



Design and Access Statement

Written and prepared by Breen Planning

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Introduction

Breen Planning (**the agent**) has been instructed by Ms Kerstin Bowers (**the applicant**) to prepare and submit a retrospective planning application to Mid Sussex District Council (**the Planning Authority**) to seek planning consent for the retention of an existing outbuilding, which will be used for agricultural storage purposes. (**the proposal /development**) at: Agricultural land south of Meadow Cottage, Brantridge Lane, Staplefield RH17 6EW (**the site location**). This planning application follows recent applications made at the site, including the original retrospective planning application (reference DM/22/3875), where a planning decision is still pending. The provision of this Planning Statement report has been prepared to support this retrospective planning application and seeks to demonstrate the appropriate nature of this development, in line with planning policy along with any relevant material considerations.

Site Location

The site is located on agricultural land south of Meadow Cottage, Brantridge Lane, Staplefield, RH17 6EW with the exact position of the existing outbuilding being located along the mid-northern edge of the site. The existing land is bounded by a high volume of natural landscape componentises including hedges along with mature and semi-mature trees which are densely located particularly along the sites western and south boundaries. The existence of these existing landscape features provides the site with effective screening opportunities which have a proven benefit to significantly mitigate against any visual change to this area. As per the Mid Sussex Local Plan, the site resides within the countryside and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The site resides outside of the Staplefield Conservation Area.

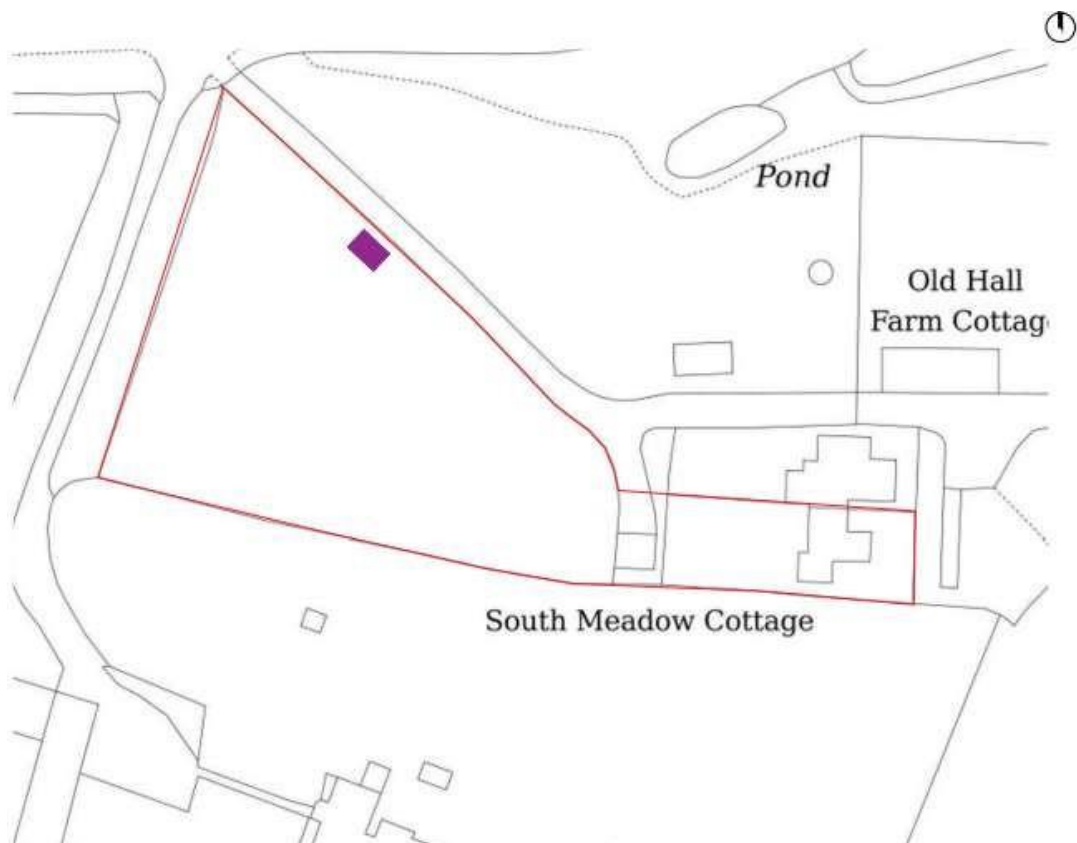


Figure 1: Block plan (not to scale, see planning drawings and designs)

The Development

The development to which this retrospective planning application relates is an in-situ outbuilding/ located on the mid-northern edge of the site. The applicant has made several planning applications against the structure in recent years in an effort to retain the structure, including a retrospective planning application wherein a planning decision is still pending. Additionally, the applicant sought a change of use of the land to residential, however this application was not successful.

During these applications, significant engagement with the planning officers took place with the overall consensus being that the structure itself was not resulting in any detrimental visual impact, with potential residential use being the area of concern due to the site's relevant planning constraints. As a result of this, the applicant has decided to seek planning consent to regularise its use for agricultural storage, in line with the existing land use.

The scope of works will not result in any design changes but will restrict its usage solely for agricultural purposes, in line with the sites planning constraints and applicable national and local planning policy.

Provided that planning consent can be acquired for the retention of this structure, the applicant is willing to adhere to any limitations on the use of the unit which can be agreed by way of a conditional grant in planning approval.

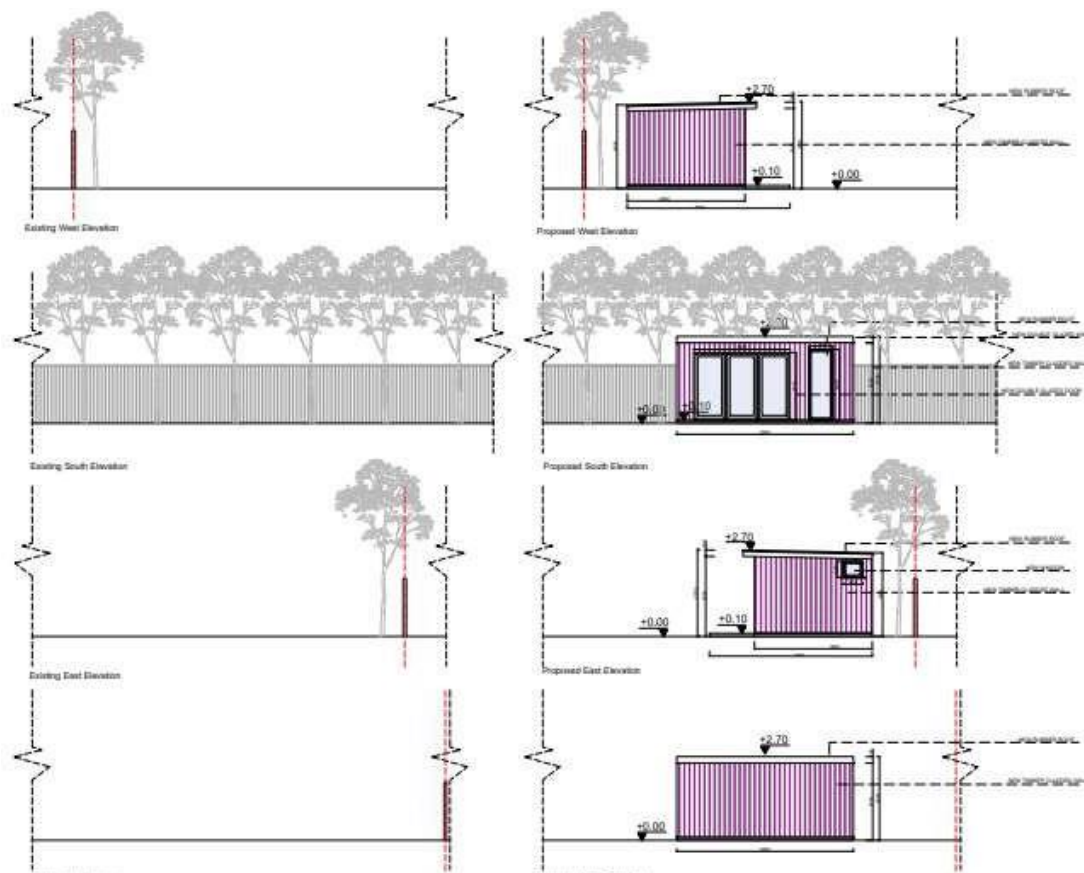


Figure 2: Pre-existing and existing Elevations (*not to scale, see planning drawings and designs*)

Access

The provision of this new structure to the site has not brought any change to current access movement patterns to and from the site.

Planning History

A review of the council's planning database in December 2022 highlights that the site location is associated with the following planning history:

- Ref:13/01132/FUL – Erection of a greenhouse on agricultural land **Approved Jun 2013**
- DM/25/0886 – Change of use of land to residential – **Refused**
- DM/22/3875 – Retention of existing Garden Room – **Decision Pending**

Policy Assessment

The following policy and guidance documents are recognized as primary considerations for the decision of the associated application at the site location

- National Planning Policy Framework;
- National Planning Practice Guidance;
- Mid Sussex District Plan 2018;
- Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF explains that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimizing waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Analysis: The development represents sustainable development through the promotion of all three primary objectives of the NPPF. Firstly, the development has proven to facilitate significant social benefits to the applicant through the provision of additional storage space for existing site users. From an environmental perspective, the development will not lead to any visual disruption or impact to the areas existing landscape character as the site is privacy guarded with surrounding greenery. This ensures that the development has no detrimental impact on the designated AONB. Economically, the development has provided

activity at a local level as local suppliers and fitters have already erected the unit and its removal through any enforcement case may extract revenue from local cash streams.

Section 12 of the NPPF relates to achieving Well-designed Places which states that “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. 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”

Analysis: As highlighted through the supplied planning drawings and designs, the development is of a modest scale and design which has been installed through the use of sustainable, high-quality materials to ensure that the structure will remain visually pleasant at this location due to associated landscape designations.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF describes the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 specifically states that for decision-making this means (amongst other things):

- 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 this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear 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 in this Framework taken as a whole

Breen Planning kindly request that this planning application is examined and accessed within a suitable timeframe in line with paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031

The Plan sets out a vision for how Mid Sussex wants to evolve and a delivery strategy for how that will be achieved. It supports the National Planning Policy Framework’s ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. As such, it sets out broad guidance on the distribution and quality of development in the form of ‘higher level’ strategic policies. It also provides the framework for all subsequent planning documents, including Neighbourhood Plans. The District Plan covers the period up to 2031 and will replace the majority of the Mid Sussex Local Plan adopted in 2004. The Local Plan policies that will continue to apply are listed in Appendix C. From the councils local plan, the following planning policies are recognised as relevant considerations for the assessment of this application:

- DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside;
- DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- DP26: Character and Design;

DP12: Protection and enhancement of countryside

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.

Agricultural land of Grade 3a and above will be protected from non-agricultural development proposals. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, detailed field surveys should be undertaken and proposals should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality.

The Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, the West Sussex County Council Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape, the Capacity of Mid Sussex District to Accommodate Development Study and other available landscape evidence (including that gathered to support Neighbourhood Plans) will be used to assess the impact of development proposals on the quality of rural and landscape character.

Analysis: The development is considered to be compliant with Policy DP12 of the councils Local Plan as the existing structure at the unit will serve significant practical benefits in the use and running of this agricultural land as a means of storage. The structure itself is of a high-quality design in comparison to many agricultural buildings which are commonly seen throughout these rural landscapes which are typically often seen as visually displeasing. This has led to the applicant deciding that a high-quality outbuilding would be appropriate at this location based on the site's context residing within the councils AONB, which has made the structure appear to take the form of a typical garden room. Should the council wish to ensure that this is enforced, the applicant would be willing to adhere to any reasonable planning conditions following planning consent for the retention of this structure.

DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, 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.

Development on land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where it does not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB, and in particular should not adversely affect the views into and out of the AONB by virtue of its location or design.

Analysis: The development is in line with Policy DP16 of the local plan as the structure conserves the existing landscape character of this area as its addition to the site does not pose any significant change to the areas natural/built form thanks to the presence of dense landscape features which facilitate effective screening.

DP26: Character and Design

Design and Character Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 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:

- is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;
- 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;
- creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;
- protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;
- protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;
- 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 DP27);
- creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;
- incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;
- positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;
- 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;
- optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development."

Analysis: The existing outbuilding has been developed through the use of sustainable, high quality materials to ensure compliance with Policy DP26 of the councils Local Plan. Furthermore, thanks to the presence of dense natural landscape features such as hedges and semi mature & mature trees, the development poses no significant change to the areas existing landscape character due to existing screening measures which are in place.

Conclusion

In considering this application, it is hoped that the Planning Authority recognise that the development development has been located, designed and scaled appropriately, in line with the site

locations existing landscape character. The development will continue to deliver significant social benefits to the applicant while not demonstrating any detrimental environmental impacts if retained on site. Throughout the past number of years, this area has been subject to a high volume of planning applications for housing developments which can be seen to have enjoyed a high rate of planning success in the form of planning approval which facilitates a strong precedent for development at this location for similar development.

Following a review of National and local planning policy considerations, the structures scale and design is considered to be in accordance with National and Local Planning Policy requirements and objectives. Should the Planning Authority have any queries or concerns relating to any element of this proposal, Breen Planning welcome the opportunity to correspond to any issues prior to the release of any formal decision. We kindly request for the council to view upon this application favourably and issue a timely decision in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Kind regards,

Michael Breen