



Planning, Design & Access Statement

Change of use of an existing residential outbuilding into a farm café
and the retrospective replacement and extension of a timber deck
at Goddenwick Farm, Ardingly Road, Lindfield, Haywards Heath,
West Sussex, RH16 2QX.

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Introduction

This statement is submitted on behalf of Mr Kidger in support of an application for Full Planning Permission for *'the change of use of an existing residential outbuilding into a farm café and the retrospective replacement and extension of a timber deck'* ('the proposed development') at Goddenwick Farm, Ardingly, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2QX ('the site').

This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the other supporting information submitted in support of the application which comprises:

- Planning Application Forms and Ownership Certificate;
- Site Location Plan;
- Block Plan;
- Planning Drawings;
- Heritage Statement.

The Site and Surroundings

Goddenwick Farm

Background

Goddenwick Farm extends to approximately 150 acres of land and buildings which are centred around Goddenwick Farmhouse, Ardingly Road. The Farm itself has gradually diversified in to forestry (Christmas trees) and Sussex Trees, which operates from the site at Goddenwick Farm and Five Ashes and has been successfully operating for a number of years. There are also a number of animals kept on the land, including donkeys, goats and pigs.

The farm has grown organically, in response to demand from customers in the local area, and in conjunction with the successful Christmas tree business, the farm has begun to offer pop up food and drink stalls for visitors collecting their trees at Christmas. This income is only seasonal and has been restricted to winter owing to the nature of the forestry use. The operation has expanded to provide pumpkin picking at the farm at Halloween and it is the intention to provide Easter Egg Hunts on the farm at Easter. This will provide a valuable source of income for the farm across the year which will maintain the viability of the forestry use of the land and buildings.

Pre-application advice will be sought in due course regarding the wider farm diversification.

The purpose of this planning application is to establish a more permanent venue for food and drink, to provide an indoor space for customers. This will also avoid the need for obtaining pop up vendors to cater at events and will make the operation which more efficient.

They have explored the potential for using Permitted Development Rights (Class R) on the existing farm buildings, however this particular building would be the easiest and most convenient to be converted in to a café. Therefore this planning application is being submitted for the change of use of the redundant outbuilding/swimming pool in to a café to support the farm diversification.

The Application Site

The application site is part of Goddenwick Farm which is located to the east of Ardingly Road (B2028) and to the south-east of Ardingly village in Mid Sussex District.

The building is a detached single storey structure consisting of timber weatherboarding and is currently located within, but on the edge of the curtilage of Goddenwick Farmhouse. The building is not curtilage listed, having been constructed following Planning Permission granted in 2001 (see planning history). A timber deck has been constructed to the east elevation of the building. This

was constructed to replace a smaller deck which was rotten. This is also the subject of this application for planning permission.

The vehicular access to the site is via the private access driveway from the B2028. There is then pedestrian access from the car park to the building.

Relevant Planning History

Application Reference	Description of Development	Decision and Date
01/00305/FUL	Erection of a detached timber swimming pool building	Approved 18.07.01

Proposal

Planning permission is sought for *'the change of use of an existing residential outbuilding into a farm café and the retrospective replacement and extension of a timber deck'* ('the proposed development').

The building is a single storey timber building that was previously used as an outbuilding and swimming pool. It is 146m² in area and is currently redundant. It is proposed to change the use of this building in to a farm café to serve customers visiting the farm. No external changes are proposed to the building.

A timber deck on ground has been laid to the eastern side of the building. The deck extends to 134m² in area and has been laid to replace a deck that was rotten. It is proposed that this space is also used in association with the use of the farm café.

Parking will be provided within the existing car park which serves the farm business and is located to the south of the application site.



Planning Assessment

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 state that in making any determination under the Planning Acts the determination should be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the development plan for the area and that apply to this proposal are contained within the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF), the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031 (2018) and the saved policies of the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004 (MSLP).

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024.

The Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP) was adopted on 28th March 2018. The MSDP replaces the Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004), with the exception of any saved policies. The MSDP sets out the Council's vision and objectives for Mid Sussex as well as the overall strategy for achieving the vision and strategic objectives.

The saved policies of the Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004) still form part of the development plan for the District and are set out in Appendix C of the MSDP.

The District Plan (2021-2039) is at an advanced stage, having been examined at the end of 2024. The Planning Inspector has requested main modifications to the plan before it can be found sound. Although it is not yet formally adopted as part of the Development Plan, it is a material consideration of significant weight in the decision making process.

The Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' in March 2015.

Planning Policy Designations

For the purposes of planning policy, the site lies within the countryside outside of any defined built-up area boundary. The site is within the High Weald National Landscape and is within the setting of a Grade II Listed Building which lies to the west of the site.

The following planning policies are relevant to the consideration of the application:

Countryside

Policy DP12 of the District Plan relates to the protection and enhancement of the countryside. In part it states:

"The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area

boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

- *it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or*
- *it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan."*

Emerging Policy DPC1 reflects the above Planning Policy.

In this case, Policy DP14 of the District Plan is permissive of sustainable rural development and diversification.

Rural Economy

Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should enable (a) the '*sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion and well-designed, new buildings*' (b) *the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural; businesses* and (c) *sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.*'

Policy DP1 of the District Plan allows for new small scale economic development in the countryside including tourism in accordance with Development in the Countryside policies.

Policy DP14 of the District Plan states that

- new small-scale economic development, including tourism-related development, within the countryside (defined as the area outside of built up area boundaries as per the Policies Map) will be permitted provided:
 - it supports sustainable growth and the vitality of the rural economy; and
 - where possible, utilises previously developed sites.
- diversification of activities on existing farm units will be permitted provided:
 - they are of a scale which is consistent to the location of the farm holding; and
 - they would not prejudice the agricultural use of a unit.
- the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings for business or tourism use in the countryside will be permitted provided:

- the building is of permanent construction and capable of re-use without substantial reconstruction or extensive alteration;
- the appearance and setting is not materially altered; and
- it is not a recently constructed agricultural building which has not been or has been little used for its original purpose.

Policy DPE8 of the emerging District Plan reflects the above adopted Planning Policy.

Policy DP19 is supportive of proposals for sustainable tourism for the re-use of rural buildings which support the rural economy. This is also reflected in Policy DPE9 of the emerging District Plan.

Design

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to the planning process.

Policy DP26 of the District Plan seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and reflects the distinctive character of the District, and is sensitive to the countryside. The policy requires applicants to demonstrate that development is of high quality, creates a sense of place and protects residential amenities and takes in to account sustainability in layout and design. This is reflected in emerging Policy DPB1 of the District Plan.

Policy DP39 of the District Plan requires that all development must seek to improve the sustainability of development where appropriate and feasible. This includes minimising energy use through the design and layout of the scheme.

Landscape - High Weald National Landscape

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that 'great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.'

Policy DP16 of the MSDP states that *'development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)...will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular;*

- *The identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting;*
- *The traditional interaction of people with nature, and appropriate land management;*
- *Character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB; and*
- *The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.*

Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.'

Emerging Policy DPC4 reflects the above guidance in the adopted District Plan.

The High Weald AONB Management Plan contains a statement of significance which defines the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB, its character and the special qualities associated with it. It provides the criteria against which impacts upon the landscape can be judged.

The Management Plan is structured around five key components of character – geology, landform, water systems and climate; settlement; routeways; woodland and field and heath.

In the AONB Management Plan 'other qualities' the vision is stated as '*an AONB in which people have the means to access the landscape easily and can enjoy outstanding quality multi-sensory experience and increased contact with nature, all contributing to individual health and wellbeing and an improved sense of community without damage to characteristic habitats and species. People's emotional engagement with the landscape generates a sense of responsibility and connection to the area leading to more sustainable lifestyles that protect and enhance natural beauty.*'

The key characteristics include '*features and resources providing opportunities for the informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature.*'

Objective OQ1 is '*to increase opportunities for learning about and celebrating the character of the High Weald.*' Objective OQ3 is '*to develop and manage access to maximise opportunities for everyone to enjoy, appreciate and understand the character of the AONB while conserving its natural beauty.*'

Heritage – Setting of Listed Building

Chapter 16 of the NPPF provides policy guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Paragraph 210 of the NPPF states that '*In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that '*when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be).* This is

irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.'

Policy DP34 of the District Plan seeks to protect listed buildings and their settings. This includes being able to understand the significance of the listed building which is proportionate to the importance of the building and impact of the potential impact of the proposal. The policy also specifies that 'special regard' will be given to protecting the setting of a listed building.

Emerging Policy DPB2 of the District Plan also reflects the above adopted Planning Policy.

Transport

Chapter 9 of the NPPF sets out the Government's approach to promoting sustainable transport. When considering applications for development, paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that it should be ensured that:

- (a) Sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision of the site, type of development and its location;
- (b) Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.....'

Paragraph 116 states that *'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 would be severe.'*

Policy DP21 states that decisions on development proposals will take account of several criteria including the following:

- *'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 avoids severe additional traffic congestion, individually or cumulatively;*
- *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.'*

Biodiversity

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF sets out the principles that local planning authorities should apply when determining planning applications which may impact habitats and biodiversity. Part (a) states that development should be refused if significant harm to biodiversity cannot be mitigated or compensated for.

Policy 38 of the District Plan seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity through a number of measures, including taking opportunities to improve and enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure so that there is a net gain in biodiversity. The Policy also expects that existing biodiversity should be protected so that there is no net loss.

Emerging Policies DPN1 and DPN2 seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity and incorporate Biodiversity Net Gain.

Assessment

The proposal is for the change of use of an existing redundant building in to a farm café to support the use of Goddenwick Farm. It is proposed that the farm café would be used to support the activities at the farm, which are already occurring at Christmas (in association with the sale of the trees), but also at other times of year such as Halloween and Easter.

Goddenwick Farm has been used for growing and selling Christmas trees for a number of years, and operates a very successful 'pick your own' Christmas tree service. This has grown organically over the years and now includes a number of 'pop up' vendors selling hot drinks and refreshments for visitors to the farm. The purpose of this planning application is to provide a farm café within a building which will provide this service on site and indoors, which will provide indoor seating space and space for customers during more inclement weather. It will also result in greater efficiency within the business, through having a permanent facility on site to serve visitors.

The building was originally constructed as a residential outbuilding with a swimming pool, following planning consent that was granted in 2001 (Planning Permission Reference 01/00305/FUL). The building is situated on the eastern edge of the curtilage of Goddenwick Farmhouse which is Grade II Listed. This building is over twenty years old and is no longer required. It faces east, on to the farm land and farm buildings, it is well placed to serve the use of the farm, as a café and will involve minimal alterations to change the use as it is already a habitable, insulated structure.

Permitted Development rights are available under Class R of the General Permitted Development Order, which provide for the change of use of farm buildings in to a variety of uses, including farm shops and cafes. As such, the principle of the conversion would usually be acceptable under permitted development rights. However, in this instance, the building that has been selected as most appropriate for the conversion is a building that is within the residential curtilage of Goddenwick Farmhouse. This is because it is redundant and will be the most cost effective to convert, as it is already insulated and a habitable structure.

The change of use of the building will support the diversification of the forestry business and help to maintain an income stream for the farm across the year. It is small in scale and will support the rural economy pursuant to the objectives of Policy DP14 of the District Plan. Employment will be provided for local people – this is estimated to equate to 1 full time and 3 part time employees, as such there will be a contribution to the rural economy through the provision of the café.

No external changes will be required in order to change the use of the building in to a farm café. A timber deck has been laid to the east elevation of the building (which replaced a smaller rotten deck) and is proposed for use in association with the farm café. This is included within this application on a retrospective basis. The materials that have been used to construct the deck are simple rural materials consisting of local timber. As such, the design is considered to conserve and enhance the High Weald National Landscape and the character and appearance of the building. There are also considered to be visual benefits resulting from containing the café use within a building.

The building is a modern structure and is not curtilage listed. As there will be minimal external changes (only the replacement deck), there would be no harm to the significance of Goddenwick Farmhouse as a Grade II Listed Building. The proposal is therefore compliant with paragraphs 193, 210 and DP34 of the District Plan in this respect.

There is an existing parking area that is located to the south of the application site which will be used in conjunction with the farm café. There is ample space to park within this area and there is safe and suitable vehicle access on to Ardingly Road.

Conclusion

Planning permission is sought for Planning permission is sought for '*...the change of use of an existing residential outbuilding in to a farm café and the retrospective replacement and extension of a timber deck*' ('the proposed development') at Goddenwick Farm, Ardingly, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2QX ('the site').

Goddenwick Farm has gradually diversified in to forestry (Christmas trees) and Sussex Trees, which operates from the site at Goddenwick Farm and also Five Ashes has been successfully operating for a number of years.

The farm has grown organically, in response to demand from customers in the local area, and in conjunction with the successful Christmas tree business, the farm has begun to offer pop up food and drink stalls for visitors collecting their trees at Christmas. This income is only seasonal and has been restricted to winter owing to the nature of the forestry use. The operation has expanded to provide pumpkin picking at the farm at Halloween and it is the intention to provide Easter Egg Hunts on the farm at Easter. This will provide a valuable source of income for the farm across the year which will maintain the viability of the forestry use of the land and buildings.

The proposed change of use will establish a more permanent venue for food and drink at the farm, and will make the business more efficient, as well as creating work for at least 1 full time and 3 part time employees.

Planning policy at all levels is supportive of the sustainable growth of rural businesses, and Policy DP14 of the District Plan is specifically supportive of farm diversification, where the use is small in scale such as this scheme.

The proposal will re-use a redundant building, which will require no external changes to the building to enable the change of use. Permitted Development Rights are available to change the use of farm buildings to cafes, however in this instance it was considered more appropriate to change the use of the redundant annexe, as this would be a more cost effective solution as it is already insulated.

There will be no adverse impact on the setting of the Grade II Listed Building or the High Weald landscape.

The proposals constitute sustainable development which will support farm diversification, provide jobs for local people and will do so in a manner which conserves the environment.