

Planning Statement

Proposed extension to existing annex

Wellhouse Farm, Wellhouse Lane, Burgess Hill, RH15 0BN

Prepared for

Mr & Mrs R Carne

Prepared by

Sarah Sheath BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

Version

August 2025

Version

FINAL

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Dowsettmayhew Planning Partnership are instructed by the applicants, Mr and Mrs Carne, to prepare this Planning Statement in support of a householder planning application seeking the extension of an existing annex at Wellhouse Farm, Wellhouse Lane, Burgess Hill.
- 1.2. The applicants have recently purchased the property with their daughter and wish to inhabit the plot as a single family, multi-generational home. The annex is already in existence, however improvements are sought to provide improved shared living space.
- 1.3. The application is to be considered in relation to the following list of plans:
 - Plans as existing (141 GA 01);
 - Elevations as existing (1404 GA 02);
 - Plans as proposed (1404 GA 10 Rev 2);
 - Elevations as proposed (1404 GA 11 Rev 1); and
 - Site location and block plan (1404 SI 03 Rev 1).
- 1.4. Additionally this statement sets out relevant planning policy, planning history, and assesses the scheme in accordance with the requirements of the Development Plan and other material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1. Wellhouse Farm is a substantial detached dwelling located on the northern side of Wellhouse Lane, just on the southern outskirts of Burgess Hill, albeit the site falls within Hassocks Parish.
- 2.2. Wellhouse Lane is a private, no through road, hosting a small number of residential properties all of which lie on the northern side of the lane.
- 2.3. A public footpath runs along the lane in an east/west direction and provides a pedestrian link between Common Lane (B2112) to the east and Keymer Road/Ockley Lane to the west.
- 2.4. The property sits on the outer limits of Mid Sussex District, with the South Downs National Park boundary lying to the immediate south (falling within Lewes District), as illustrated by Figure 1 below.
- 2.5. As with all of the dwellings along Wellhouse Lane, the property sits within a generous plot some 0.4 hectares in area, with a further 1.4 hectares of land owned by the applicants to the immediate north (falling within Lewes District).
- 2.6. In addition to the main dwelling, which is located towards the north east corner of the plot and has been recently subject of extension and enlargement, there is a large detached double garage opposite the dwelling towards the northern boundary of the plot; a two storey barn building set towards the southern edge of the plot; and an intervening annex building.

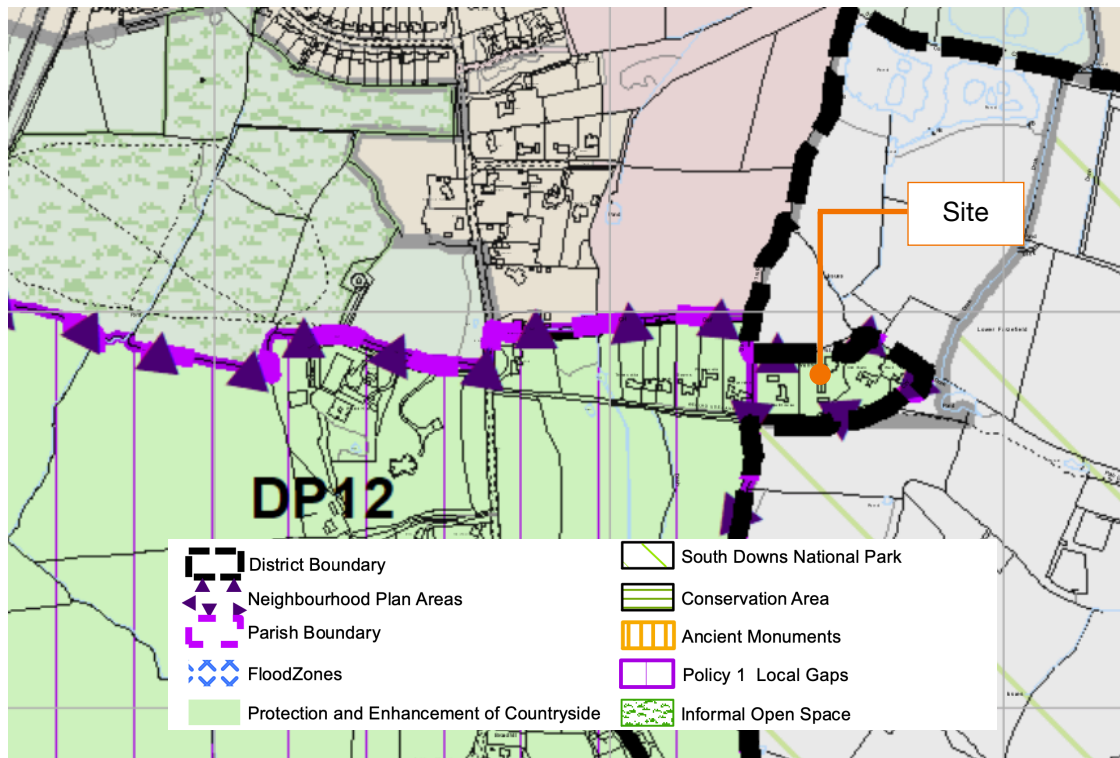


Figure 1: Extract from Mid Sussex Local Plan Map 12: Hassocks



Figure 2 - Aerial photograph of application site

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1. The Council's online planning register indicates that the following historic applications relate to the application site:

- LW/78/1785 - Detached house - Refused 14th December 1978.
- LW/86/1439 - Alterations to roof including dormer windows to form first floor accommodation with further alterations to ground floor fenestration - Refused 7th October 1986.
- LW/87/0175 - Erection of replacement dwelling - Approved 7th April 1987.
- LW/97/0963 - Erection of replacement dwelling. Amendment to approved application LW/87/175 - Approved 11th August 1987.
- 12/01115/FUL - Cladding of existing barn/garage - Approved 23rd May 2012.
- 13/02258/FUL - Renovation and re-roofing of existing old dairy farm building to form ancillary living accommodation - Approved 12th August 2013.
- DM/17/1380 - Two storey rear and side extension - Approved 25th May 2017.
- DM/19/5061 - Ground floor side extension in place of two storey side extension previously granted. Freestanding double garage within curtilage of property - Approved 28th January 2020.
- DM/20/2993 - Non-material amendment to application DM/19/5061 seeking amendments to previously approved garage - Withdrawn
- DM/20/3300 - Non-material amendment to DM/19/5061 to allow change from flat roof to a pitched roof - Refused 23rd September 2020.
- DM/20/3313 - Variation of condition no. 2 of application DM/19/5061, allowing changes to approved plans for the detached garage - Approved 20th October 2020.
- DM/20/3475 - Variation of condition no. 2 of planning permission DM/19/5061 - to amend the approved plans to replace the flat roof with a tiled pitched roof to the single storey side extension - approved 18th January 2021.

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1. Permission is sought for alterations and modest extension to the existing annex.

4.2. The proposed extension would infill the existing recess at the north east corner. It would measure some 5.8 metres in depth by 9.9 metres in width and would provide a new shared garden room. It would be a modern flat roofed addition, with large glazed windows dominating the east facing elevation onto a shared patio/garden. External walls are to be painted render.

- 4.3. Internally the existing accommodation would be re-arranged to provide storage, an office and a plant room. The existing bedroom would be retained and a new bathroom provided in a relocated position. The existing kitchen would be opened through into the proposed garden room. To the front elevation a new enclosed porch is proposed to the front door. This would be clad with weatherboard to match the existing building.
- 4.4. To the rear a new glazed feature window is proposed.
- 4.5. In the south elevation existing glazed doors are to be blocked up along with an existing window.
- 4.6. Likewise an existing window in the north elevation is to be blocked up.



Figure 3 - Existing and proposed floor plans

5. PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 38(3) states that the Development Plan includes the adopted Development Plan Documents (DPDs). Material considerations include National Planning Guidance, and in

particular the NPPF, together with supplementary planning documents adopted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

- 5.2. The approved Development Plan, in relation to this application, for the purposes of the Act, comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.3. Other relevant material considerations would include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) along with adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) such as the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

Mid Sussex District Plan

- 5.4. The Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP) was adopted on 28th March 2018. It covers the period 2014 - 2031 and sets out a vision for how Mid Sussex wants to evolve and a delivery strategy for how that will be achieved.

- 5.5. The following policies are considered most relevant to these proposals:

Policy DP12 - Protection and Enhancement of Countryside

- 5.6. This policy seeks to protect the countryside in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty and states that development will be permitted in the countryside provided it maintains, or where possible, enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and is either:

- necessary for the purpose of agriculture; or
- supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document (DPD) or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy DP26 - Character and Design

- 5.7. This policy seeks to ensure all new development, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, are well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside.

Site Allocation DPD

- 5.8. The Mid Sussex Site Allocations Development Plan Document was adopted on 29th June 2022. The Site Allocations DPD identifies sufficient housing sites to provide a five year housing land supply to 2031 and also makes sure that enough land is allocated to meet identified employment need.
- 5.9. There are no policies within this plan that are of particular relevance to the consideration of this application.

Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.10. The Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by Hassocks Parish Council and adopted in June 2022. It seeks to guide and influence development in the Parish over the plan period 2014-2031. The following policies would be most relevant to the consideration of these proposals:

Policy 6 - Development Proposals Affecting the South Downs National Park

- 5.11. This policy supports proposal on land outside of, but contributing to, the setting of the South Downs National Park where proposals:
- Do not detract from, or cause detriment to, the special qualities and tranquility of the South Downs National Park; and
 - Do not unacceptably harm the South Downs National Park or its setting.

Policy 9 - Character and Design

- 5.12. This policy supports proposals where their character and design takes account of listed design principles, as appropriate to the nature, scale and location of the particular proposal.

6. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 6.1. The NPPF sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner (paragraph 7). Paragraph 8 goes on to explain that *“Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways”*: an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.
- 6.2. Paragraph 9 states that planning decisions *“should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.”*
- 6.3. Paragraph 9 states that planning decisions *“should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.”*
- 6.4. Paragraph 10 states that, “So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development.**”
- 6.5. Paragraph 11 states that *“plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development... For decision-taking this means:*
- *Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*

- *Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

 - i. *the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.”**
- 6.6. Paragraph 39 states that local planning authorities “*should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way... Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.*”
- 6.7. Chapter 12 relates to achieving well-designed places and paragraph 131 states that “*good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.*”

Mid Sussex Design Guide 2020

- 6.8. The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of this planning application.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Consultation Draft

- 6.9. The District Council is currently in the process of reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current adopted District Plan. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 8th July 2024 and a number of initial hearings were held in October 2024.
- 6.10. In April 2025 the Inspector wrote to the Council setting out her initial findings on the emerging District Plan. In her view the Council has failed in its duty to co-operate with neighbouring authority's during the preparation of the emerging plan. Accordingly she has recommended that the Plan should be withdrawn from the examination.
- 6.11. At this stage therefore the policies of the emerging plan hold very little weight in the determination of this application.

7. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1. In the assessment of this application is it considered that the main issues are:
- Principle of development

- Design and impact on the character of the area
- Impact on Amenity

7.2. Each is now considered in turn.

Principle Of Development

7.3. While the application site lies outside any development boundary as defined by the Development Plan, where Policy DP12 seeks to safeguard the countryside from unwarranted development, the current proposals relate solely to modest extensions to an existing, lawful annex.

7.4. The annex was approved under application 13/02258/FUL and its occupation is already restricted by virtue of condition 1 of that consent which reads:

“The accommodation hereby permitted shall be occupied solely for purposes incidental to the occupation and enjoyment of Wellhouse Farm as a dwelling and shall not be used as a separate unit of accommodation.”

7.5. This restriction will remain in force and the applicants do not wish to occupy the building in any other manner. They just simply wish to re-organise the existing accommodation and provide an additional garden room.

7.6. Since approval of application 13/02258/FUL the internal accommodation of the annex has been altered and the building currently consist of two bedrooms, a bathroom, and ensuite, a kitchen and a living room. These internal alterations and the re-organisation of accommodation would not have constituted development and therefore would not have required planning permission. Likewise any internal re-organisation of the accommodation now would not amount to development provided the accommodation remains to be occupied for purposes incidental to the occupation and enjoyment of Wellhouse Farm as a dwelling.

7.7. As established by case law (Uttlesford DC v SSE & White 1992) even if the accommodation provides facilities for independent day-to-day living, it does not necessarily become a separate planning unit from the main dwelling. This is a matter of fact and degree.

7.8. Wellhouse Farm occupies a large plot and the existing annex is already a sizeable building.

7.9. During their consideration of application 13/02258/FUL officers noted that the proposals would form “a sizeable annex”. However due to its “close proximity to the main dwellinghouse and adjoining garden area” they were content that the proposed use was acceptable and confirmed that a condition could be imposed to ensure that the unit is used for purposes ancillary to the enjoyment of the main dwellinghouse only.

7.10. The proposed extension will further reinforce the annex’s relationship with the main dwelling by physically reducing the separation between the two buildings. Moreover, the proposal includes the removal of one existing bedroom to create a home office, and the addition of a shared garden room with a new patio area that will enhance connectivity with the main house.

- 7.11. The applicant and their family intend to continue occupying the site as a single, multi-generational household. The annex will remain incidental to the enjoyment of Wellhouse Farm, and the proposals will not result in the creation of a separate planning unit or a material change of use.
- 7.12. Subject to acceptable design and amenity considerations which are addressed in detail below, there is no policy-based reason to resist the proposed development. The application represents a proportionate and reasonable enhancement of an existing ancillary building, fully compliant with the spirit and intent of local planning policy.

Design And Impact On The Character Of The Area

- 7.13. Policy DP26 seeks to ensure that all development, including alterations and extensions achieves a high standard of design that respects the distinctive character of the towns and villages, while remaining sensitive to the countryside. This is also reflected by requirements of Policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.14. The proposed extensions to the existing annex are modest in scale, carefully designed, and well-contained within the generous curtilage of the site. High-quality external materials have been selected to complement the existing building, ensuring a cohesive and sympathetic appearance. The additions are proportionate and will not dominate the original structure, which will continue to read as a clearly subservient element within the wider setting of Wellhouse Farm.
- 7.15. Given the substantial size of the plot, the proposed increase in footprint is minimal and will not result in overdevelopment. The siting of the rear garden room extension, close to the main dwelling, ensures it will be largely screened by the existing annex and the farmhouse itself. Views from the south and east will be significantly limited due to the well-enclosed nature of the site and existing boundary treatments.
- 7.16. It is therefore submitted that the proposals respond positively to the character and appearance of the host building and its setting. The development will preserve the visual quality of the site and surrounding area, in full accordance with the design principles set out in Policy DP26 of the District Plan and Policy 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Impact On Amenity

- 7.17. Policy DP26 seeks to ensure new development does not result in significant harm to the amenities of existing or future occupants, with particular regard to privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution.
- 7.18. In this case, the nearest neighbouring properties lie to the east and west of the site, each situated at a distance of over 35 metres from the proposed development. This generous separation, combined with the single-storey nature of the proposed extensions, ensures there will be no adverse impact on neighbouring amenity.
- 7.19. Furthermore, the shared boundaries with these neighbouring properties are well screened by existing mature vegetation and boundary treatments, which will further mitigate any potential visual or privacy impacts. Given the scale, siting, and design of the proposals, it is submitted

that the development will fully comply with the amenity safeguards set out in Policy DP26 and will not result in any material harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

8. SUMMARY

- 8.1. Permission is sought for modest extensions to an existing, lawful annex at Wellhouse Farm. The annex is already restricted to ancillary use by condition and will remain incidental to the main dwelling. The changes include internal reconfiguration and a new garden room, with no intention to create a separate planning unit.
- 8.2. The extensions are proportionate, use matching materials, and respect the scale and character of the existing building. The annex remains subservient within a large plot, and the development will not result in overdevelopment of the site. The design therefore aligns with the aims of DP26 of the District Plan and Policy 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8.3. The nearest neighbours are over 35 metres away, with strong boundary screening. The single-storey nature of the proposals ensures no harm to privacy, outlook, or light. The development fully complies with DP26 in terms of protecting residential amenity.
- 8.4. In conclusion it is submitted that the proposals are policy-compliant, well-designed, and will not harm the character of the area or neighbouring amenity. Importantly there is no planning reason in principle to resist the application.