

PLANNING STATEMENT

IN RELATION TO:

‘Construction of two detached dwellings with separate garaging. Associated hard and soft landscaping works, to include highway crossovers to both plots’

**Land at Pascotts Farm, Snowdrop Lane,
Lindfield, West Sussex, RH16 2QE**

May 2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On behalf of our Clients, Mr. and Mrs. Hill, this Planning Application is submitted to the Local Authority for planning permission for the erection of 2 No. new detached dwellings and garaging on land to the front southeast side of the existing property, Pascotts Farm. Two individual access points off Snowdrop Lane will be created to serve the development proposals.
- 1.2 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of the above detailed planning application. The statement describes the site, its surroundings and the proposal itself. The Planning Policy background is considered along with an assessment of the proposal in light of the relevant policy and all other material planning considerations.
- 1.3 This statement should be read in conjunction with the package of application drawings, which have been prepared by Gould Baxter Architects.
- 1.4 The application is also accompanied by the following technical reports: -
- Design and Access Statement (Including the Sustainability Statement), prepared by Gould Baxter Architects.
 - Highways Technical Note and Appendices, prepared by Motion.
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, prepared by Environmental Assessment Services Ltd.
 - Dormice Survey, prepared by GPM Ecology.
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, prepared by Environmental Assessment Services Ltd.
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by GHA Trees Arboricultural Consultancy.
 - Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) documents (including Statutory Metric), prepared by Environmental Assessment Services Ltd.

2.0 SITE CIRCUMSTANCES

- 2.1 The Application Site comprises a broadly rectangular paddock with a ribbon of trees along its road frontage. To the north west of the site is the existing dwelling – Pascotts Farm – which sits in its own generously-proportioned grounds. The site is surrounded by hedgerow and young and semi-mature oaks and other deciduous trees in the west boundary of site. A pond is found in the southwest corner of the site and a collection of oak trees is in the southwest corner.



Fig 1. Aerial map showing the site and its surroundings (*Courtesy of Google Maps*)

- 2.2 The site lies on the northwest side of Snowdrop Lane, approximately 60m northeast of its junction with Lyoth Lane. The site area is approximately 3356m²/0.34 hectares.
- 2.3 The site is positioned approximately 2.5 kilometres south of Lindfield and 2.5 kilometres east of Haywards Heath and falls within the administrative boundaries of Mid Sussex District Council (Local Planning Authority) and West Sussex County Council (Local Highways Authority).
- 2.4 As set out in detail below, there has been much residential development along Snowdrop Lane in recent years. Snowdrop Lane is semi-residential in character, typified by detached houses of varied scale, form, siting and design. Plot sizes and shapes are varied.
- 2.5 The Site is located outside of any defined built up area boundary, and is therefore designated as 'countryside' in planning policy terms. To our knowledge, no other constraints or restrictions relate to the site.
- 2.6 According to the Council's TPO map, there are no TPO's on site.

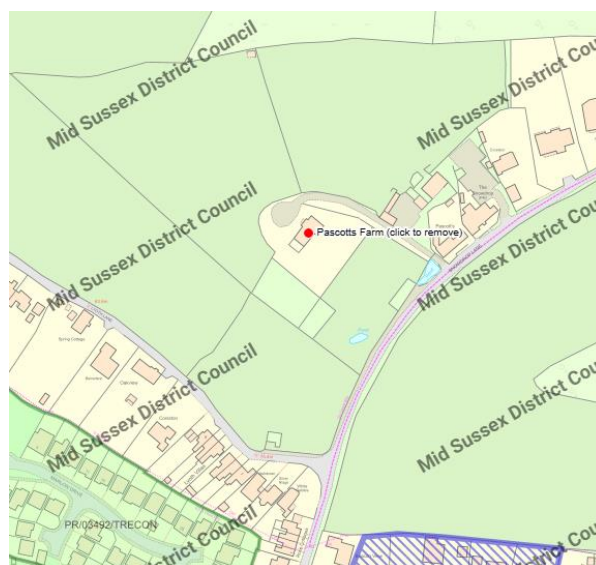


Fig 2. Extract from MSDC Online Tree Preservation Order Map

- 2.7 The Gov.uk Flood Map for Planning online resource confirms that the Site is located within Flood Zone 1 as designated by the Environment Agency, meaning the site has the lowest risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. In addition, this same resource also advises that the site and immediate surrounding area is not at risk from flooding from surface water.
- 2.8 It is understood that there are no Listed Buildings located within the vicinity of the site. The Site is also outside and not appreciably close to any Conservation Area.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

(i) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was originally published in 2012, and has been subject to a number of revisions subsequently, with the most recent version being published on 12th December 2024.
- 3.2 The NPPF confirms that planning law, as set out at 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.
- 3.3 The focus of the revised NPPF continues to be achieving sustainable development. The NPPF clarifies that *“at a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”* (taken from Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations). However, at paragraph 8 the Framework sets out that in planning terms, and in order to achieve sustainable development there are *“three 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)”*. These objectives are economic, social and environmental, which *“should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and 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”* (paragraph 9).
- 3.4 Paragraph 11 is an important element of the NPPF. It states that: *“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:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides 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 in 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”.*

3.5 Paragraph 12 confirms that *“the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed”.*

3.6 Paragraph 14 is relevant in this case. It states that *“in situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:*

- a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and*

b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement (see paragraphs 69-70).

- 3.7 Section 4 of the Plan refers to Decision Making. At paragraph 39 of the Framework, it sets out that *“Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”*.
- 3.8 The Framework also sets out that there are only limited circumstances where decision-makers should give weight to policies in emerging plans, and generally *“refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity will seldom be justified where a draft plan has yet to be submitted for examination; or – in the case of a neighbourhood plan – before the end of the local planning authority publicity period on the draft plan”* (paragraph 51).
- 3.9 Section 5 relates to delivering a sufficient supply of homes. It reiterates at paragraph 61 that the Government’s objective is to significantly boost the supply of new homes. Paragraph 65 confirms that the provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer). To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount.
- 3.10 Paragraph 72 states that *“strategic policy-making authorities should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should*

identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability. Planning policies should identify a supply of:

- a) specific, deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption;*

and

- b) specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for the subsequent years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the remaining plan period”.*

3.11 Paragraph 73 continues *“Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for Small and Medium Enterprise housebuilders to deliver new homes, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should:*

- a) identify, through the development plan and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare; unless it can be shown, through the preparation of relevant plan policies, that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved;*

- b) seek opportunities, through policies and decisions, to support small sites to come forward for community-led development for housing and self-build and custom-build housing;*

- c) use tools such as area-wide design assessments, permission in principle and Local Development Orders to help bring small and medium sized sites forward;*

- d) support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes; and*

- e) work with developers to encourage the sub-division of large sites where this could help to speed up the delivery of homes”.*

3.12 Paragraph 74-75 notes that *“neighbourhood planning groups should also give particular consideration to the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites (of a size consistent with paragraph 73a) suitable for housing in their area....Where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated*

supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the strategic housing land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends. Plans should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area”.

- 3.13 With regard to housing supply, paragraph 78 states that *“Strategic policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period, and all plans should consider whether it is appropriate to set out the anticipated rate of development for specific sites. Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old.³⁹ The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer (moved forward from later in the plan period) of:*
- a) 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; or*
 - b) 20% where there has been significant under delivery⁴⁰ of housing over the previous three years, to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply; or*
 - c) From 1 July 2026, for the purposes of decision-making only, 20% where a local planning authority has a housing requirement adopted in the last five years examined against a previous version of this Framework⁴¹, and whose annual average housing requirement⁴² is 80% or less of the most up to date local housing need figure calculated using the standard method set out in national planning practice guidance”.*
- 3.14 Paragraph 82 states that in rural areas *“planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including proposals for community-led development for housing”.*

- 3.15 it goes on to state at paragraph 83 that *“to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby”*.
- 3.16 Section 9 discusses promoting sustainable transport, including the need to support opportunities, and give priority to walking, cycling and public transport, in addition to creating places that are safe, accessible, address the needs of people with disabilities, and are designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.
- 3.17 At paragraph 110 the Framework confirms that *“Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making”*.
- 3.18 Paragraph 113 sets out that *“Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport”*.
- 3.19 Paragraph 115 confirms that the main considerations in transport terms when determining specific planning applications is that proposals should provide:
“(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;
I 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 ⁴⁸; 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”.*

- 3.20 At paragraph 116, the framework also confirms 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, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios”.*
- 3.21 Section 11 is entitled ‘Making effective use of land’. Paragraph 119 confirms that *“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”.*
- 3.22 Paragraph 125 sets out that decision makers are required to give regard to benefits of development, including environmental gains, and should *“(c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes ...[and] (d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively...”.*
- 3.23 Paragraph 127 states that *“decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land.... Applications for alternative uses on the land should be supported, where the proposed use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area”.*

- 3.24 Paragraph 129 discusses the need to achieve appropriate densities. Account needs to be given to the identified need for different types of housing and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it, local market conditions, sustainability, existing character and setting, and *“the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places”*.
- 3.25 Paragraph 130 states that *“Area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places. Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site...local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards)”*.
- 3.26 Section 12 refers to achieving well-designed and beautiful places. Paragraph 131 states *“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...”*.
- 3.27 Paragraph 135 sets out that *“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);

(d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

(e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

(f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users ⁵¹; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.

- 3.28 Paragraph 136 notes that *“trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users”.*
- 3.29 Paragraph 139 confirms that *“development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes”.*

- 3.30 Further parts of the Framework that are of particular note include Section 14, which relates to meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change and section 16 which relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- (ii) The District Plan 2014 – 2031
- 3.31 The District Plan was adopted March 2018 and forms part of the Development Plan against which this application will be assessed and determined. However, the Plan is now in excess of 5 years old. Paragraph 34 of the NPPF states that “*policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every 5 years, and should then be updated as necessary. Reviews should be completed no later than 5 years from the adoption date of a plan, and should take into account changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy. Relevant strategic policies will need updating at least once every 5 years if their applicable local housing need figure has changed significantly; and they are likely to require earlier review if local housing need is expected to change significantly in the near future*”.
- 3.32 The Council’s Policies Map (refer to **Fig 3**) identifies the site as being outside of the planning boundary, with the Lindfield settlement boundary lying a short distance to the north west. In planning policy terms it is understood that the site therefore lies within the countryside.

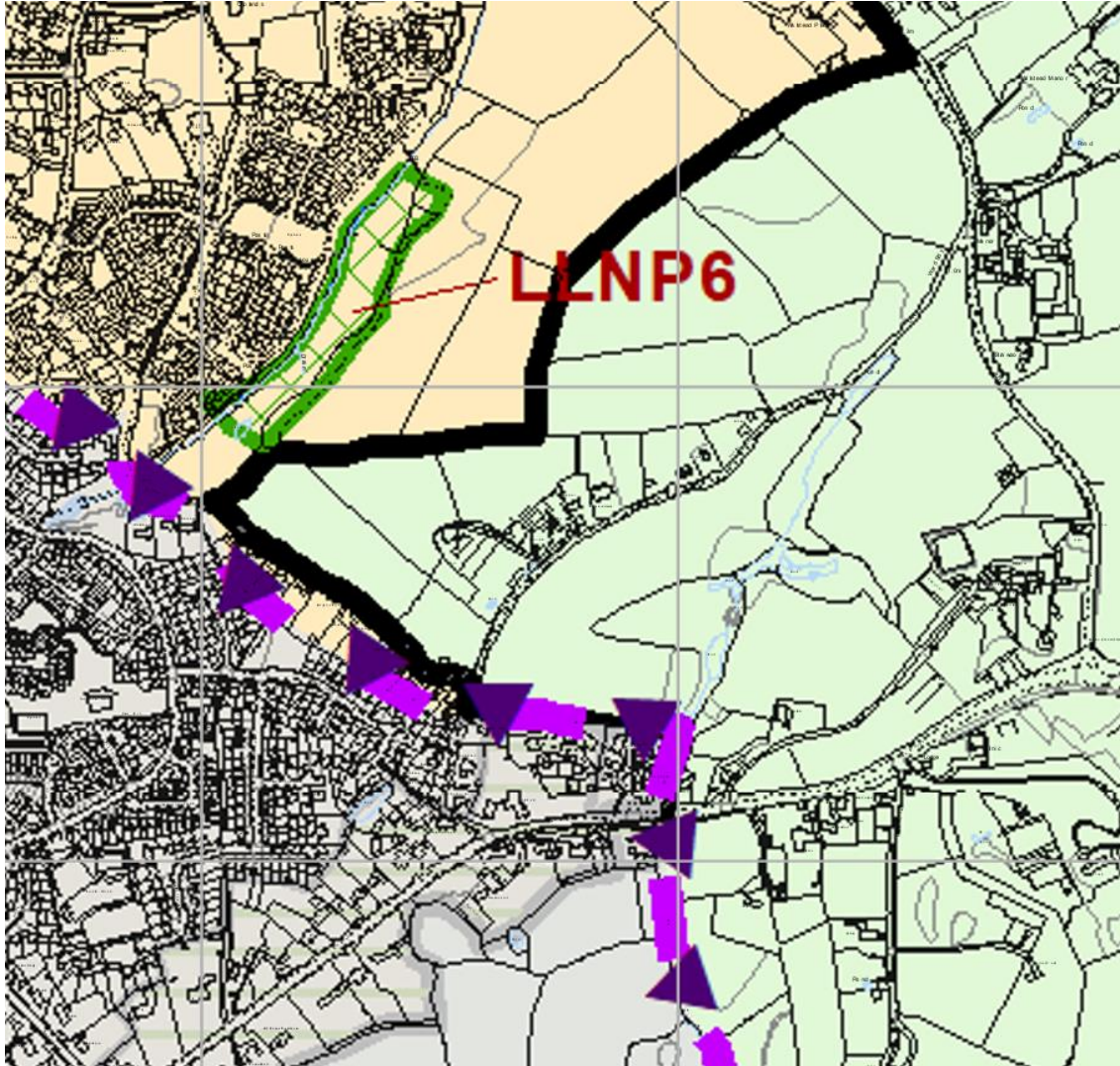


Fig 3. Extract of the Mid Sussex District Council Proposals Map (Map 17: Lindfield Rural)

- 3.33 **Policy DP4** is the Council's general housing policy. It sets out that an average of 876 dwellings are required per annum until 2023/24, after which the need increases to 1,090 per annum until 2030/31.
- 3.34 **Policy DP6** of the District Plan relates to Settlement Hierarchy and designates Lindfield as a category 2 settlement, which are described as *"larger villages 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”.

- 3.35 **Policy DP12** relates to the Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside. It states that *“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.

Built-up area boundaries are subject to review by Neighbourhood Plans or through a Site Allocations Development Plan Document, produced by the District Council...”

- 3.36 **Policy DP15** refers to New Homes in the Countryside. It states that *“provided that they would not be in conflict with Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside, new homes in the countryside will be permitted where special justification exists. Special justification is defined as:*

- *Where accommodation is essential to enable agricultural, forestry and certain other full time rural workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work; or*
- *In the case of new isolated homes in the countryside, where the design of the dwelling is of exceptional quality and it enhances its immediate setting and is sensitive to the character of the area; or*
- *Affordable housing in accordance with Policy DP32: Rural Exception Sites; or*
- *The proposed development meets the requirements of Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy.*

Permanent agricultural (includes forestry and certain other full time rural worker) dwellings will only be permitted to support existing agricultural activities on well-established agricultural units where:

- *The need cannot be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on or any other existing accommodation near the agricultural unit; and*
- *It can be proven that it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times; and*
- *It can be proven that the farming enterprise is economically viable; and*
- *It can be proven that the size of the dwelling is commensurate with the established functional requirement of the agricultural unit...”*

3.37 Policy DP26 relates to Character and Design and states that “*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 DP29);*
- *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”.*

3.38 The following policies are also considered of relevance: -

- **Policy DP21:** Transport Policy
- **Policy DP27:** Dwelling Space Standards
- **Policy DP28:** Accessibility
- **Policy DP37:** Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows Policy
- **Policy DP38:** Biodiversity
- **Policy DP39:** Sustainable Design and Construction Policy
- **Policy DP41:** Flood Risk and Drainage

(iii) Neighbourhood Plan

3.39 The Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2013 was adopted on 23rd March 2016.

(iv) Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

3.40 The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' 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 planning applications.

(v) Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 – 2039 – Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

3.41 The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 – 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF.

3.42 The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination stage. A further round of examination hearings took place earlier this year with a new Planning Inspector (Jonathan Bore). Mr Bore has now written to the District Council with his interim findings, which include increasing the overall housing target in the Plan to a *“range of 1,200 to 1,300 dpa, which will include a substantial component for the unmet housing needs of adjacent authorities, will be tested for delivery. The Council will seek, as far as possible, to identify sufficient additional housing sites to meet a requirement towards the upper end of that range.”* Further work is also

required on a number of other issues, including site identification, existing allocations and policy wording. This will all feed into a Main Modifications document, which presumably will then be subject to a further round of public consultation. At the culmination of that stage, it is anticipated that further examination hearings maybe required. The timescales for the progression of the new District Plan is still unclear, and due to ongoing unresolved objections we consider that no weight can be attributed to the new Plan at this time.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY & PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

i. Application Site

4.1 According to the Council's online planning records, Pascotts Farm has the following planning history: -

- **Planning ref: 02/02215/TEL56/:** The erection of a telecommunications installation which comprises of a 15m column with six antennas and four dishes mounted upon it together with ancillary development thereto. Refused 6th December 2002.
- **Planning ref: 02/00835/:** The erection of a telecommunications installation which comprises of a 15m column with six antennas and four dishes mounted upon it together with ancillary development. Refused 16th May 2002.
- **Planning ref: LR/008/92/AP1/:** Amended Plans: Two storey extension to rear. Alterations to window. Approved 28th March 1996.
- **Planning ref: LR/039/94/:** Proposed double garage and 'granny annexe' accommodation. Withdrawn 17th October 1994.
- **Planning ref: LR/029/75/:** Proposed waiver of agricultural occupation condition. Refused 9th December 1975.

ii. Nearby Sites

4.2 The following nearby approvals are considered relevant to this planning proposal: -
Garlands, Snowdrop Lane, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2QE

- **Planning ref: 13/01543/FUL/:** Demolition of existing dwelling and associated outbuildings and erection of new dwelling in the existing location of the house and Nursery greenhouses. Approved 23rd July 2013.
- **Planning ref: DM/16/1470/:** Demolition of existing dwelling and associated outbuildings and erection of new dwelling in the existing location of the house and nursery greenhouses. Approved 13th July 2016.
- **DM/19/1869/:** Demolition of existing dwelling and associated outbuildings and erection of new dwelling in the existing location of the house and nursery greenhouses. Approved 10th July 2019.

- **Planning ref: DM/19/2285/:** Demolition of existing dwelling and associated outbuildings and erection of new dwelling in the existing location of the house and nursery greenhouses (revised plans received showing changes to the floor plan and location of garage 19.11.2019). Approved 16th January 2020.



Fig 4. Approved Site Block Plan – as Proposed (ref: DM/19/2285)

- 4.3 When considering application **ref: DM/19/2285**, officers noted that the proposal sought a replacement dwelling, which they considered acceptable in principle in line with **Policy DP15** of the District Plan. They went on to note that *“the proposed dwelling is to be sited further west than the current house and would be substantially larger than the existing dwelling. It is noted, however, that to the west of the site is a short row of houses fronting Snowdrop Lane. This also includes two new build dwellings in between the established housing and application site. The location of the proposed development would therefore not appear wholly incongruous within*

the wider area in the proposed position". It was concluded that the "proposal is a well-designed contemporary building that will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal will not cause a significant loss of amenity to the occupiers of the neighbouring properties. There will be no adverse impact on highway safety, flood risk or sustainability".

Land Parcel At Snowdrop Lane Haywards Heath West Sussex

This site is located approximately 100m east of the site.

- **Planning ref: 14/02438/OUT/:** The erection of two detached 5-bedroom dwellings with garaging. Approved 3rd November 2014.



Fig 5. Approved Site Layout Plan (ref: 14/02438)

- 4.4 This application sought outline planning permission for the erection of two detached dwellings on land to the north side of Snowdrop Lane, Haywards Heath, to considered means of access only.

- 4.5 The Council concluded that *“in light of the Council’s lack of a five year supply of housing, para’s 47 – 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are engaged and as such the application needs to be considered in the context of paragraph 14 of the NPPF. This paragraph sets a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Therefore the development should only be refused if any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development, when assessed against the NPPF as a whole, or specific NPPF policies indicate development should be restricted...It is considered that the proposal would result in a visual improvement to the character and appearance of the area. The scheme would provide two units of accommodation at a time when the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. Whilst the occupiers of the site are likely to be reliant on the private car, the movements associated with two houses are not likely to be any more than the current use of the site. There are not felt to be any neighbour amenity issues with the proposal...In light of all the above it is not felt that any adverse impacts of the scheme would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development. As such it is felt the scheme complies with the NPPF and policies B3, CS13 and T4 in the MSLP and it can be supported”*.
- 4.6 A subsequent full planning application for the erection of two detached dwellings on this site was approved under **reference DM/15/1864**. A separate application for the erection of a house in plot A was approved under **reference DM/16/0552**. A revision to the proposed house on plot A to the east has been granted under **reference DM/16/1724**.
- 4.7 A separate application for the erection of a house on plot B was approved under **ref: DM/16/0556**. A revision to this application was approved under subsequent application **ref: DM/22/1646**.
- 4.8 Based upon the aforementioned planning approvals, the principle of the dwellings proposed by our Client’s Planning Application is considered acceptable. The

proposal will form a continuation of the ribbon development fronting Snowdrop Lane, thus not appearing as an isolated or out-of-context development. In addition, the context of the approval of application 14/02438/OUT is similar to the current circumstances – i.e. there is no 5-year housing land supply, the District Plan is out of date for decision making purposes, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged.

(iii) Pre-application Planning Enquiry

- 4.9 A pre application enquiry to consider 2 detached dwellings on the site was submitted to the Council. A written response was received from the Planning Officer on 26th November 2024 (ref: DM/24/2572).
- 4.10 At the time of the pre-application being considered, the Council noted that *“the Mid Sussex District Plan is up to date, and the Council can demonstrate a 4 year supply of deliverable housing land, as required by the NPPF. The balance to be applied in this case is therefore a non-tilted one”*. **As set out in detail below, this is no longer the case and as such, there has been a significant change in planning circumstances that would warrant a different view being taken in relation to the planning application.**
- 4.11 Notwithstanding the above, at the time, Officers concluded that *“I am of the opinion that no argument can be made that your proposal constitutes infill and seeks to therefore maintain the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District. This is an open field with no existing buildings. Your proposal would also involve the creation of a new access from Snowdrop Lane. The site is entirely surrounded (south, east and western areas) by open countryside apart from the farm buildings on Pascotts Farm which are part of the vista of a countryside setting. As such, if you were to make an application it is highly likely to be refused permission on the grounds of principle”*.

5.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 5.1 The accompanying DAS confirms that *“the proposals seek to construct a pair of two-storey detached dwellings, each with their own detached double garage, and each with its own vehicular access onto Snowdrop Lane. The proposed dwellings will have a traditional, Sussex-style appearance, reflecting their semi-rural setting. The proposed dwellings will sit in their own landscaped grounds, which have been designed to increase the biodiversity of the site”*.

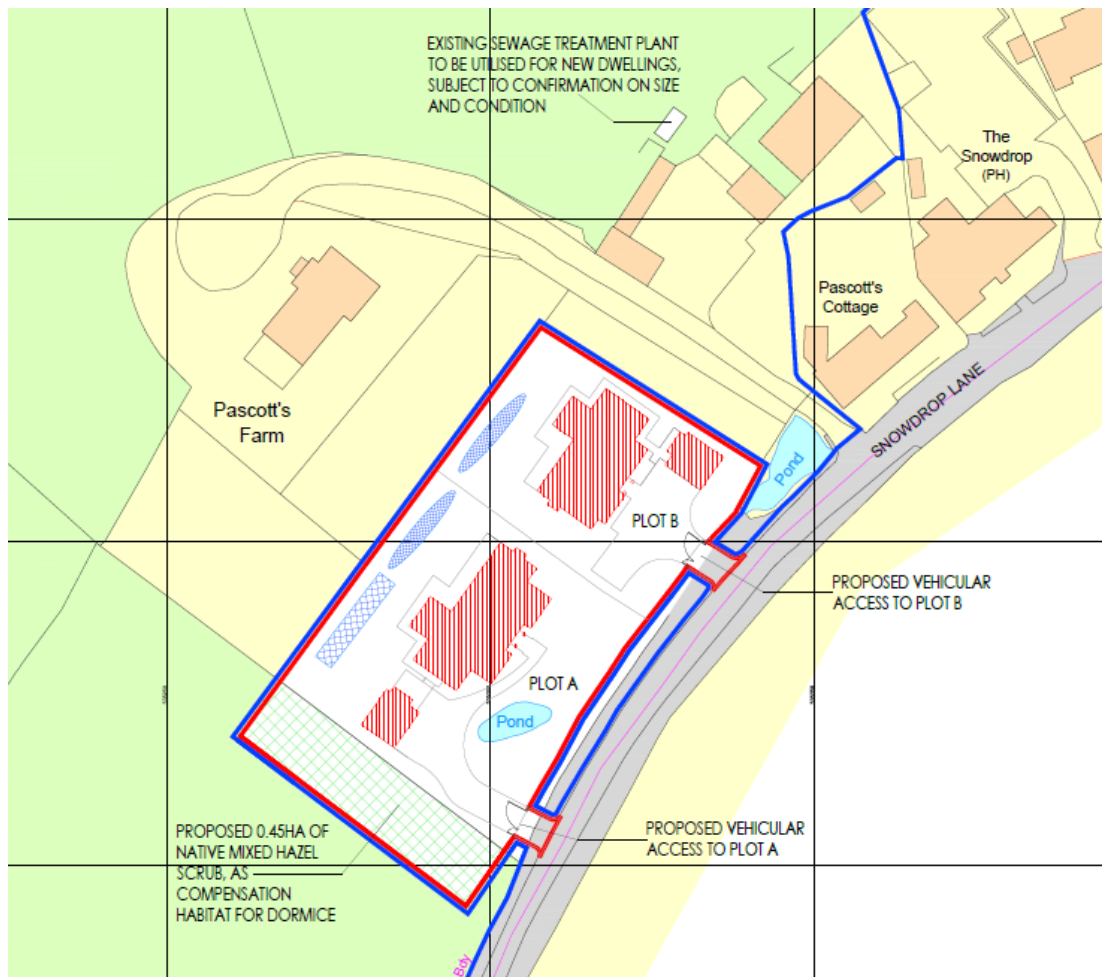


Fig 6. Extract from proposed site layout plan

5.2 As per the DAS, the proposals include the following development: -

- "a) The construction of two, Sussex-style detached dwellings, following the ribbon of development along this part of Snowdrop Lane;*
- b) The construction of detached double garages to serve each of the proposed dwellings;*
- c) The formation of vehicular crossovers to individually serve the proposed dwellings, with sensitively detailed parking and turning areas;*
- d) Associated hard and soft landscaping works, to include dormouse mitigation measures, tree works and surface water mitigation measures".*

5.3 The proposed dwellings will each comprise a two storey detached property, with a single storey element to the side and detached double garaging positioned adjacent to the dwelling. As detailed at **fig 7** and **8**, the dwellings would present a traditional, Sussex-style vernacular with materials selections to reflect this.



Fig 7. Plot A – Front and East Side Elevation – As Proposed



Fig 8. Plot B – Front and East Side Elevation – As Proposed

- 5.4 Plot A and B will have slightly different layouts from one another, but would both comprise an open plan dining room/ kitchen/ family room, separate snug, drawing room, study and w.c. utility/ boot room. There would each have 5 No. ensuite bedrooms at first floor level.
- 5.5 The properties will be designed to be fully compliant with the relevant required space standards for internal accommodation.
- 5.6 With regard to materials, the dwellings will each have projecting plinth walls of natural coursed sandstone. They will have facing stock bricks walling at ground floor level, above the plinth work, with plain clay hung tiles above. Plain clay tiles to the pitched roofs. The proposed windows and doors will be of painted timber construction (colour to be agreed). The front entrance door will be of timber construction and have a painted finish (colour to be agreed).
- 5.7 Two new vehicular access points are to be created from Snowdrop Lane into the site through the existing hedgerow. The small area of scrub within the western corner of the site is to be removed.
- 5.8 Each of the individual access points would lead to a driveway, turning area and detached double garage building. Each of the garages would comprise timber boarding, with a double pitched roof.

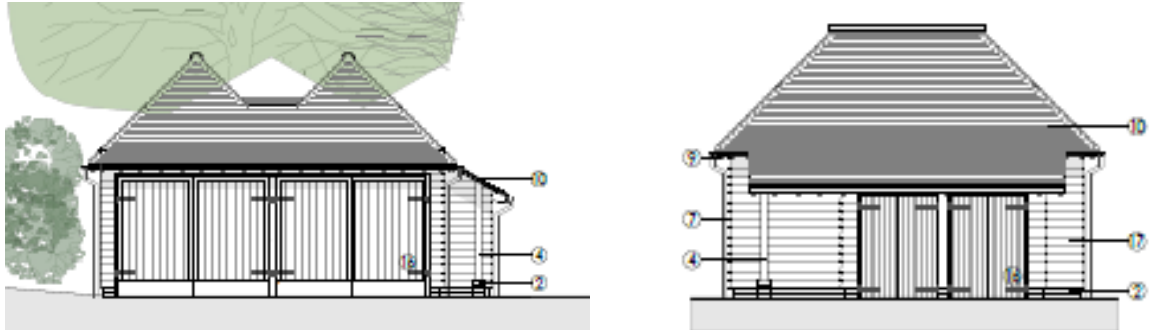


Fig 9. Plot A - Proposed garage – Front and Northwest Side Elevation



Plot 10. Plot B – Proposed garage – Front and Northwest Side Elevation

- 5.9 Bin stores are provided to the rear of the garages and will be provided with 2x 240 litre bins, one for general waste and the other for recycling. Residents will be required to drag any refuse/recycling towards Snowdrop Lane for collection by refuse personnel on waste collection days.
- 5.10 The proposed dwellings will be highly sustainable in both their construction and in their energy use, through the adoption of a ‘fabric first’ approach, combined with the provision of air source heat pumps for their space heating and hot water requirements.
- 5.11 Finally, the development proposal will include hard and soft landscaping works, including works to form the new driveway and parking areas, along with sensitive planting and new paved terracing, will greatly enhance their setting and protect the character and integrity of their rural setting.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

a. Principle of Development

- 6.1 Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that *"in dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to:*
- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to application,*
 - b) Any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and*
 - c) Any other material considerations."*
- 6.2 Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that *"if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*
- 6.3 Under section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, if a policy contained in a development plan for an area conflicts with another policy in the development plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to be adopted, approved or published.
- 6.4 Using this as the starting point, the development plan in this part of Mid Sussex consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the Lindfield & Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.5 We are aware of a recent housing scheme on land adjacent to Batchelors Farmhouse, Keymer Road, Burgess Hill that was recently determined at the Council's Planning Committee on 12th March 2026 (**planning ref: DM/25/2634**). Within their committee report, the Council referred to their current five year housing land supply position, stating that *"Footnote 8 of paragraph 11 clarifies that for applications involving the*

*provision of housing, in situations where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year land supply of deliverable housing sites (with an appropriate buffer) or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that delivery of housing has been substantially below (less than 75%) of the housing requirement for the last three years, then relevant policies for the supply of housing should be considered out-of-date...Having regard to the above, while the Council has performed excellently in respect of the Housing Delivery Test, a new standard method formula was published alongside the NPPF which gives Mid Sussex a significantly higher housing requirement than the current District Plan. As a result, and having regard for the need for an appropriate buffer, **the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites as per the requirements of paragraph 78 of the NPPF...In light of the above, this development needs to be considered in the context of paragraph 11 (c) and (d) of the NPPF, and it is considered necessary to assess whether the policies most important to the determination of the application within the Mid Sussex District Plan are up-to-date or not**".*

- 6.6 Evidently the Council are unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply at this time. This is a material change in planning circumstances since the development proposal at Pascotts Farm were considered at the pre-application stage.
- 6.7 The presumption in favour of sustainable development is therefore engaged, and paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF applies. The policies most relevant to new housing are out of date, and permission should be granted for new housing unless:
- "i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides 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 in 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”.

- 6.8 The application site lies outside the settlement boundary of Lindfield, within an area that is designated as countryside in planning policy terms.
- 6.9 **Policy DP12** (Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside) of the District Plan states that *“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...”*. With regard to Batchelors Farm, the Council considered that only moderate weight could be given to this policy, stating: *“while it does seek to restrict certain forms of development, it is not considered to be a policy directly related to the supply of housing, however it is recognised that given the Council’s is unable to demonstrate a five-year land supply and given the aim of the NPPF to boost significantly the supply of housing, the weight that can be afforded to this policy is moderate”*.
- 6.10 **Policy DP15** (New Homes in the Countryside) states in part that: *“Provided that they would not be in conflict with Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside, new homes in the countryside will be permitted where special justification exists.*
Special justification is defined as:
- *Where accommodation is essential to enable agricultural, forestry and certain other full time rural workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work; or*
 - *In the case of new isolated homes in the countryside, where the design of the dwelling is of exceptional quality and it enhances its immediate setting and is sensitive to the character of the area; or*

- *Affordable housing in accordance with Policy DP32: Rural Exception Sites; or*
- *The proposed development meets the requirements of Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy”.*

6.11 With regard to sustainability, paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that *“Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”*

6.12 The supporting Transport Statement notes that *“while some amenities and facilities would potentially need to be accessed via private car, the trips would occur over a relatively short distance. Notwithstanding this, there are a number of Public Rights of Way within an appropriate walking distance from the site that provide access to Lindfield, Scaynes [Hill] and Haywards Heath. It should also be noted that the National Planning Policy Framework defines sustainable transport modes as: “Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, ultra-low and zero emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.”*

The provision of cycle parking and electric vehicle charging spaces are therefore considered sustainable transport modes which can assist in reducing reliance upon the private car within the context of the National Planning Policy Framework. Due consideration has been given to the provision of cycle and electric vehicle charging parking spaces in Section 3 of this Highways Technical Note”.

6.13 It is clear that the proposal is appropriately located and would not result in future occupiers becoming wholly reliant on the private car to meet their daily needs. This is consistent with the Council’s conclusions on nearby development, which was

approved when the Council could not demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. The proposal would be compliant with policy **DP21** of the District Plan, which requires development to be sustainably located.

6.14 In addition, the following facilities and services are proximate to the site: -

Primary Schools

Northlands Wood Primary Academy	510 yards
St. Wilfrid's CofE Primary School	0.8 miles
St. Augustine's CofE Primary School	1 mile
Blackthorns Community Primary Academy	1 mile

Secondary Schools

Oathall Community College	1.1 mile
Warden Park Secondary Academy	2.7 miles
Ardingly College	3.2 miles

Doctors

Northlands Wood Surgery	590 yards
Lindfield Medical Centre	1.2 miles
Newtons Practice	1.4 miles

Hospitals

Princess Royal Hospital	0.8 miles
Chalkhill	1 mile
Nuffield Health	1.7 miles

6.15 We note that the issue of sustainability was considered within the Officer's Report for Land Parcel at Snowdrop Lane (**planning ref: 14/02438/OUT**). At this time, it was concluded that the proposal would satisfy the economic, social and environmental dimension of sustainable development; with regard to the social role

it notes that *“the provision of 2 new dwellings will make small but a useful contribution to the district’s housing supply and will help meet the identified need for housing including that for additional affordable homes. The NPPF seeks to promote a “strong, vibrant and healthy community by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and supports its health, social and cultural well-being.” It can be considered that the proposal satisfies the social dimension of sustainable development”.*

- 6.16 The proposed development meets with criterion 1 of **Policy DP6** in that the proposal is for fewer than 10 dwellings; although we accept that the proposal does not meet with criterion 2 as the site is not contiguous with the built up area boundary of Lindfield or Haywards Heath. With regards to criterion 3, the site is considered to be sustainable, and therefore the conflict with criterion 2 is considered to only be a minor breach of policy. We are aware that the Council has taken a similar approach with comparable applications elsewhere in the District.
- 6.17 It is our opinion that when considering the principle of development in countryside areas, it is important to consider the intention behind the aforementioned policies. The supporting text for policy **DP12** sets this out as follows: *“The primary objective of the District Plan with respect to the countryside is to secure its protection by minimising the amount of land taken for development and preventing development that does not need to be there. At the same time, it seeks to enhance the countryside, support the rural economy by accommodating well-designed, appropriate new forms of development and changes in land use where a countryside location is required and where it does not adversely affect the rural environment. It is therefore necessary that all development in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built up area boundaries, must seek to maintain or enhance the intrinsic beauty and tranquillity of the countryside”.*

- 6.18 Thus, the principal aim of the policy is to maintain or enhance the quality of the rural character of the area. In this case, the proposed development would be sited in front of an existing property, adjacent to Snowdrop Lane. The surrounding area is characterised by detached properties of varied scale form and design, positioned in a ribbon development along Snowdrop Lane. The development proposal would continue this ribbon development along Snowdrop Lane, thus not appearing as an isolated or out-of-context development. Further, the plots would be wholly proportionate to the size of the dwelling, with an appropriate amount of amenity space provided. As such they will not appear incongruous or out of keeping. It is not considered that the proposed development would have a tangible impact on the appearance of the open countryside, adjoining residential properties to the northwest and northeast sides. Consequently, it is considered that the proposal would not conflict with the principal aim of **policy DP12**.
- 6.19 In addition, when considering the settlement hierarchy as required by **policy DP6**, Lindfield is defined as a category 2 settlement in the District Plan. As such it is considered a suitable location for new development.
- 6.20 It is our opinion that given the sites position, adjoining existing residential development, as well as close to Category 2 settlements, the principle of development is acceptable in this location. Further, as set out in detail above, a planning precedent for this form of development within a countryside location has been clearly established within the surrounding area (refer to planning history section above).
- 6.21 Further, the Application proposals are shown below to be compliant with the 3 objectives of paragraph 8 of the Framework, and given this context it must also be found that the proposals comply with the District Council's development strategy as set out in the Mid Sussex District Plan. Justice Sullivan in dealing with the case of Regina v Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council, ex parte Tew [2000] confirmed

that the Development Plan should be taken as a whole, and the fact that a proposal is in breach of one or more policies of the Development Plan, should not mean that the development does not comply with the Plan when considered in its entirety. Therefore we contend that the minor breach of **DP6** (i.e. the site is not contiguous with the settlement boundary) is insufficient to warrant refusal of the application, given that in all other respects the development proposals are acceptable and do not breach any other up-to-date development plan policy. Further, within their committee report for ref: **DM/25/2634**, the Council stated that *“policies DP4 (Housing) and DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy) are relevant to this application. These policies are considered to be policies relating to the supply of housing and as such can be considered to be out-of-date, having regard to the NPPF tests. As such, these policies can be given limited weight in the determination of the application”*. It would follow that the same would therefore apply to this application.

- 6.22 At paragraph 11(d)(ii), following the statement that if adverse impacts of applying the presumption are *“significantly and demonstrably”* outweighed by the benefits of development when taken against the NPPF “as a whole”, there is now the phrase *“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”*. Therefore the revised NPPF broadens the circumstances under which the ‘tilted balance’ applies for the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development. It is pertinent to note that the proposed development is located in a sustainable location, it does make effective use of land, and it is also well-designed – as required by the NPPF.
- 6.23 With regard to the ‘Tilted Balance’ - limb 2 *“Would adverse impacts of approval SIGNIFICANTLY and DEMONSTRABLY outweigh the benefits?”*, in this case the answer must be ‘no’, as there is no demonstrable harm arising from development, and the benefits associated with the scheme are multiple, which include economic, high quality design, and making a valuable contribution to the Council’s housing

requirements (which we consider is a significant material consideration that weighs heavily in favour of the proposed sustainable development). The application proposals therefore comprise sustainable development, and the principle of 2 No. new houses in this location should be accepted.

b. Design and Character

- 6.24 The proposed development is located within the countryside, where the principle aim of **Policy DP12** of the District Plan states: *'The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty.'*
- 6.25 **Policy DP26** of the District Plan seeks a high standard of design in all new developments via the protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment. This is consistent with the aims of the NPPF. Principle **DG11** of the Mid Sussex Design Guide states in part: *"new development should generally reflect the scale of adjacent areas and the settlement context within which it is located to deliver a coherent and consistent urban fabric."* Principle **DG38** is also considered to be relevant and states: *"Applicants should establish an architectural approach and identity in the design of building that is borne from the place. The facade and elevational treatment, roofscape fenestration and materials used in existing buildings within the locality should be a starting point for the consideration of architectural design of new buildings. However, this should not result in pastiche replicas of traditional buildings. Instead a re-interpretation of key aspects of their form should be demonstrated."*
- 6.26 As detailed above, this proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of 2 No. detached dwelling houses. With regard to scale, the DAS confirms that *"the proposals have been developed to respect the character of the area, by following the prevailing ribbon pattern of development, to make the best possible use of land available...The proposed dwellings are considered to be appropriate to the site in terms of their scale, form and appearance. The Site Block Plan illustrates how the width and depth*

of the plots is very much in keeping with the adjacent properties. The proposals do not comprise overdevelopment in relation to the size of their plots and the surrounding development, with the dwellings giving due regard to their spacing...The dwellings have been positioned on the site to take into consideration its constraints, including the presence of the tree belt to the front of the site, the existing pond, and its topography. Through close liaison with the appointed project consultants, a development scheme has been prepared that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the site, and how it relates to the existing area – including features of local distinctiveness...The proposed dwellings will be mostly two-storey, with single-storey element to the side, with detached garaging positioned adjacent to the dwelling. The proposed dwellings present a traditional, Sussex-style vernacular with material selections to reflect this. The design and detailing of the roof form in particular, ensures the scale and massing of the dwellings remains modest in the context of its neighbours”.

- 6.27 In our opinion, the above is an appropriate design response to its rural, verdant-setting. The proposed dwellings would be sensitive in their scale, adopting a two storey design that reflects the character of the existing built form. The proposed dwellings would appear in keeping with neighbouring properties. Finally, the proposed hard and soft landscaping works, including works to the existing driveway and parking area, along with sensitive planting and new paved terracing, will greatly enhance its setting and protect the character and integrity of its setting.
- 6.28 The development will be well related to existing development, and would not represent an isolated form of development in the countryside. In landscape character terms the proposals will be in keeping and would not result in a jarring or alien feature within the locality; quite the contrary, the proposal represents an efficient use of a currently vacant area of land, adjoining existing residential development within a sustainable location that is not subject to any special landscape character constraints. In this context it must be agreed that the development proposals are

entirely compliant with development plan policies and the NPPF, which seek to focus new housing to locations exactly like this.

- 6.29 Great care and consideration has been paid to creating two high quality dwellings on the site. The accompanying DAS confirms that in terms of design, *“the proposed dwellings will be elevated in a combination of sandstone, brick and tile. The dwellings will each have projecting plinth walls of natural coursed sandstone, reflecting the fact that the site sits upon a sandstone ridge. Above the plinth, facing stock brick forms their ground floor walls, with their first floor walls then receiving plain clay hung tiles. These materials are typical of the local Sussex vernacular, and are prevalent on the adjacent properties...The pitched roofs will receive plain clay tiles to compliment the hung tiles and facing brick. The roofs have been designed to be characterful, with the use of ‘eyebrow’ features over the first floor windows. These are a feature to be found on a number of dwellings within Lindfield, and it is appropriate to recreate these in this instance. The proposed roof windows to Plot B will be of the conservation type in thermally-broken metal frames, with a powder-coated finish in black. The roof windows will be detailed so as to sit flush with the proposed plain clay tiled roof finish”*.
- 6.30 The site is not located within any ‘valued landscape’ for the purposes of Paragraph 187 of the revised NPPF. The Framework goes on to confirm that the level of protection afforded to the landscape should be commensurate with its recognised value; *“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan...”*.
- 6.31 In summary, we are of the opinion that the proposed development **would not** represent an inappropriate incursion into the countryside. The proposal would be generally compliant with **Policy DP6** of the District Plan that relates to Settlement

Hierarchy in that it is for fewer than 10 dwellings (1), and although not directly contiguous with the existing built up area of Lindfield (2) the site is sustainable (3). We are of the view that the development proposals would make an efficient use of a plot, which would otherwise be under-used, within an existing street scene of continuous ribbon development. The proposed dwellings would be of a design that would sympathetically relate to the surrounding area. Indeed, it is our view that this development of 2 No. dwellings, which will use a sensitive pallet of materials, would enhance the character of this location by providing 2 No. high quality designed new dwellings, which will appear in keeping with the established pattern and visual quality of housing on Snowdrop Lane.

c. Residential Amenity

- 6.32 Great Care and consideration has been paid to the siting and orientation of the proposed dwellings. It is our view that the proposed dwellings would be appropriately positioned an acceptable distance away from all neighbouring properties to ensure that no demonstrable harm would occur by way of overlooking effect, loss of privacy or loss of light.
- 6.33 As noted in the DAS, *“the proposed dwellings are a significant distance from their neighbours, with the rear of Plot B being 39.6m from the rear of Pascotts Farm at its closest point...The presence of established boundary treatments, comprising mature hedging, trees, and timber fencing, plus the planting of new native hedging, ensures that privacy is maintained not only between the proposed dwellings and their neighbours, but between the two proposed dwellings themselves”*.
- 6.34 We would conclude that the proposal would represent an acceptable form of development, which would be compliant with **Policy DP26** of the District Plan, and **principles DG45 – DG48** of the Mid Sussex Design Guide.

d. Highways/ Access

- 6.35 It is noted that the NPPF advises 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.
- 6.36 The development proposal is accompanied by a Highways Technical Note and Appendices, which have been prepared by Motion.
- 6.37 The development proposal seeks permission for the erection of 2 No. detached dwellings. Access to the site will be achieved via 2 No. access points from Snowdrop Lane to the south, with each property having their own individual access point. Car and cycle parking are to be provided in accordance with local policy standards. The report confirms that *“the development proposals comprise of two 5-bedroom residential dwellings and lies within a PBZ4 area. As such, each residential dwelling should be provided with 2.2 car parking spaces. The swept path analysis drawings included in Appendix B demonstrate that there is sufficient space for two cars to park within the curtilage of each dwelling. The development proposals will also provide a two-car garage for each dwelling. As such, it is demonstrated that car parking is provided in accordance with local policy standards and deemed suitable to sever the quantum of development...West Sussex County Council’s ‘Guidance on Parking at New Developments’ (2020) also provides guidance on minimum cycle parking provision, which is based on the number of habitable rooms within a dwelling, with 3+ bedrooms required to provide a minimum of two cycle parking spaces. In accordance with the policy standards, the development proposals will provide two cycle parking spaces per dwelling (totalling to four cycle parking spaces)”*.
- 6.38 Bin stores will be provided to the rear of the garages and are provided with 2 x 240 Litre bins, one for general waste and the other for recycling. Residents will be

required to drag any refuse/ recycling towards Snowdrop Lane for collection by refuse personnel on waste collection days.

- 6.39 The report notes that *“the expected trip generation associated with the development proposals have been assessed with reference to the industry standard TRICS database. The analysis demonstrates the proposed development is expected to result in a marginal increase in vehicular movements during both the morning and evening peak hours, as well as over an average weekday...On that basis, it is concluded that the proposed development will not result in a material effect on the operation of the highway network local to the site and no further assessment of trips associated with the proposed development is considered necessary”*.
- 6.40 The report concludes that *“this Highways Technical Note has demonstrated that the development proposals benefit from suitable and appropriate access arrangements having regard to relevant design guidance. Car and cycle parking have also been provided in accordance with local policy standards. In addition, the development proposals will result in a negligible increase in vehicular movements during both the morning and evening peak hours, as well as over an average weekday...On the basis of the above, it is concluded that there is no reason as to why the development proposals should be resisted from a highways or transportation perspective”*.
- 6.41 The proposal would be acceptable from a highway perspective. Each of the dwellings would be provided with an individual access and the report has sufficiently demonstrated that *“the required visibility splays can be achieved from the proposed access points and, as such, safe and suitable access to the site can be accommodated”*. Further, *“the suitability of the access arrangements, to demonstrate that a large car can enter and exit the site in forward gear, has been tested through swept path analysis”*. Ample parking provision will be provided for the proposed residential units. It is our opinion that there would be no conflict with **MSDP Policy DP21** or guidance contained within the NPPF.

6.42 The DAS reiterates this point, noting that *“the development proposals provide sufficient off-road parking for at least 4No. cars to each Plot, which exceeds the WSCC recommended guidance for vehicular parking levels. The Highways Technical Note includes a swept path analysis, to demonstrate that this parking is achievable while maintaining adequate space for manoeuvring. This swept path analysis further demonstrates that safe entry and exit in a forward gear can be achieved. The proposals also provide secure, covered storage for bicycles in a store adjacent to the Garage. An electric car charging point will also be provided”.*

e. Flood Risk and Drainage

6.43 The application site comprises a paddock, positioned to the front of the existing dwelling, Pascotts Farm, whose drainage is served by an existing sewage treatment plant. This application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, which has been prepared by EAS Ltd.

6.44 The report draws the following conclusions: -

“The site lies within Flood Zone 1, at very low risk of flooding from surface water, and groundwater and reservoir flooding at the site is considered unlikely. No other flood risks likely to affect the site have been identified.

The underlying geology, Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand exhibits very poor permeability and results of percolation testing support this. As such, it is considered that the site is unsuitable for drainage to soakaway (the preferred method of dealing with surface water in the sustainable drainage - SuDS - hierarchy). The alternative SuDS preferred method of draining surface water is drainage to attenuation storage with outflow limited to 1 in 1-year greenfield flow rate (1.6 l/s) discharged to an existing watercourse or drainage ditch. The attenuation storage may be provided in the form of a swale behind the proposed dwelling on plot A. This would then discharge into the ditch in the northwest corner of the site. This ditch has been shown to flow northward down the hill and eventually into a tributary of the River Ouse. A suitable sized swale would be 16.3 m x 3 m x 0.5 m deep with a vortex valve flow control

device discharging at a maximum of 1.6 l/s to the aforementioned drainage ditch. See suggested drainage design in Figure 4. A rain garden is to be constructed at the front of the site as a further SuDS measure.

Rainwater harvesting from downpipes to collect water for irrigation and other non-potable uses would further improve the sustainability of the site. Additional sustainable drainage (SuDS) measures would be permeable paving for the external parking, driveway and access areas, and rainwater butts on the drainpipe downpipes.

An extreme event overtopping the system would likely follow the existing flow pattern, draining across the surface of the ground to the drainage ditch located to the north of the site. There should be no significant flood risk to the proposed dwellings or occupants and safe access should be available onto Snowdrop Lane under all flood scenarios.

The proposed development will require foul sewerage. The site presently has a package sewage treatment plant located in the northeast field, discharging treated effluent into a nearby watercourse. This is currently used by the existing farmhouse building but, subject to investigation of the current capacity and effluent disposal arrangement, could also be used by the proposed new development. If the present plant is too small for the existing and proposed residences, an upgraded plant will be installed.

The surface water flow control device and the sewage treatment plant will require regular maintenance, and all chambers will require the occasional removal of silt and debris. The swale should not become overgrown or otherwise lose volume”.

- 6.45 The accompanying DAS concludes that “a Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment has been undertaken by EAS Ltd, who have recommended that the new dwellings be connected to the existing sewage treatment plant. Their report acknowledges that the existing tank will need to be checked, and potentially renewed in order for this connection to occur, but overall they deem this to be the most appropriate, compliant solution...The proposed dwellings will utilise sustainable methods for their surface

water discharge, as set out in the aforementioned report. The report explains the design philosophy is for surface water to be drained into an attenuation storage swale, with a controlled overflow through a vortex valve to the existing drainage ditch located to the north west corner of the site. This ditch then flows north, down the hill, until it meets an eastern flowing tributary of the River Ouse. Rainwater gardens have also been provided, which additionally assist with achieving Biodiversity Net Gain”.

- 6.46 Our clients are happy to comply with the recommended drainage measures. The proposal would be compliant with guidance contained within the NPPF and **Policy DP41** of the District Plan.

f. Trees

- 6.47 **Policy DP37** of the MSDP states: *“Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted”.*
- 6.48 The Planning Application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Report, which has been prepared by GHA Trees Arboricultural Consultancy. The report confirms that *“of the fifteen individual trees and groups of trees surveyed, four have been assessed as BS 5837 category A, five have been assessed as BS category B, with the remaining trees being assessed as BS 5837 category C”.*
- 6.49 The report confirms that as part of the new development, G11 and G12 are proposed for removal. It states that *“these specimens could not be effectively retained as they are located within the outline of the new structures”.* In addition, *“there is a slight overhang of the new access points from the crowns of T3 and G13. These trees will therefore be pruned to improve access to the site and 7 facilitate improved access*

for site works...The proposed tree work is assessed to be minor and will not adversely impact the health or amenity value of these trees”.

- 6.50 The report concludes that a “small number of trees will be lost to facilitate the proposed scheme. However, new trees can be planted following approval from the Local Planning Authority to ensure a sustainable tree stock for the future. Subject to precautionary measures as detailed above, the proposal will not be injurious to trees to be retained”.
- 6.51 The development proposal is acceptable from an arboricultural perspective and would be in compliance with MSDC **Policy DP37**.

g. Ecology

- 6.52 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, which has been prepared by EAS Ltd. The Ecological Impact Assessment provided the following conclusions in relation to the development: -

“The site (as existing) comprises a small paddock used for grazing (sheep). The grassland within the site is heavily grazed and poached, limiting its ecological value, however, there are other features within and adjacent to the site which are considered of ecological value and which may support notable and protected species. It is proposed to develop the site to include two detached residential dwellings with associated gardens, parking and access from Snowdrop Lane.

The development will include the removal of two sections of hedging and adjacent trees to permit the development of two new access points, and will include the removal of a small area of bramble scrub from the southwest corner of the site. There are two ponds, one within and one immediately adjacent to the site. Both ponds are to be retained but will be impacted by the proposed development for which protection measures will be required.

Further surveying has been recommended in relation to hazel / common dormice which may use the hedgerow and/or scrub habitat, and further surveying or a

district level licence is recommended in relation to great crested newts. Further surveying / checks will be required for nesting birds, if site clearance works are scheduled during the nesting season for overriding reasons.

The site is considered to have some, but limited, potential for use by reptiles for which protection measures are recommended, but the proposed development is considered unlikely to result in the loss of any significant reptile habitat. Protection and compensation measures have also been recommended in relation to hedgehogs. Compensation measures have been recommended in relation to the removal of hedgerow and scrub habitat, and the potential impacts on invertebrates, and enhancement measures have been recommended in relation to the existing pond Habitat”.

- 6.53 Suggested enhancement measures include enhancement of the existing pond for the benefit of local wildlife, the introduction of roosting and nesting features for both birds and bats and sustainability features which reduce pollution, reduce energy consumption, and decrease waste and water usage.
- 6.54 As advised, the application is also accompanied by a Dormice Survey, which has been prepared by GPM Ecology. The report concluded that although *“they were not present at the time of the survey, the site is considered likely to support dormice and it is estimated that the site has a potential dormice density of 0.224 dormice (0.16 in scrub + 0.064 in the hedge) on site. Due to the small area of habitat present on site and very low population density it is considered that a detailed Non-license Method Statement could be considered for this project and would need to be agreed in detail by the LPA”.*
- 6.55 The following outline recommendations are suggested to be included within the Non-Licensed Method Statement:
- “1. A tool-box talk should be provided to contractors prior to site clearance, providing descriptions of species that could be present, such as dormice, in the*

unlikely event that they disperse across the site and are located during clearance works.

2. A watching brief will need to be conducted during removal of the two hedge sections and this must take place outside of the hibernation period, from November to March, to avoid harming hibernating dormice. Due to the likelihood of breeding birds being present within this hedge the optimal time for the hedge sections to be removed would be during the September to October window, when birds are unlikely to be breeding and dormice unlikely to be hibernating.

3. Newly created habitat will need to be planted-up to compensate for the loss of 80m of hedgerow and 0.02ha of scrub foraging and breeding habitat for dormice. This can be achieved by planting-up a block of mixed hazel scrub adjacent to the development, with an area of 0.045ha (10m x 45m, as shown on Figure 3), will compensate for the loss of the habitat on site, though Wells et al 20251 (p33) would not expect dormice to colonise such habitat for up to 7 years.

4. In addition to this planting, compensation planting will also be required to improve the existing hedgerow habitat. All planting will need to be designed and agreed with a Landscape Plan for the site”.

- 6.56 Finally, if the site remains undeveloped, a protected species survey should be reassessed at least every three years.
- 6.57 In a direct response to the above report, the proposals include a newly created habitat to the southwest of the site, which would be fully enclosed by post and rail timber fencing to protect it against any encroachment.
- 6.58 Our client is committed to carrying out all other suggested mitigation measures and would be happy for these to be ensured via a condition in accordance with guidance contained within the NPPF and **Policy DP38** of the District Plan.

h. Dwelling Space Standards

- 6.59 It should be noted that the proposed dwellings have been designed internally to meet the requirements laid out in the Governments 'Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard' document.
- 6.60 The proposal would comprise 2 No. two storey, 5-bedroom dwelling houses (all double rooms). Internally the house has been designed to comfortably meet the requirements laid out in the Governments 'Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard' document. The requirement for a 5 bed; 8 person; 2 storey dwelling is 128m² and the proposed dwellings would comfortably exceed these minimum requirements, with the proposed internal floor area being 401.06 sq.m for Plot A, and 338.57 sq.m for Plot B.
- 6.61 We can confirm that all room sizes will also be compatible or in excess of the previous Mid Sussex District Council supplementary guidelines regarding space standards. Storage space would be provided within the dwellings and their garages, in excess of the specified guidelines. They are also designed to meet Secured by Design standards.

i. Sustainable Construction

- 6.62 We would refer Officers to section 9 of the accompanying DAS and Sustainability Statement, which sets out how the proposals have been developed to ensure that the proposed dwellings will achieve a very high level of sustainability, primarily through low energy use. The DAS and Sustainability Statement confirms that *"the proposed dwellings will include low carbon and renewable energy sources to minimise the total carbon emissions of the dwellings"*. The proposals are therefore in accordance with District Plan Policy DP39: 'Sustainable Design and Construction'.

j. Landscaping

- 6.63 With regard to Landscaping, the site is rural in character with a ribbon of trees along its road frontage. The DAS confirms that *“the proposed dwellings will sit within well-proportioned front and rear gardens, with new native hedge planting to their boundaries as indicated on the site plan drawing. The hedging ensures mutual privacy, while also providing further compensatory planting for dormice. The landscaping is key to ensuring the dwellings integrate with their surroundings...The proposed vehicular accesses are sensitively positioned to minimise their impact upon the retained trees. Where noted, the driveways and parking areas will receive a permeable surfacing treatment over a ‘no dig’ sub base, as detailed in the accompanying tree survey report. The surface treatment will be of a granular type to reflect the rural character of the site...It is proposed to lay paving to the rear of the property to provide areas for outdoor seating. The extent of this paving is modest, being finished in a sandstone-type material... to the south west of the site it is proposed to plant a block of mixed hazel scrub. This will provide compensatory planting for Dormice, as well as offering biodiversity enhancements”*.
- 6.64 The design and landscape strategy seeks to reflect the distinctive character of the immediate area, whilst being sensitive to the countryside. The proposed development will therefore maintain the quality of the rural and landscape character of the locality, in accordance with policies DP12 and DP26 of the District Plan.

k. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 6.65 Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain this application is deemed to have been granted subject to the biodiversity net gain condition for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.

- 6.66 The proposed development is subject to the mandatory 10% BNG. On behalf of the Applicant, EAS Limited, have provided a number of supporting documents in relation to BNG, including a completed statutory metric. Together these provide sufficient information details to show compliance with the requirements to achieve BNG.
- 6.67 EAS's report confirms that *"The redevelopment of the site, as proposed, will result in a net loss of 2.16 habitat units (-59.33% net loss), and a gain of 0.18 hedgerow units (99.43 % net gain)...*
In this case, 2.53 habitat units will need to be delivered from an offsite source to include 1.47 medium distinctiveness tree / woodland units, and 0.98 units of low distinctiveness grassland habitat (or higher) in order to satisfy the trading rules...
While the site will offer net gain for hedgerow units, 0.18 high distinctiveness hedgerow units will still need to be secured from an offsite source to satisfy the trading rules...
The ecological functionality of the site, as proposed, has been assessed alongside a review of the site's strategic importance. While not considered to be strategically important, the proposed scheme looks to retain key habitats and the majority of linear features, and compensation is offered for the loss of bramble scrub. New hedging is to be provided which will improve ecological connectivity, foraging and nesting potential. These measures have been applied in line with the mitigation hierarchy."
- 6.68 It is understood that BNG matters can be addressed by a standard pre-commencement planning condition.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The development seeks full planning permission for the provision of 2 No. detached dwellings with separate access and garaging. The proposal would be positioned in front of Pascotts Farm, to the north west of Snowdrop Lane,
- 7.2 In terms of site designations and constraints, and for the purposes of planning, the application site is located outside of the defined built up area boundary for Lindfield, within a Countryside Area of Development Restraint (CADR).
- 7.3 A clear planning precedent for this form of residential development has been set along Snowdrops Lane, as referred to within the planning history section of this report.
- 7.4 This proposal follows a pre-application enquiry with the Council. At the time, the Council were able to demonstrate the required housing land supply. However, this situation has now materially changed, and the Council are now unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. The Council's housing land supply position has been recently confirmed in a Planning Committee report for a site at Batchelor's Farm (ref: DM/25/2634).
- 7.5 The presumption in favour of sustainable development is therefore engaged, and paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF applies. We contend that there are no adverse impacts arising from the development, but even if there are, these would be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the benefits of providing 2 No. new dwellings in a sustainable location, that are well designed and make effective use of land. It therefore follows that planning permission should be granted without delay.
- 7.6 We are of the opinion that the proposed development **would not** represent an inappropriate incursion into the countryside. We are of the view that the development proposals would make an efficient use of a plot, which would otherwise be under-used, within a semi-rural locale on the edge of the existing settlement of Lindfield. The proposed dwellings would be of a high-quality design that would

sympathetically relate to the surrounding area. Indeed, it is our view that this high-quality development of 2 No. dwellings, which will use a sensitive pallet of materials would in fact enhance the character of this semi-rural locale and represent a visual improvement. It is not considered that the proposed development would significantly harm the amenities of any neighbouring property in terms of overlooking or being overbearing, due to distance, vegetation screening, as well as property orientation. Nor would the proposal cause demonstrable harm through the creation of noise and disturbance. The development will serve to both preserve and enhance the character of the countryside. The proposal would be in accordance with the development plan, when taken as whole.

- 7.7 **Policy DP6** identifies Lindfield as a category 2 settlement, the second largest settlement category in Mid Sussex after the main towns of Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath.
- 7.8 The proposal meets with criterion 1 of **Policy DP6** in that the proposal is for fewer than 10 dwellings; although we accept that the proposal does not meet with criterion 2 as the site is not contiguous with the built up area boundary of Lindfield or Haywards Heath. With regards to criterion 3, the site is considered to be sustainable. Importantly, the proposal complies in full with the overarching aim of **Policy DP12** which seeks to *“maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District”*.
- 7.9 It is our opinion that the proposal is appropriately located and would not result in future occupiers becoming heavily reliant on the private car to meet their daily needs. The proposal would be compliant with **policy DP21** of the District Plan and the NPPF. The accompanying Transport Statement reiterates this view, noting that *“while some amenities and facilities would potentially need to be accessed via private car, the trips would occur over a relatively short distance. Notwithstanding this, there are a number of Public Rights of Way within an appropriate walking distance from the site that provide access to Lindfield, Scaynes and Haywards Heath. It should*

also be noted that the National Planning Policy Framework defines sustainable transport modes as: “Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, ultra-low and zero emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.”

The provision of cycle parking and electric vehicle charging spaces are therefore considered sustainable transport modes which can assist in reducing reliance upon the private car within the context of the National Planning Policy Framework. Due consideration has been given to the provision of cycle and electric vehicle charging parking spaces in Section 3 of this Highways Technical Note”.

- 7.10 The development proposal is supported by a variety of technical documents. Our client would be happy for any mitigations measures to be secured via suitably worded planning conditions, if it is considered reasonable to do so.
- 7.11 The development proposal would be fully compliant with guidance contained within the NPPF and local level policies within the District Plan.

May 2026