

PLANNING STATEMENT – Proposed New Access to Rock Lodge (Quarry Lodge)

1. Site and Context

The application property, *Rock Lodge* (also known as *Quarry Lodge*), is a detached domestic dwelling. Vehicular access is currently taken from a very steep private road to the side of the dwelling. This road also serves Rock Lodge Vineyard and is constrained by limited visibility splays, resulting in sub-optimal highway safety.

2. Proposal

The application seeks consent for the formation of a new, safer *bellmouth* access directly into the site. The proposed access will be positioned and designed to modern highway standards, achieving visibility splays of 165 metres in both directions. This significantly exceeds the current provision and accords with relevant safety standards, including *Manual for Streets* and *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges*.

3. Legal Framework and Relevant Policies

Planning Legislation

Planning legislation requires that decisions on planning applications must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For this part of Mid Sussex, the development plan consists of:

- Mid Sussex District Plan (adopted 28 March 2018)
- Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan (made March 2016)

National policy (contained within the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) and *National Planning Policy Guidance*) is not part of the development plan but remains an important material consideration.

Mid Sussex District Plan

Relevant policy:

- DP26 – Character and Design: Requires all development, including alterations and extensions, to be well designed, reflect the distinctive character of the area, and be sensitive to its setting.

Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan

- No directly relevant policies to this proposal.

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Adopted on 4 November 2020, the SPD promotes high-quality development that responds to context, is inclusive, and is sustainable. It is a material consideration in decision-making.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021)

Key paragraphs relevant to this proposal include:

- Paragraph 12: Affirms the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making.
- Paragraph 38: Encourages local planning authorities to approach proposals positively and work proactively with applicants.

- Paragraph 47: Confirms that decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Design Guide & Ministerial Statement (1 October 2019)

Highlights the Government's commitment to improving design quality, providing examples of good practice, and promoting developments that respond to social, economic, and environmental change.

4. Assessment

Design and Character

The new access will be modest in scale and designed in keeping with the existing rural approach to the property. The works will be carefully integrated into the site boundaries and surrounding landscape. The bellmouth design will enhance the sense of place by providing a clearly defined and legible entrance.

Highway Safety

The proposed access will achieve 165m visibility splays in both directions — a significant improvement on the current arrangement. This will:

- Improve driver sightlines and decision-making time.
- Reduce the likelihood of conflicts with traffic using the private road.
- Provide a safer turning geometry for vehicles entering and exiting the site.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties

To the southern side of the property is Quarry Manor, with mature planting in between. Given this separation and the nature of the works, there will be no harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties.

5. Conclusion

The proposal represents a proportionate and well-considered improvement to the access arrangements at Rock Lodge. It will deliver a measurable benefit to highway safety while respecting the character of the site and surrounding area.

The works:

- Comply with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.
- Are consistent with the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.
- Accord with the relevant provisions of the NPPF and the National Design Guide.

Accordingly, planning permission is respectfully sought for this important safety enhancement.