

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/1788	Case Officer:	Andrew Horrell
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	The proposed siting of a Shepherds Hut for use as tourist accommodation.		
Site:	The Granary, Honeybourne Farm, Truslers Hill Lane, Albourne, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9DU,		
Validation Date	14 Jul 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	15 Aug 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	19 Sep 2025
Target Date:	8 Sep 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Andrew Horrell

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	19 Sep 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/1788

The Granary, Honeybourne Farm, Truslers Hill Lane, Albourne, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9DU
The proposed siting of a Shepherds Hut for use as tourist accommodation.
Mr And Mrs Giles

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received

CONSULTEE COMMENTS

Mid Sussex Conservation Officer: The Granary is a converted former farm building forming part of the historic farmstead associated with Wick Farm House, a Grade II listed building dating from the early 19th century. This building, together with a further surviving building to the south, are the only surviving elements of a grouping of agricultural buildings around a farm courtyard which was located to the east and south of the house. It is not clear whether the Granary would be regarded as curtilage listed- it does appear that listed building consent was granted in 2004 for its conversion to residential use, but further information would be required to assess its status in the context of the most recent Historic England guidance on the matter. If not curtilage listed, it would be regarded as a non designated heritage asset.

In any case, the current application does not affect the building itself, but a field to the east, within its setting and the setting of the farmhouse, as is for the construction of a shepherd's hut for use holiday accommodation.

As such, the surviving rural setting around the former farmstead will be considered to make a strong positive contribution to the special interest of the listed farmhouse and the associated historic farm buildings, and the manner in which this is appreciated, in particular those parts of that interest which are drawn from historical illustrative and aesthetic interest. The field which is subject of this application forms a relatively prominent part of that rural setting, being adjacent to the driveway approach to the house from Truslers Hill Lane.

The proposed shepherd's hut will be located in a small field to the east of the Granary and Farmhouse, which is partly enclosed by hedging. Although this hedging is relatively dense in summer, it is deciduous, so that visibility looking through the planting to the hut from the entrance drive and from the settings of the Granary and Farmhouse is likely to be greater in winter. Notwithstanding this, the hut is relatively modest in size, and of an agricultural appearance which is in keeping with the rural nature of the context. As these huts were originally mobile, its position outside the original farmstead is also not in itself incongruous. Furthermore, in terms of the principle of the use, the associated increase in activity around the farmstead, including traffic generation, is likely to be modest in terms of its impact on the tranquil rural character of the setting of the farmstead. In principle, therefore I would have no objection therefore to the proposal.

I would however like to see further information on any associated features or landscaping, including fencing, patios, decking areas, hot tubs, pathways, lighting or planting of a domestic nature which may be proposed alongside the new holiday accommodation, and which would have the potential to introduce inappropriately domestic features into the rural setting of the farmstead. I would suggest therefore that a more detailed site plan should be requested, either as part of the application documents or by condition. Also, are there to be steps up the hut, as these are not shown on elevation? What colour(s) is the hut to be finished?

Subject to the above further information, the proposal is considered to preserve the settings of Wick Farm House and the curtilage listed or NDHA buildings within the associated historic farmstead, meeting the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

I would recommend the following conditions, if this information is not provided as part of the application at this stage:

- Detailed hard and soft landscaping plan to include details of any new or altered pathways or other areas of new or altered hard surfacing, decking or patio areas, soft landscaping and external lighting.
- Details of facing and roofing materials including colour, to walls, roof, windows and external doors.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

As a one off only, Albourne Parish Council has no objections to this application, and would be in support of the proposal.

INTRODUCTION

Permission is sought for the installation of a shepherds hut for tourist accommodation.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

05/00934/FUL - Conversion of 4 no. redundant traditional farm buildings to residential use. (approved)
12/00916/FUL - 2 storey extension (refused)

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The Granary is a two storey converted barn that sits in a rural setting as part of a small cluster of old farm buildings.

The property fronts west towards the listed property at Wick Farm although a public right of way separates these two properties. To the east lies an agricultural field that is raised above the application site but this also wraps around to the north where it adjoins the existing car parking spaces. To the south lies one of the previously converted farm building (The Stables).

The site is within the countryside.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The shepherds hut on wheels measures 6m in depth, 3m in width with an overall height of 3m. It provides a bedroom, dining room and WC. The shepherds hut is to be characterised by juniper green timber cladding and natural wood windows. The Planning statement makes clear that the hut will be temporary and mobile in nature.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, the Site Allocations DPD and the Albourne Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance) does not form part of the development plan but is an important material consideration.

Mid Sussex District Plan

The District Plan was adopted at Full Council on 28th March 2018.
Relevant policies:

DP12 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
DP14 - Sustainable Rural Development and Rural Economy
DP19 - Sustainable Tourism
DP21 - Transport
DP26 - Character and Design
DP34 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

Albourne Neighbourhood Plan

The Albourne Neighbourhood Plan was made on 22 September 2016. Relevant policies:

ALC1 - Conserving and Enhancing Character
ALE2 - Tourism

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 - Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and the stage 1 hearings were concluded on the 31st October 2024. There are unresolved objections to some of the Policies in the draft District Plan and as such, only minimal weight can be given to the Plan and this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

Relevant policies:

DPC1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
DPB1 - Character and Design
DPB2 - Listed Building and Other Heritage Assets
DPT4 - Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
DPE9 - Sustainable Tourism and Visitor Economy

ASSESSMENT

Design and impact on the character of the area

District Plan Policy DP12 seeks to protect the countryside in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development must enhance the quality of the rural and landscape character of the district - be necessary for agricultural purposes or be supported by a specific policy in the Plan, a Development Plan document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design. It states:

'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- o is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- o contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- o creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- o protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*

- o protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- o 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 (see Policy DP29);*
- o creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- o incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- o positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- o take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- o optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'*

The area where the hut is to be sited is in a field separated from the rear garden of the dwelling by high hedging, which comprises gently sloping fields that are largely surrounded by hedging which screens long distant views over the landscape. In this instance the location chosen for the huts would be towards the lowest point of the field in which they would be sited, close to a belt of hedging.

The shepherds hut would be visible from the adjoining fields and the private accessway and public right of way to the north (hedged boundary); more distance views being screened either by topography or hedging. The materials are sympathetic to the rural location.

The hut is to be of a modest scale and with the green timber clad exterior, would not be dissimilar in character to many agricultural building types. Its temporary and mobile nature is noted. It would represent a small addition to the landscape and given its limited visibility outside the site it is not considered that it would cause harm to the surrounding landscape or countryside.

The provision of the hut would be generally supported by Policy DP14 and therefore in light of the above, the scheme would be compliant with Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Economic Impact/Tourism

District Plan policy DP14 accepts the principle of new small scale economic development including tourism related development within the countryside providing it supports sustainable growth, where possible utilises previously developed sites and provided it is not in conflict with Policy DP12.

District Plan policy DP19 advises that tourism related development in the countryside, including visitor accommodation, will be permitted providing it supports sustainable growth of the rural economy and maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character in accordance with Policy DP12.

ALE2 of the Albourne Neighbourhood Plan has a similar ethos and states:

'Any new development or conversion for tourism will be required to:

- a. not be in conflict with the characteristics of the National Park and the open countryside of the Neighbourhood Plan area, and*
- b. not result in a severe traffic impact either individually or cumulatively, and*
- c. provide for an appropriate level of parking for both vehicles and cycling, and*
- d. not result in a loss of amenity to neighbouring properties, including for noise'.*

Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states:

'Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings;*
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside'*

The proposed hut would not be sustainably located - being in a location that is not within a close walking distance of a variety of public transport means or a variety of services and facilities. However, it must be acknowledged that some tourist accommodation is, as a matter of principle, designed to be located in unsustainable locations - to better take advantage of the character of the countryside.

It is noted that the site is characterised by public rights of way in all directions from this location including to Albourne (approx 2km) and Henfield village centre (approx 3km) with alternative forms of transportation (buses) available. Many tourist attractions themselves are located similarly, but still make a contribution towards the local tourist trade and economy.

It is considered that such a scheme whilst not wholly sustainable because it is not well served by public transport, it would nevertheless support the vitality of the local economy and comply with that part of Policy DP14.

Impact on Setting of Listed Building

Neighbouring Wick Farmhouse is listed. It is not clear whether the Granary would be regarded as curtilage listed. This application does not affect the Granary building itself, but a field to the east, within its setting and the setting of the farmhouse, as is for the provision of a shepherd's hut for use holiday accommodation.

Policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan is most relevant and states:

'Development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- o A thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting has been demonstrated. This will be proportionate to the importance of the building and potential impact of the proposal;*
- o Alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. Proposals for the conversion or change of use of a listed building retain its significance and character whilst ensuring that the building remains in a viable use;*
- o Traditional building materials and construction techniques are normally used. The installation of uPVC windows and doors will not be acceptable;*
- o Satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy installations are not sited in a prominent location, and where possible within the curtilage rather than on the building itself;*
- o Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building;*
- o Where the historic fabric of a building may be affected by alterations or other proposals, the applicant is expected to fund the recording or exploratory opening up of historic fabric.*

Other Heritage Assets

Development that retains buildings which are not listed but are of architectural or historic merit, or which make a significant and positive contribution to the street scene will be permitted in preference to their demolition and redevelopment.

The Council will seek to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the character and quality of life of the District. Significance can be defined as the special interest of a heritage asset, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

Proposals affecting such heritage assets will be considered in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and current Government guidance'.

It should be noted in view of the Conservation Officer comments above, it has been confirmed that it is not intended to include any fencing, planting or decking around the proposed Shepherds hut.

The MSDC Conservation Officer has stated that the proposal is considered to preserve the settings of Wick Farm House and the curtilage listed or NDHA buildings within the associated historic farmstead, meeting the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF. The case officer has no reason to disagree.

Therefore, the proposal is deemed to comply with policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Highways Matters

Policy DP21 of the District Plan relates to transport and states in part that:

'...Decisions on development proposals will take account of whether:

- The scheme is sustainably located to minimise the need for travel noting there might be circumstances where development needs to be located in the countryside, such as rural economic uses (see policy DP14: Sustainable Rural Development and the Rural Economy);*
- Appropriate opportunities to facilitate and promote the increased use of alternative means of transport to the private car, such as the provision of, and access to, safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and public transport, including suitable facilities for secure and safe cycle parking, have been fully explored and taken up;*
- The scheme is designed to adoptable standards, or other standards as agreed by the Local Planning Authority, including road widths and size of garages;*
- The scheme provides adequate car parking for the proposed development taking into account the accessibility of the development, the type, mix and use of the development and the availability and opportunities for public transport; and with the relevant Neighbourhood Plan where applicable;*
- Development which generates significant amounts of movement is supported by a Transport Assessment/ Statement and a Travel Plan that is effective and demonstrably deliverable including setting out how schemes will be funded;*
- The scheme provides appropriate mitigation to support new development on the local and strategic road network, including the transport network outside of the district, secured where necessary through appropriate legal agreements;*
- The scheme avoids severe additional traffic congestion, individually or cumulatively, taking account of any proposed mitigation;*
- The scheme protects the safety of road users and pedestrians; and*
- The scheme does not harm the special qualities of the South Downs National Park or the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty through its transport impacts.*

Where practical and viable, developments should be located and designed to incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.'

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states; *'Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.'*

The proposal does not seek to alter the existing vehicular entrance to the site and due to the nature of the proposal it is considered that a similar level of vehicular movements will occur at the site. As such it is not considered to adversely impact the wider road network.

In terms of parking provision, the existing dwelling (The Granary) is according to the 2012 application a two bedroom dwelling and the shepherds hut adds an additional bedroom in effect. Therefore according to West Sussex Parking Standards Guidance a dwelling with three bedrooms should provide 2.2 parking spaces in this location. The dwelling is served by two off-street parking spaces and whilst there is therefore a shortfall, it is considered that given the anticipated use of the hut, it is not expected that the proposal would result in parking that would lead to a highway safety issue.

As noted above the site is well served by public footpaths to nearby village centres with alternative forms of the transportation and amenities available.

Taking into account the above, it is considered that policy DP21 would on balance be met and therefore there are no highway, access or parking grounds to resist the proposal.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. As the impact on habitat is less than 25sqm this development is exempt from the requirement to provide biodiversity net gain.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The proposed shepherd hut would be a modest size, of a style and using materials not out of character with the rural setting. The site would be located in an area not well served by public transport. However, a degree of isolation is the character of some tourist facilities and it would provide an improved range of tourist accommodation within the area. It would also secure improved economic benefits to the local area in accordance with the District Plan objectives. Neighbouring amenities should not be harmed by the development.

The proposal is thereby considered to comply with Policies DP12, DP14, DP19, DP21, DP26 and DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, ALC1 and ALE2 of the Albourne Neighbourhood Plan, the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Andrew Horrell