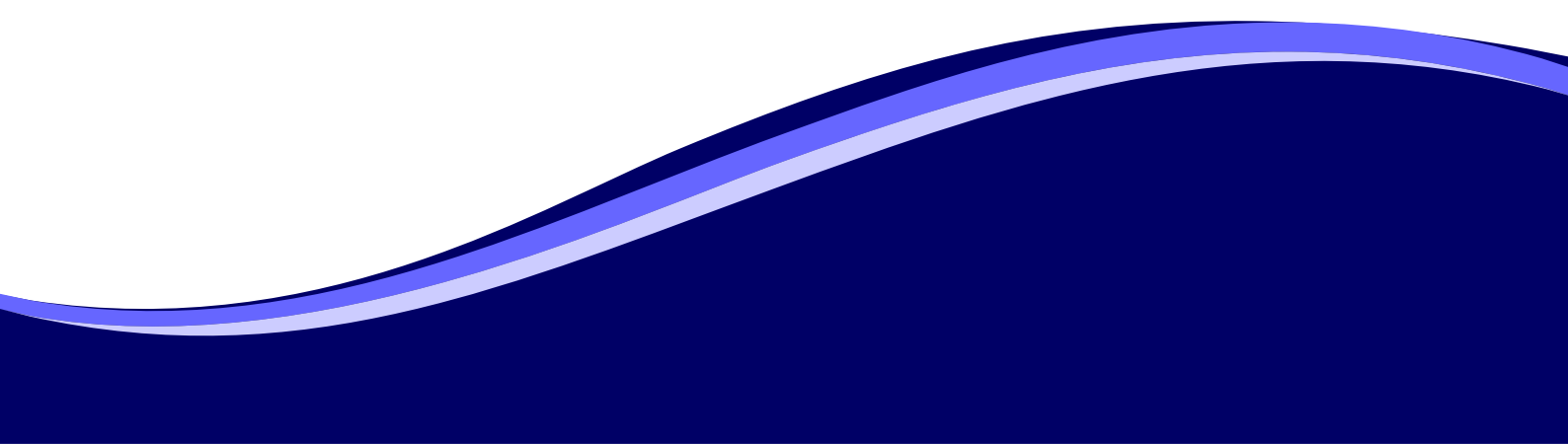


Design, Access & Planning Statement

Prince Albert Public House,
Copthorne Bank,
Copthorne,
Crawley
RH10 3QX

Residential Development

Decorative wavy lines in shades of blue and purple sweep across the bottom of the page.

Contents

1. Introduction

2. Background

The Site & Surroundings

Planning History

Relevant Planning Policy

3. Design Response

Use

Amount

Layout

Scale

Appearance

Landscaping

Access

4. Planning Case



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1 Introduction

Site Address:

The Prince Albert Public House, Copthorne Bank,
Copthorne, Crawley RH10 3QX

Applicant:

Westcoast Convenience Limited

Architect:

UAN Architecture

Proposal:

Sever land and erect two detached dwellings
with associated access and parking.

Author:

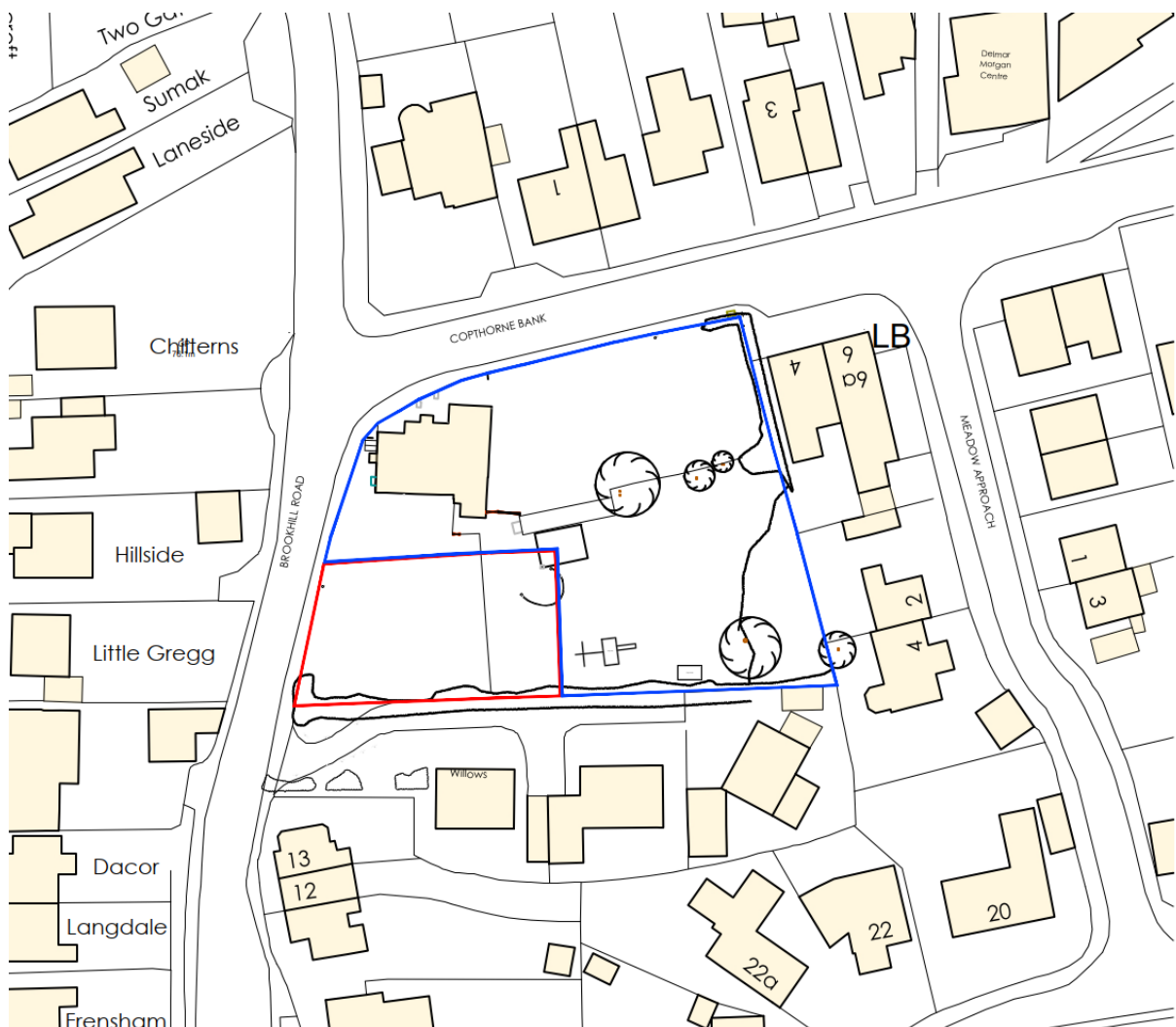
Mr C. Miell, BA(Hons), MPlan, MRTPI

Application type:

Full application

Date:

May 2026



2 Background

The Site and Surroundings

Site Area

0.06 ha

Use

Public House (Sui Generis) with associated car park and garden to the side / rear.

Built form

The application site (red line area) is largely devoid of built form. The wider land holding (blue line area) comprises of a detached two storey public house which occupies a substantial corner plot at the junction of Copthorne Bank and Brookhill Road. The current building was constructed in C19 and has a simple traditional form with a pitched roof and render / painted brick exterior. To the east of the public house there is a storage container, which provides secure storage for the business. Behind the storage container there is a small timber smoking shelter.

Landscape

The application site is mostly overgrown scrub land behind public house, which has been separated from the wider pub garden by fencing. Planning permission was given in 2019 to construct a two-storey rear extension in this location, which would have provided 8 x letting rooms with new kitchen, disabled toilet and staff accommodation. The permission lapsed in 2022.

The public house benefits from a large pub garden to the rear. The garden is mainly laid to lawn and features a children's play park and a silver birch tree.

Access

To the side of the public house is a large car park, which is accessed from Copthorne Bank. This is a private car park, which is for the sole use by patrons and staff of the public house. The site is located within walking distance of a range of services and facilities in Copthorne town centre.



Site Photos



Site Photos

Character Overview

The site is located within the historic core of Copthorne. The Copthorne Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2031 explains that *"At the centre of Copthorne is its historic core. This primarily residential area has clusters of commercial activity along Copthorne Bank, Borers Arm Road and Church Road. It is interspersed with a number of historic buildings contributing to a rich sense of place"*.

The immediate area has a suburban character of the area with a mix of residential and commercial premises. The buildings are typically two storey detached or semi-detached properties of varying architectural form, merit and materials.



View of site from northeast
Source: Google Streetview (March 2026)

Planning History

Pre-Application

No pre-application discussions have been undertaken before the submission of the current application because it follows a refused scheme and the material planning issues are well understood.

However, pre-application discussions (LPA Ref; DM/23/3242) were held with in 2023/24 prior to the submission of the previous planning application. The LPA advised that the principle of severing the site to provide land for a residential development and a convenience store was in accordance with the development plan owing to the site's sustainable location and the proposal forming windfall development in the built-up area

Site History

- **TA/84/P/1115:** Single-storey extension to provide porch and enlarged bar area. **APPROVED** on 5th February 1985
- **06/02073/FUL:** Demolition of existing rear extension and erection of new extension for dining area and updated toilet facilities (incl disabled). **APPROVED** on 23rd November 2006
- **08/01522/FUL:** Retrospective planning application for a rain shelter. **APPROVED** on 7th July 2008
- **DM/15/4045:** Extension to existing public house to provide 8 no. letting rooms, extended kitchen and staff accommodation. Amended plans received 3rd December 2015 showing revised materials to elevation, revised window design and external fire escape on south elevation. **APPROVED** on 7th January 2016
- **DM/19/01314:** Proposed 2 storey rear extension with external staircase to provide 8 letting rooms with new kitchen, disabled toilet and staff accommodation. **APPROVED** on 26th April 2019.
- **DM/24/2957:** Sever existing land to retain existing public house use and area of pub garden and erect a convenience store and 4 no. apartments with associated works, including alterations to the existing vehicular access and car park. **REFUSED** on 20th January 2026.

LPA Reference: DM/24/2957 – Overview

This application was submitted in November 2024 and sought permission to sever the existing land to retain existing public house use and area of pub garden and erect a convenience store and 4 no. apartments with associated works, including alterations to the existing vehicular access and car park.

After 12 months of negotiation with the Local Planning Authority, which resulted in several positive design changes, including highway improvements, the planning application was recommended for approval by the Planning Officer. Due to the number of objections, the application was referred to the Council's Planning Committee. The Committee Members overturned the Officer's recommendation and refused planning permission on 20th January 2025.

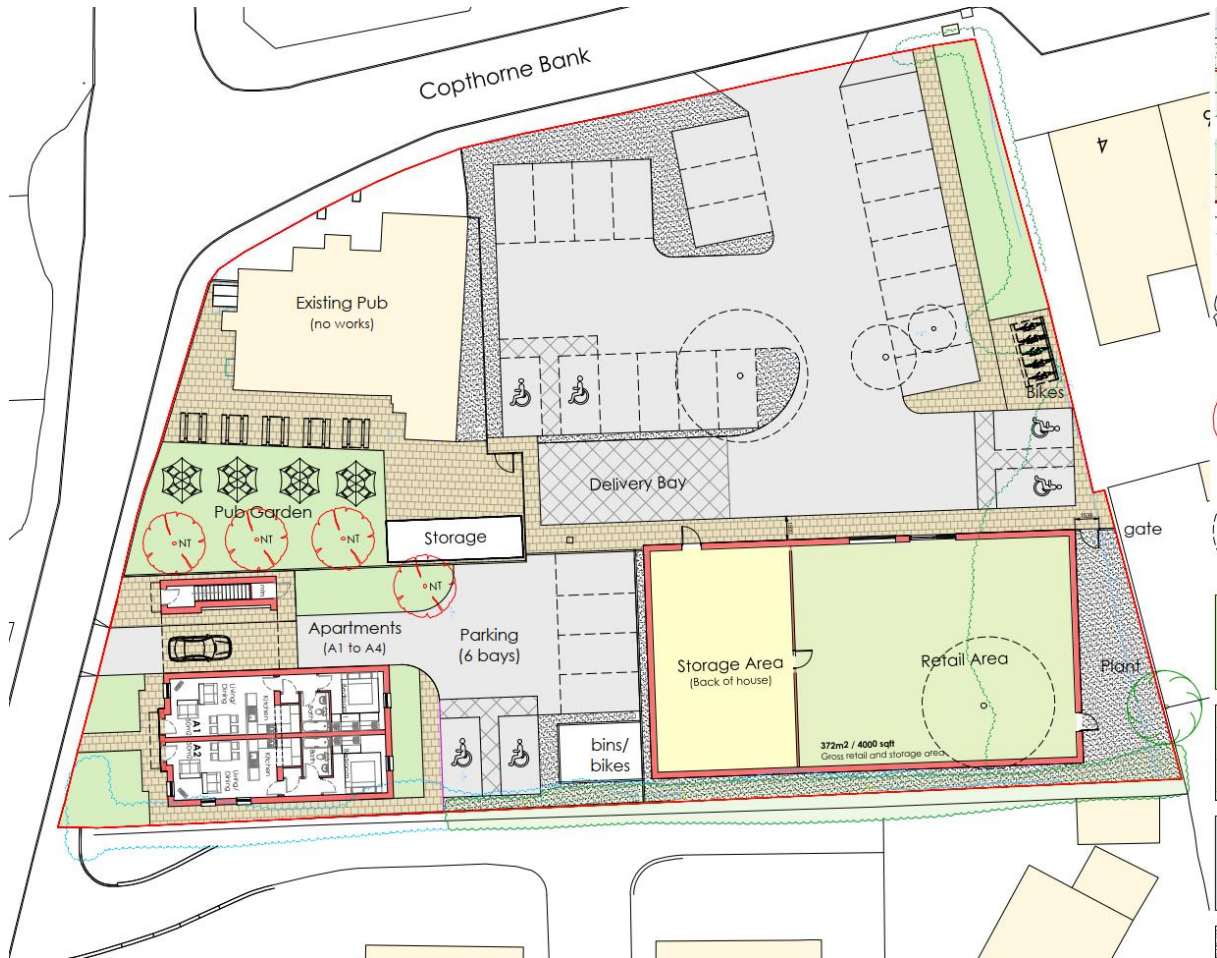
The **SOLE** reason for refusal on the Council's decision notice states:

"The design of the proposed apartment block and retail unit building would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, specifically due to the scale, bulk and height of the apartment block in relation to the public house and Boundary Cottage, and the unsympathetic design and appearance of the retail unit building. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policies CNP1, CNP2 and CNP11 of the Copthorne Neighbourhood Plan and the Mid Sussex Design Guide. The Council recognises that it is currently not able to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and having regard to paragraph 11d)ii) of the NPPF, while limited positive weight has been given to the proposed apartments, the adverse impacts identified (substantial harm to the character and appearance of the area) are considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. As such, there are no material considerations that indicate a decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with the Development Plan"

It is noted that the reason for refusal relates exclusively to design matters (highlighted in **yellow**). Therefore, it follows that the Planning Committee were satisfied with the Officer's assessment regarding the other material planning considerations set out within the Officer Report, including the principle of development (residential and new convenience store) and the subsequent reduction of the pub garden.

The Local Planning Authority must determine similar cases in a consistent manner. Therefore, it would be unreasonable for the Planning Officer and/or Planning Committee to find the principle of development unacceptable when determining the current application. Instead, the focus should be on whether the revised design approach overcomes the previous concerns, which are clearly identified within the sole reason for refusal.

LPA Reference: DM/24/2957 – Refused Plans



Site Plan



Proposed Streetscene

LPA Reference: DM/24/2957 – Refused Plans



Proposed Elevation (West) - Street Elevation 1:100



Proposed Elevation (North) 1:100

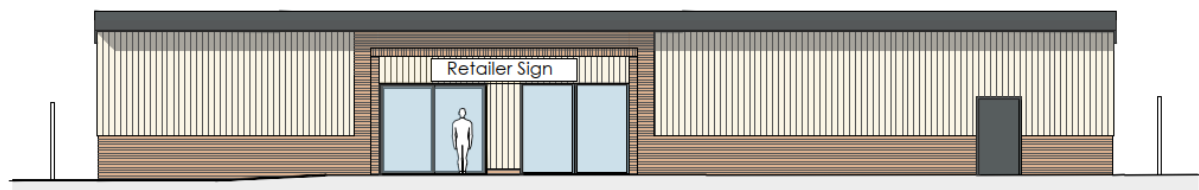


Proposed Elevation (East) 1:100

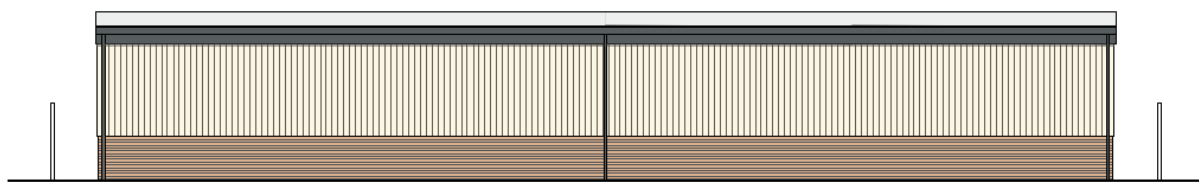


Proposed Elevation (South) 1:100

Proposed Elevations - Apartments



Proposed North Elevation (Street facing) 1:100



Proposed South Elevation (rear) 1:100

Proposed Elevations – Convenience Store

Planning Policy

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031 (March 2018)

- DP3 – Village and Neighbourhood Centre Development
- DP4 – Housing
- DP5 – Planning to Meet Future Housing Need
- DP6 – Settlement Hierarchy
- DP17 – Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC
- DP21 – Transport
- DP25 – Community Facilities and Local Services
- DP26 – Character and Design
- DP27 – Dwelling Space Standards
- DP28 – Accessibility
- DP29 – Noise, Air and Light Pollution
- DP30 – Housing Mix
- DP37 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- DP38 – Biodiversity
- DP39 – Sustainable Design and Construction
- DP41 – Flood Risk and Drainage
- DP42 – Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment

Copthorne Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2031 (February 2021)

- CNP1 – General Development Requirements
- CNP2 – Redevelopment and Infill Development within the Defined Built-Up Area
- CNP4 – Important Community Facilities
- CNP5 – Conversion of Public Houses
- CNP7 – Parish Heritage Assets
- CNP11 – CA4: Historic Core
- CNP13 – Our Economy
- CNP14 – Sustainable Transport
- CNP15 – Car Parking
- CNP16 – New Parking Areas

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD (November 2020)
- West Sussex County Council – Guidance on Parking at New Developments (September 2020)
- Planning Noise Advice Document: Sussex (September 2021)

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. It was submitted for examination in July 2024, no examination hearings have taken place at this point. At this stage, the Local Planning Authority does not know which Policies will be the subject of unresolved objections and therefore only minimal weight can be given to the Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The following sections of the NPPF are relevant to the proposal:

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development:

- Paragraph 11 – *"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For **decision-taking** this means: (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or (d) 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: 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 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"*

Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy:

- Paragraph 85 – *"Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development"*

Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities:

- Paragraph 98 – *"To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments."*

Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport:

- Paragraph 115 – *“In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that: a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location; b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.”*

Section 11 – Making effective use of land:

- Paragraph 124 – *“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.”*
- Paragraph 125 – *“Planning policies and decisions should: c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, proposals for which should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused.”*
- Paragraph 128 – *“Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs”*

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places:

- Paragraph 131 – *“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.”*
- Paragraph 135 – *“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: (a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; (c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).”*

3 Description of Proposal

Use

It is proposed to sever the southern portion of the existing pub garden to provide land for a minor residential development (Use Class C3). The existing public house use is to be retained save for a reduction in the amount of pub garden.

A separate planning application has been submitted by the applicant concerning the eastern portion of the existing pub garden, which is proposed to be redeveloped to provide a convenience store with associated access and parking.

Copthorne is a Category 2 settlement under Local Plan Policy DP6 (Settlement hierarchy) and is defined as a "Larger village acting as Local Service Centres providing key services in the rural area of Mid Sussex. These settlements serve the wider hinterland and benefit from a good range of services and facilities, including employment opportunities and access to public transport.". As such, the site is suitable location for residential development.

The pub itself is registered as an Asset of Community value (ACV) and as such, Local Plan Policy DP25: Community Facilities and Local Services and Neighbourhood Plan Policies CNP5 and CNP7 are of relevance. These policies seek to protect against the loss of the existing public house.

Policy DP6 sets out that "Development will be permitted within towns and villages with defined built-up area boundaries. Any infilling and redevelopment will be required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale (with particular regard to DP26: Character and Design), and not cause harm to the character and function of the settlement."

Policy CNP2 of the Neighbourhood Plan supports redevelopment and infill development of sites within the defined built-up area subject to a number of criteria being met in relation to character, design and amenity.

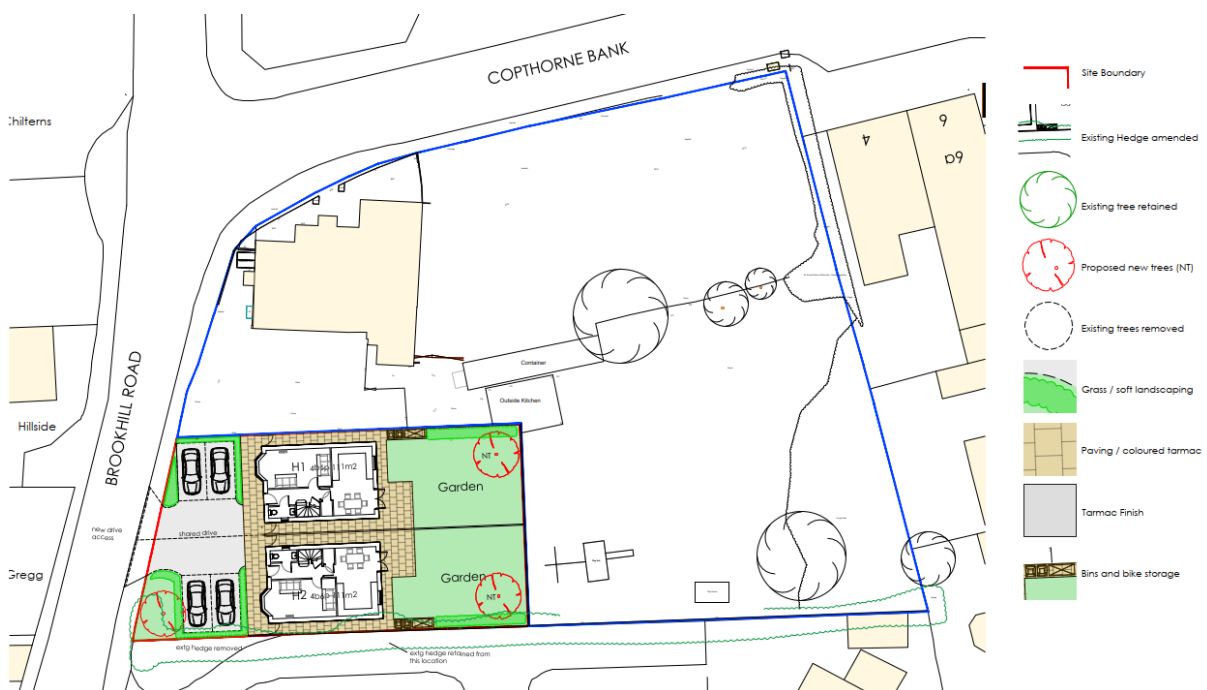
In determining the previous application, the Planning Officer concluded that the principle of new residential development at the site was acceptable noting in his committee report that "*the proposed residential development is supported by both policies.*" (Policy DP6 and Policy CNP2).

The garden land to be retained to serve the existing public house use is ample in order to provide sufficient external space to serve this use. This position is supported by the viability report submitted with the planning application.

As per the previous scheme, the shared boundary between the pub garden and residential development will be planted with a line of new trees which will provide aural and visual screening between the domestic and commercial uses. In addition, the pub garden will be improved by to provide usable seating areas which will be a significant improvement upon what is seen on site now.

Further, the relationship between the proposed new houses and the pub is a common one. The layout (which will be discussed further in later sections) ensures the new dwellings are set away from the pub and as such there will be no amenity concerns with regards to noise. The application is supported by a noise impact assessment which demonstrates that the proposed development would provide suitable living conditions for occupiers of the proposed houses.

The principle of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable. This is in line with the pre-application advice received. The existing public house use is to be retained, the proposed dwellinghouses entirely appropriate in this sustainable location as supported by local policy.



Proposed Site Plan

Amount

The proposal seeks to retain the existing public house use, whilst severing a portion of the pub garden to providing 2 x 4-bedroom dwellinghouses.

The amount of development proposed has been driven by the desire to make effective use of this large underutilised site, whilst ensuring the existing public house use is protected, respecting the prevailing pattern of and the amenities of existing and future occupiers, as well as the following considerations:

- The need to make optimum use of the site;
- To provide a development of high-quality design;
- The need to preserve neighbouring amenity and suitable living conditions for future occupiers;
- To provide an appropriate amount of car parking, cycle parking and suitable access standards;
- To provide adequate bin storage;

Policy DP30 requires new development to provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes that reflects current and future housing need. The SHMA 2021 sets out that the greatest need is for family housing, however, Policy DPH7 of the Submission Draft Local Plan states that the SHMA ranges should be used as a starting point and that variations to this required mix would be considered based on high-quality mixed-use factors including site characteristics and location that dictate that there is a more appropriate mix of dwellings.

Two dwellings are proposed under this application, both of which will be 4-bedroom units and will be suitable as family housing. Both units would satisfy the Government's nationally described space standards (2015) and private outdoor amenity space of a suitable size to meet the needs of modern family living. Therefore, the proposal makes efficient use of the site. As such, the proposed dwelling type is appropriate in this context.

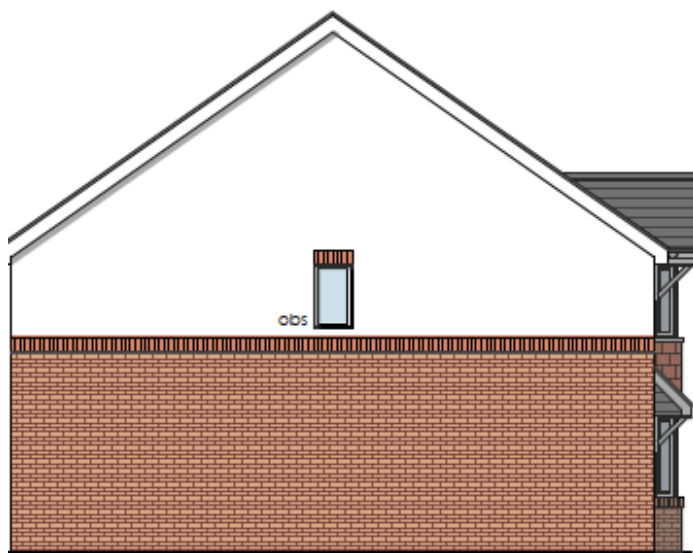
Finally, as can be seen from the submitted plans, the amount of development proposed has been carefully balanced to create an attractive scheme that makes efficient use of the site, whilst not representing an overdevelopment of the site or creating an overbearing impact on the neighbouring properties.

Layout

The layout of the scheme has been carefully thought out to make maximum use of the site whilst ensuring the existing public house use is retained. The relationship between the public house and the new residential dwellings is appropriate and sufficient space is given to soft landscaping and parking to provide a redevelopment that is in keeping with the surrounding area.

A good-sized rear garden to the south of the public house is proposed to be retained as part of the redevelopment of the site, which is commensurate with the size of the pub and the type of venue, which is primarily a wet establishment with limited/no food offering.

The proposed dwellings are located to the south-west of the site, closest to the southern boundary. As shown by the site plan, the building line of the new dwellings aligns with the side elevation of the existing public house, which ensures that the proposal would be in-keeping with the prevailing pattern of development.



Side Elevation 1:100



Front Elevation 1:100

Proposed Elevations – Unit 1

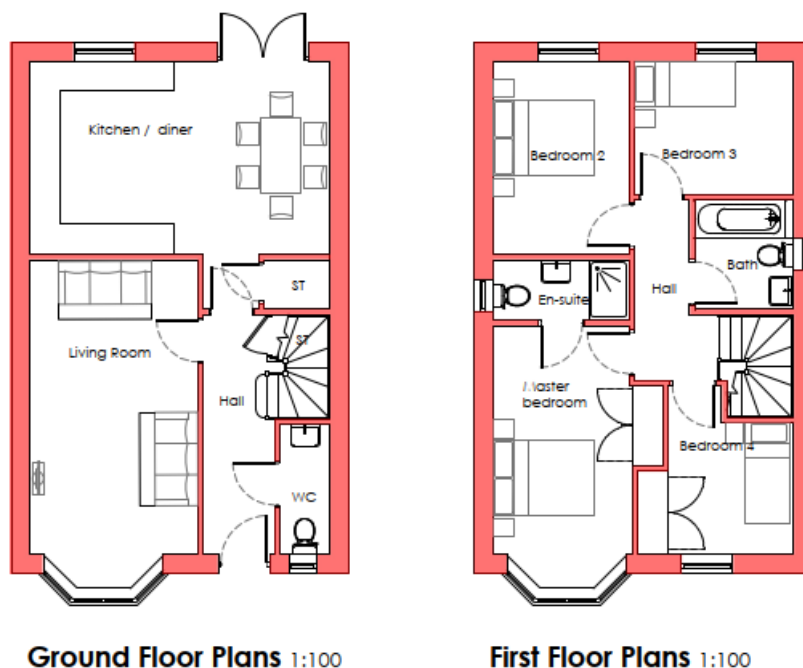
In order to protect the amenity of future occupiers from noise and disturbance, there would be no bedroom windows on the north elevation facing into the pub's garden, with the windows to all habitable rooms facing front to rear i.e. as far from the public house as possible. In accordance with paragraph 200 of the NPPF (Agent of Change Principal), the proposed layout will ensure that no undue restrictions are placed on the Public House as a result of the proposed development.

Private external amenity space is proposed to the rear of the new dwellings, whilst a shared parking area would be provided to the front of the dwellings, which would be served from a new access onto Brookhill Road.

Internally each of the proposed dwellings has a good-sized living room and kitchen / dining area on the ground floor, with 4 x bedrooms provided at first floor. The proposed design and layout ensures both units are afforded a good level of natural light and good outlook.

The proposed layout ensures that the development meets all necessary requirements in terms of provision of amenity space, protection of amenity and provision of necessary parking whilst making efficient use of the site in a form that respects the character of the area.

In these respects, the layout would reflect, preserve and enhance the surrounding area in accordance with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and Policies CNP1, CNP2 CNP11 of the Neighbourhood Plan.



Proposed Floor Plans – Unit 1

Scale & Appearance

The revised proposal is **substantially different** to the previous proposal for a three-storey apartment block, which the Council's Planning Committee found to be unacceptable due to the *"scale, bulk and height of the apartment block in relation to the public house and Boundary Cottage"*.

The proposed dwellings would be two storey properties with a traditional design utilised, incorporating a mix of brick, render, hung tiles and period features, such as bay windows, all of which would be an appropriate response to the area's local distinctiveness.

It is recognised that the new dwellings would be marginally taller than existing public house. However, this is to be expected when comparing a new build development to a historic building which has low floor to ceiling heights that do not align with current building regulations. Moreover, the immediate area features a mix of property types with differing roof heights and thus proposed development would be in-keeping with the character and appearance of the area.

The streetscene shows that the new dwellings would respond to the sloping topography of the site striking a balance between preserving the character of the area whilst making efficient use of the site. The separation distance between the proposed dwellings and neighbouring properties is sufficient to ensure there would be no concerns with regards to the development appearing overbearing nor with it impacting upon light. Moreover, the choice of detached dwellings, as opposed to a pair of semi-detached dwellings is intentionally and provides a visual break between the dwellings, which breaks up the bulk and massing of the new development, thus overcoming the previous concerns.

Given the above, the character and appearance of the area would be maintained, and a carefully designed proposal would be incorporated into the street scene without adversely affecting the local distinctiveness of the area. As such the development is in accordance with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and Policies CNP1, CNP2 and CNP11 of the Neighbourhood Plan.



Proposed Streetscene

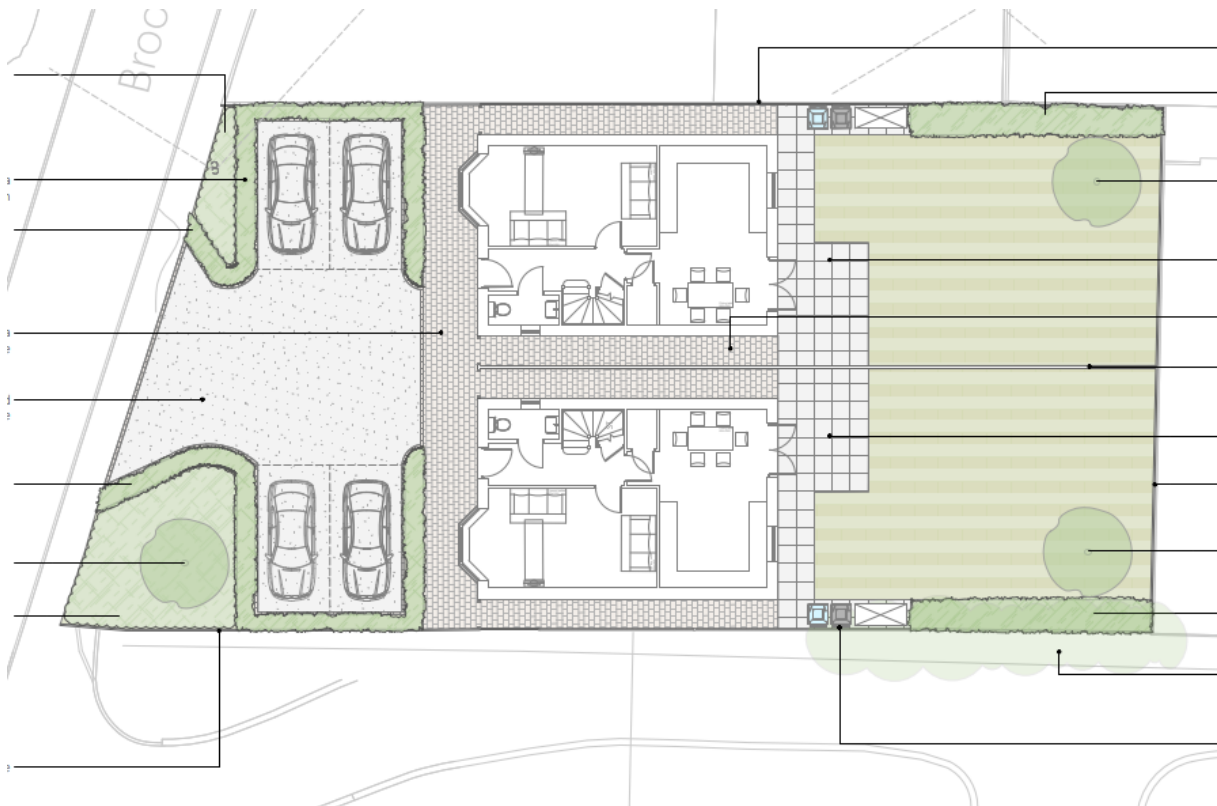
Landscaping

The application site would be landscaped to a high standard with a variety of new shrubs and trees to be planted to the front and rear of the new dwellings, as shown by the submitted landscape plan.

The frontage planting would enhance the character and appearance of street when compared to the existing situation. As such, the proposals are in accordance with Policy DP37 and DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Biodiversity

The application has been supported by an Ecological Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Report prepared by LC Ecology. The report sets out that provided the proposed mitigation is put in place, there will be no significant effects on biodiversity as a result of the proposed development. The site area is below 0.2 ha, therefore the development is exempt from BNG. Accordingly, the proposal accords with Policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.



Proposed Landscape Plan

4 Planning case

Principle of Development

- Policies DP25, CNP5 and CNP7: The proposals ensure the existing Public House use is retained and its viability will not be impacted as a result of the proposals. The proposed development has been designed to ensure that the new dwellings neighbouring the site will not result in unnecessary restrictions being placed on the businesses use due to amenity concerns and a good level of outdoor space has been set aside for use by the public house.
- Policies DP6 and CNP2: The proposed development will see an efficient use being made of this underutilised site in a sustainable location within the settlement boundary.
- The principle of development for the proposed uses in this location is considered acceptable.

Impact on Character and Appearance of the area

- The proposed development has been carefully considered to ensure the character and appearance of the area is preserved.
- The bulk, scale, massing and traditional design of the proposed dwellings responds to the local vernacular and ensures that the development will assimilate into the surrounding development.
- The amount of development proposed on the site ensures it does not appear overcrowded and as such matches the prevailing density of the area.
- Where possible, areas of soft landscaping have been incorporated into the proposals to soften the overall visual appearance.
- The proposals accord with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and Policies CNP1, CNP2 and CNP11 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Residential Amenity – Neighbouring Residents

- The proposed new development has been designed to preserve the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, especially with regards to the residential dwellings to the south of the site. Ample separation is proposed between the new dwellings and the neighbouring properties to the south to ensure the development does not appear overbearing.
- To preserve privacy of neighbouring residents, there are no habitable room windows on the south elevation of Unit 2 facing towards neighbours to the south.
- The proposals accord with Policies DP26 and DP29 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and Policies CNP1 and CNP2 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Residential Amenity – Future Residents

- The design has been carefully considered to ensure the relationship between the proposed dwellings and the public house is acceptable. The dwellings have been designed to site the habitable room windows away from the public house. In addition, the outside space for the dwellings does not directly share a boundary with the main section of the pub garden,
- This application has been supported by a noise impact assessment setting out that the noise levels at the proposed new dwellings will be appropriate.
- The proposals accord with Policies DP26 and DP29 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and Policies CNP1 and CNP2 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Trees and Biodiversity

- The submitted ecology report confirms that there will be no impact upon protected species.
- The proposal accords with Policies DP37 & DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Parking and Highways

- The submitted Transport Statement sets out that the proposed development will not lead to highway safety concerns.
- A policy compliant level of car parking is proposed for the new dwellings, which meets local standards.
- The proposals accord with Policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and Policies CNP14, CNP15 and CNP16 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Waste and Recycling

- Appropriate bin storage will be provided within the site. It will meet all necessary policy requirements for capacity.

Conclusion

- As the proposal complies with the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that it should be determined otherwise, the applicant looks forward to receiving the support of Mid Sussex District Council for this application.