions about future parking demand.

Taken as a whole, the evidence demonstrates that the planning purpose of Condition 23 continues to be achieved whilst allowing the retained garage conversion to remain in ancillary residential use.

The revised parking arrangement forms an integral part of this application and directly addresses the sole reason for the previous refusal.

2. Site Background and Planning History

Planning permission for the Barnfield residential development was granted under reference DM/18/4541. As part of that permission, Condition 23 requires garages and parking barns to be retained for the parking of vehicles incidental to the residential use of the dwellings.

The purpose of the condition is to ensure that adequate off-street parking is maintained in the interests of highway safety and residential amenity. At the time planning permission was granted, this reflected the anticipated parking needs of a new residential development before its occupation and operation could be assessed in practice.

The development is now fully established, and its parking characteristics are well understood following almost five years of occupation. Parking demand, vehicle ownership patterns and the operation of the estate are therefore well understood and can be assessed on the basis of observed conditions rather than assumptions (**Appendices 1 and 2**).

A previous retrospective application for the garage conversion was refused solely because the Local Planning Authority considered that the proposal would result in the loss of an off-street parking space contrary to the objectives of Condition 23. No concerns were raised regarding the design of the conversion, neighbouring amenity or the character and appearance of the area.

This revised application directly addresses that reason for refusal by demonstrating that two practical off-street parking spaces can be provided within the residential curtilage through the proposed widening of the existing driveway using reinforced permeable gravel surfacing.

Since the garage conversion was completed, planning permission has also been granted under reference DM/25/1973 for a loft conversion creating a lawful fourth bedroom. Whilst the issues under consideration were different, the Local Planning Authority did not identify parking provision, highway safety or the operation of Condition 23 as matters requiring further assessment in determining that application.

3. Description of Development

The application seeks retrospective planning permission for the retention of the conversion of the existing garage to ancillary residential accommodation comprising a snug and utility room.

External alterations associated with the development comprise:

- Installation of a rooflight;
- Installation of a rear access door; and
- Installation of a rear-facing window.

Planning permission was previously granted for the rooflight and rear access door under reference DM/26/0216. In granting that permission, the Local Planning Authority accepted that these external alterations were appropriate in design terms and compatible with the character and appearance of the dwelling. Whilst that permission did not authorise the garage conversion itself, it is a material consideration indicating that the Local Planning Authority accepted the principle of those associated external alterations, with the principal remaining planning issue relating to the adequacy of off-street parking provision. The rear-facing window forms part of the established arrangement and is included within this application to regularise the development in its entirety.

The original garage door has been retained in situ (**Appendix 6**), ensuring that the principal elevation remains substantially unchanged when viewed from the public realm.

To address the sole reason for the previous refusal, the application also proposes the widening of the existing driveway using reinforced permeable gravel surfacing to create a practical two-space parking arrangement (**Appendices 9, 12 and 13**). The proposal utilises the existing vehicular access and dropped kerb, retains a predominantly landscaped frontage and requires no alteration to the highway.

No increase is proposed to the footprint, scale or massing of the dwelling, and the converted accommodation remains wholly ancillary to the existing residential use.

4. Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 57 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that planning conditions should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

Condition 23 was imposed to ensure that adequate off-street parking provision would be maintained in the interests of highway safety. Whilst the garage is no longer available for vehicle parking, the evidence submitted with this application demonstrates that two off-street parking spaces can be accommodated within the residential curtilage without reliance on the garage (**Appendices 7 and 9**). The planning purpose of the condition therefore continues to be achieved.

Mid Sussex District Plan – Policy DP21 (Transport)

Policy DP21 seeks to ensure that development provides appropriate parking provision, achieves safe and suitable access and does not result in unacceptable impacts on the transport network.

The revised parking arrangement complies with these objectives. It provides two practical off-street parking spaces using the existing vehicular access and dropped kerb, requires no alteration to the public highway and is supported by site measurements, parking demonstrations and photographic evidence demonstrating that vehicles can be accommodated and manoeuvred safely within the site.

When considered alongside the established operation of the development over almost five years, during which no highway safety concerns or parking stress have been identified, the proposal demonstrates that the objectives of both Policy DP21 and Condition 23 continue to be satisfied.

5. Parking Assessment

The previous application was refused solely because the Local Planning Authority concluded that the garage conversion resulted in the loss of an off-street parking space contrary to the objectives of Condition 23. This revised application has therefore been specifically prepared to demonstrate that adequate off-street parking can be maintained without reliance on the converted garage.

The proposal widens the existing driveway using reinforced permeable gravel surfacing to provide two clearly defined off-street parking spaces within the residential curtilage. The existing vehicular access and dropped kerb are retained, and no alterations to the public highway are required. The proposal does not create a new vehicular access or alter the existing access arrangements to the site.

The existing driveway measures approximately 6.2 metres in depth and 3.5 metres in width. Following the proposed widening using reinforced permeable gravel surfacing, the available parking width increases to between approximately 4.7 metres at its narrowest point and 5.2 metres at its widest point, providing a usable parking width of approximately 5.1 metres.

The widened driveway provides sufficient space for two family vehicles to be parked and manoeuvred safely within the site (**Appendices 7 and 9**). The submitted parking layout, site measurements and photographic evidence demonstrate that both vehicles can enter and leave the parking spaces using the existing access arrangements without adversely affecting the operation of the highway.

The proposal has been designed using reinforced permeable materials, maintaining sustainable drainage whilst preserving the predominantly landscaped character of the frontage.

The proposed parking arrangement remains wholly within the residential curtilage and continues to utilise the existing vehicular access and dropped kerb. The proposal does not require any encroachment onto or alteration of the adopted highway or adjoining highway verge.

Although the current household operates a single vehicle, the revised parking arrangement demonstrates that the property is capable of accommodating two off-street parking spaces, thereby satisfying the planning purpose of Condition 23.

6. Parking Context and Operational Evidence

The Barnfield development benefits from a generous level of off-street parking provision. Google Street View imagery, aerial photography and site observations (**Appendices 1–5 and 10**) demonstrate limited on-street parking activity and confirm that the majority of properties accommodate vehicles within their own curtilage.

Most properties are served by double garages, parking barns or multiple driveway spaces, together with five shared visitor parking bays providing capacity for approximately 10–14 vehicles. In addition to these formal parking areas, the layout of the estate includes sections of wide estate road where vehicles can park without obstructing the safe passage of traffic. Site observations indicate that this additional on-street capacity is generally available and, in practice, provides additional opportunities for occasional on-street parking beyond the marked visitor bays. Several dwellings also benefit from frontage areas capable of accommodating vehicles within their residential curtilage, providing further practical parking capacity beyond the original parking allocation (**Appendices 1-5 and 10**).

As illustrated in **Appendix 11**, the highlighted areas are illustrative only and demonstrate the relative difference in available frontage and practical parking capacity between the three identical dwellings. They do not identify formal or designated parking bays but illustrate the additional frontage available to Nos. 8 and 10, providing greater flexibility for accommodating vehicles within their residential curtilage than is available at No. 11.

By comparison, No. 11 Barnfield was originally provided with only a single external driveway parking space in addition to its garage, making it one of the more constrained parking arrangements within the development for a family dwelling. The proposed widening of the driveway is intended to address this inherent site constraint while remaining sympathetic to the established character of the development.

Whilst not forming part of the current proposal, **Appendix 8** also demonstrates that the residential curtilage is capable of accommodating an alternative parking arrangement should future circumstances require it. This provides further evidence that the property is capable of meeting its parking needs without reliance on the converted garage.

Importantly, the garage conversion has now operated successfully for almost five years without any identified highway safety concerns, parking complaints or demonstrable evidence of parking stress attributable to the property. Site observations (**Appendices 3–5**) also demonstrate that vehicles within the development are predominantly parked on driveways, with garages frequently used for ancillary domestic purposes.

Taken together, the revised parking arrangement, the established operation of the development and the observed parking characteristics demonstrate that adequate off-street parking continues to be available and that the objectives of Condition 23 remain satisfied.

7. Design, Character and Landscaping

The proposal preserves the character and appearance of both the application property and the wider street scene. As confirmed by the previous planning decision, no concerns were raised regarding the design of the garage conversion or its visual impact.

The original garage door has been retained, ensuring that the principal elevation continues to reflect the original appearance of the dwelling. External alterations are limited to the previously approved rooflight and rear access door together with the rear-facing window, all of which are modest in scale and largely screened from public view.

The revised parking arrangement has been carefully integrated into the existing frontage through the modest widening of the driveway using reinforced permeable gravel, allowing two practical parking spaces to be provided whilst maintaining a predominantly landscaped appearance.

Condition 14 of planning permission DM/18/4541 required the implementation of the approved hard and soft landscaping scheme together with the replacement of any trees or planting that failed during the five-year period following completion of the development. That establishment period is now approaching its conclusion, and the landscaping has become well established. The proposal has been designed having regard to the objectives of the condition by retaining a predominantly landscaped frontage and incorporating reinforced permeable materials that minimise visual and environmental impact.

The existing frontage tree is retained as part of the proposal and has been taken into account when designing the revised parking arrangement. Whilst the retained tree requires a degree of driver manoeuvring when accessing the parking spaces, the submitted parking layout and photographic evidence demonstrate that two family vehicles can be accommodated safely within the site (**Appendices 7 and 9**). Retaining the tree preserves the established landscaped character of the frontage and accords with the objectives of the approved landscaping scheme. Should the tree give rise to operational or maintenance issues in the future, its position can be reviewed separately at the appropriate time, but this is not necessary to achieve the proposed parking arrangement.

Accordingly, the proposal represents a modest alteration that integrates successfully within the established character of the development.

8. Residential Amenity and Other Material Considerations

The proposal gives rise to no material adverse impact upon neighbouring residential amenity. The garage conversion remains wholly ancillary to the existing dwelling and does not generate additional activity beyond that normally associated with a family home.

The rear-facing window is modest in scale, serves ancillary accommodation and does not result in unacceptable overlooking, loss of privacy or other harmful impacts. As the proposal relates predominantly to internal alterations, it does not affect daylight, outlook or the established relationship with neighbouring properties.

The application should also be considered in the context of subsequent planning decisions affecting both the site and the wider area. Planning permission was granted under reference DM/25/1973 for the loft conversion creating a lawful fourth bedroom without the Local Planning Authority identifying parking provision or Condition 23 as matters requiring further assessment. Furthermore, recent Mid Sussex decisions demonstrate that garage conversions may be acceptable where adequate alternative parking provision is maintained and no material highway harm arises.

These decisions are not relied upon as direct precedents but provide useful context, illustrating that the acceptability of garage conversions depends upon the individual planning circumstances of each site. In the present case, the revised parking arrangements, together with the established operation of the development, demonstrate that adequate off-street parking continues to be provided and that no material planning harm has arisen.

It is also relevant that garage conversions are a common and well-established form of domestic development throughout Balcombe and the wider Mid Sussex District where adequate alternative off-street parking can be maintained. Whilst each planning application must be determined on its own planning merits and planning history, these decisions demonstrate that the loss of a garage is not, in itself, objectionable in planning terms. The determining issue is whether sufficient off-street parking remains available and whether any material highway harm would arise. In the present case, the submitted parking evidence demonstrates that those objectives continue to be achieved.

It is also relevant that the more recent Rectory Road residential development in Balcombe, which occupies a more constrained site within the centre of the village and accommodates a greater number of dwellings, was approved without a planning condition requiring garages to be retained for vehicle parking. Whilst each development must be considered on its own planning merits and planning history, this demonstrates that the Local Planning Authority has, in appropriate circumstances, considered adequate off-street parking to be achievable without permanent reliance on garage parking. The assessment of the present application should therefore focus on whether the objectives of Condition 23 continue to be achieved in practice. The evidence submitted with this application demonstrates that two practical off-street parking spaces can be provided within the residential curtilage without resulting in highway safety concerns or parking stress.

9. Planning Balance

The principal issue for determination is whether the retention of the garage conversion would undermine the purpose of Condition 23 of planning permission DM/18/4541 by resulting in an unacceptable loss of off-street parking provision.

The evidence submitted demonstrates that it would not.

The revised parking arrangement has been specifically designed to address the sole reason for the previous refusal by providing two practical off-street parking spaces within the residential curtilage.

The proposal retains the existing vehicular access and dropped kerb, requires no alteration to the public highway and incorporates reinforced permeable materials that preserve the predominantly landscaped character of the frontage.

The application is supported by detailed site measurements, a parking layout, vehicle parking demonstrations and photographic evidence confirming that two family vehicles can be accommodated and manoeuvred safely within the site (**Appendices 7 and 9**).

The proposal must also be considered in the context of the established operation of the development. The garage conversion has been in place for almost five years without any identified highway safety concerns, parking complaints or demonstrable evidence of parking stress associated with the property. This provides tangible evidence that the objectives of Condition 23 continue to be achieved in practice.

The proposal preserves the character and appearance of the dwelling and wider street scene, safeguards neighbouring residential amenity and remains consistent with the objectives of Policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

When assessed as a whole, no material planning harm has been identified. The revised parking arrangements directly address the previous reason for refusal whilst allowing the continued use of the converted garage as ancillary residential accommodation.

No technical evidence has been identified to demonstrate that the revised parking arrangements would give rise to any highway safety issue or unacceptable parking impact.

The planning balance therefore weighs clearly in favour of granting planning permission.

10. Conclusion

This application seeks retrospective planning permission for the retention of the conversion of the existing garage to ancillary residential accommodation together with a revised off-street parking arrangement within the front curtilage.

The proposal has been specifically prepared to address the sole reason for the refusal of the previous application. The submitted evidence demonstrates that two practical off-street parking spaces can be accommodated within the site through the widening of the existing driveway using reinforced permeable gravel surfacing, without reliance on the converted garage.

The proposal:

- maintains adequate off-street parking provision in accordance with the objectives of Condition 23;
- makes use of the existing vehicular access and dropped kerb without alteration to the public highway;
- preserves the character and appearance of the dwelling and surrounding development;
- retains a predominantly landscaped frontage through the use of reinforced permeable materials;
- safeguards neighbouring residential amenity; and
- has been demonstrated, through almost five years of established operation, not to have resulted in any material highway safety concerns or parking stress.

Taken as a whole, the proposal represents a proportionate and sustainable form of development that responds directly to the previous reason for refusal whilst continuing to achieve the planning objectives of Condition 23, the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

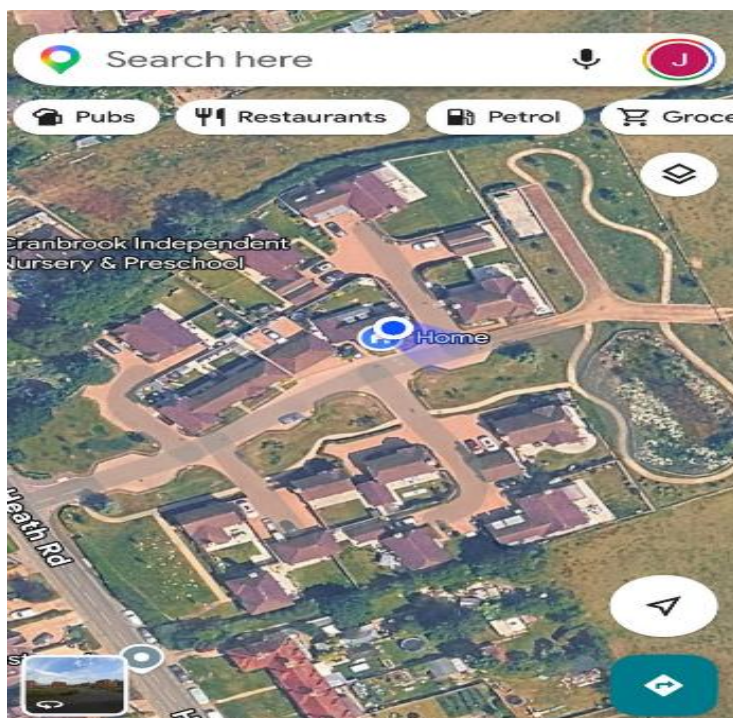
For these reasons, it is respectfully requested that retrospective planning permission be granted.

James Carr

Appendices



Appendix 1 – Google street view of the development on a typical day. Limited on-street parking activity observed.



Appendix 2 – Google Map view of the development on a typical day. Limited on-street parking activity observed.



Appendix 3 – Typical driveway parking arrangements within the development, showing vehicles accommodated on driveways



Appendix 4 - Typical driveway parking arrangements within the development, showing vehicles accommodated on driveways



Appendix 5 - Typical driveway parking arrangements within the development, showing vehicles accommodated on driveways



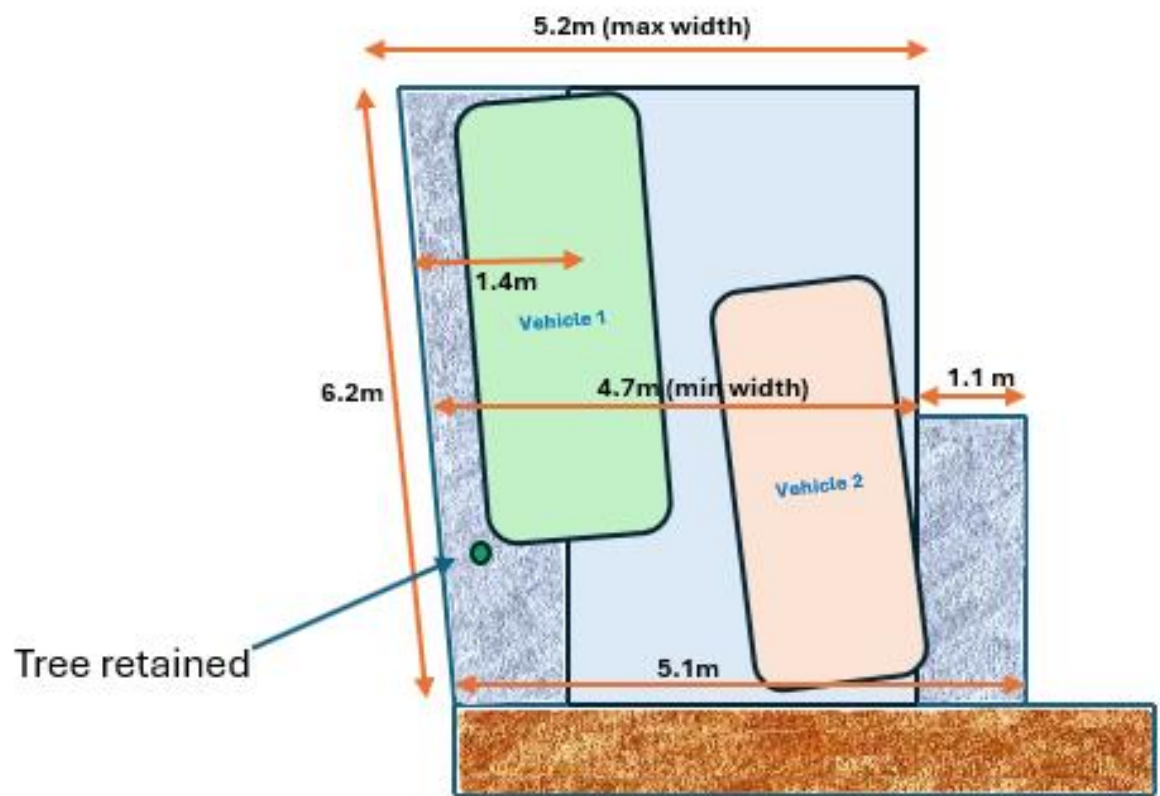
Appendix 6 – Development garage door remains in situ and street scene remains unchanged



Appendix 7 – Indicative parking layout demonstrating the proposed two-space parking arrangement.



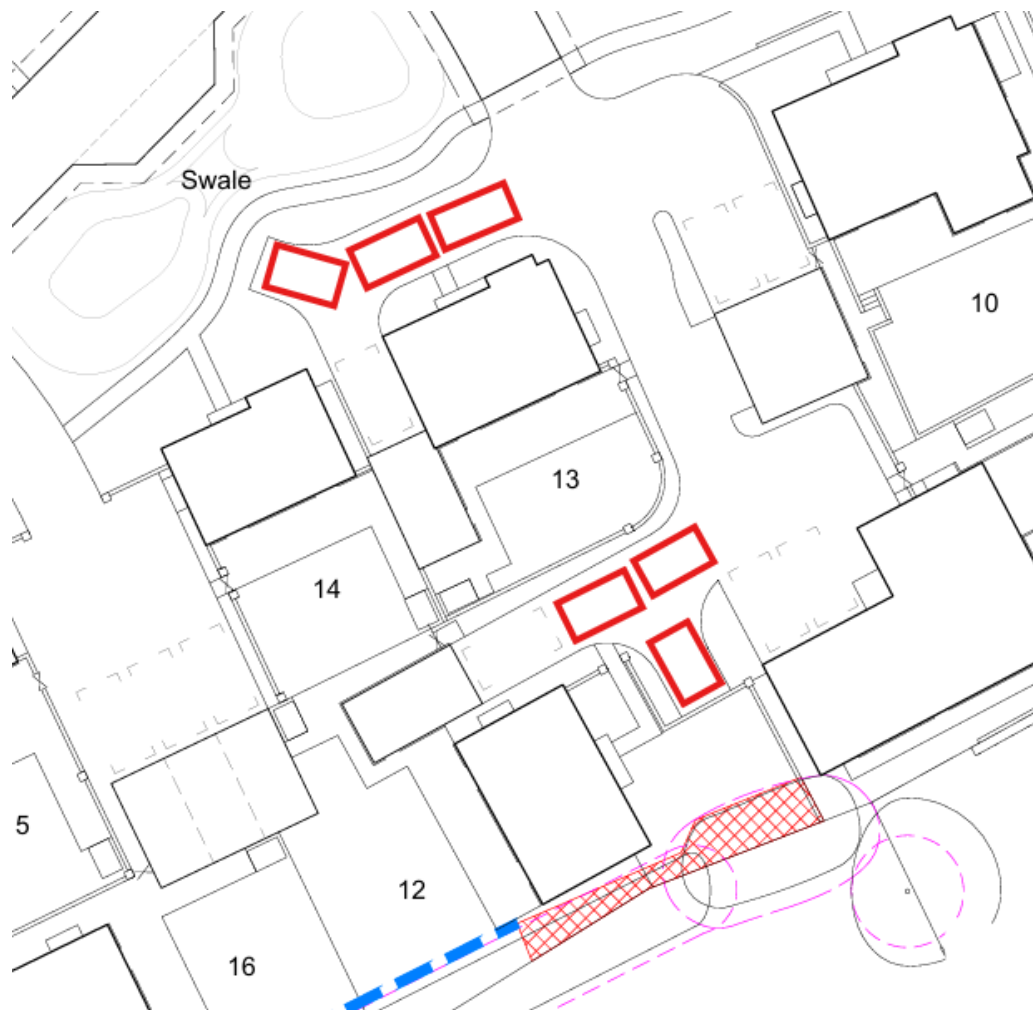
Appendix 8 – Illustrative alternative parking arrangement demonstrating additional parking capacity within the residential curtilage (not forming part of the current proposal).



Appendix 9 - Indicative parking layout demonstrating the proposed two-space parking arrangement.



Appendix 10 – Typical view of the development illustrating the availability of on-street parking and the absence of parking stress.



Appendix 11 - Comparison of the three identical dwellings, illustrating the additional frontage areas available at Nos. 8 and 10 Barnfield, which provide greater practical capacity for off-street parking and vehicle manoeuvring than No. 11 Barnfield.

Note: The red boxes are illustrative only and are intended to demonstrate the relative difference in available frontage and practical parking capacity. They do not represent formal or designated parking bays.



Appendix 12 – Example of reinforced reinforced permeable gravel system used to widen driveway.



Appendix 13 – Example of the golden pea gravel proposed for the widened driveway, selected to match the gravel already used throughout the original Barnfield development.