



STEPHEN LANGER ARCHITECTS



Design, Access and Heritage Statement

Internal Alterations & Extension

Bramblehill Farmhouse, 57&58 Selsfield Road, Turners Hill,
West Sussex RH10 4PS.



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Application

This purpose of the works proposed in this application is to return the farmhouse to use as a single dwelling. Various internal alterations are proposed as well as the construction of a single storey Kitchen to one end of the building.

The conversion back to a single dwelling will involve the removal of redundant Kitchens and a ground floor Bathroom. It is not proposed to 'knock through' the walls dividing the cottages except for the removal of the wall between the two front doors. For this reasons it will be necessary to install new Bathrooms in the former north cottage.

The new extension will allow the two historically significant ground floor rooms to be left intact Whilst providing a modern Kitchen/Dining Room with good natural light.

1.2 Application Details

Site Address: Bramblehill Farmhouse, 57 Selsfield Road, Turners Hill RH10 4PS

Listed Status: Grade II

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SLA Project Reference: 24005

Local Authority: Mid Sussex District Council



1.3 Contents of this Application

- Design, Access & Heritage Statement
- Archaeological Interpretive Report & Heritage Statement
- Drawings:

24005 PL-01 Site & Location Plans

24005 PL-06 Existing Ground & First Floor Plans

24005 PL-07 Existing Second Floor & Roof Plans

24005 PL-08 Existing N & E Elevations

24005 PL-09 Existing S & W Elevations

24005 PL-12 Proposed Ground & First Floor Plans

24005 PL-13 Proposed Second Floor & Roof Plans

24005 PL-14 Proposed N & E Elevations

24005 PL-15 Proposed S & W Elevations

24005 PL-16 Existing & Proposed Site Section

2.0 Project Details

2.1 Site & Context



Fig.1 Location of site showing main road (Google Maps)

Bramblehill Farmhouse lies at the end of a long trackway that opens onto Selfield Road to the east. The site is surrounded by fields with a grove of trees immediately to its rear.

To the east of the site are dwellings fronting Selsfield Road.

The area is rural, lying to the south of the built-up area of Turners Hill. The site is within the countryside and in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



Fig. 2: Survey drawings of the existing house

2.2 Listing Description

WEST HOATHLY SELSFIELD ROAD 1. 5405 Bramblehill Farmhouse TQ 33 SW 6/521 II

2. C17 or earlier timber-framed building, completely refaced externally in the C19 with red brick on ground floor and tile-hanging above, with brick modillions between. Half-hipped tiled roof. Small gable. Casement windows. Red brick chimney breast. Two storeys. Four windows.

Listing NGR: TQ3429434523



Fig.3: Listing Map (Historic England)

2.3 Planning History

No planning history is recorded on the Mid Sussex Council website.

No significant work seems to have been done to the building since the late C19/early C20 remodelling.



3.0 The Proposals

3.1 General Note

The proposals outlined below are described on the plans and elevations submitted with this application. The Interpretative Report and Heritage Statement sets out the justification for each item and assesses the impact on the building as set out in the NPPF.

3.2 Proposed Work Items

Ground Floor

1. Kitchen Extension

Reason for Proposal:

The original cottages consisted of a sitting room in the front and a small kitchen and scullery to the rear. There were no inside WCs.

None of the existing rooms are suitable for a modern kitchen. The rear areas are only 2.3 metres wide. The main rooms, with their beamed ceilings and open fireplaces would be spoiled by the installation of a modern Kitchen. The construction of a new Kitchen in an extension would enable the original layout of rooms to be read and historic features retained.

Design Criteria:

The proposed Kitchen is single storey and freestanding apart from a narrow glazed link. The impact of the link on the existing fabric is minimal as it cuts through a modern brick wall.

The extension is designed to be visually subservient to the main house. While there is extensive glazing to the west, the use of bricks and a traditional clay tiled roof link it visually to the original house.



Fig.4: East Elevation showing proposed extension

The extension is also set below the main house with steps down to the new Kitchen. In this way we have been able to keep the new ridge in line with the eaves of the main house.



2. Alterations to Form Access to New Extension

Reason for Proposal:

To form access from the main house to the new passage into the extension. The existing Utility Room is to be stripped out and a corridor formed incorporating steps down to the lower level of the new passage.

A new aperture through the wall will be formed and the extension built against it to include new lead flashings at the junction with the new lead flat.

Design Criteria:

The new aperture in the brick wall has been kept to a minimum workable size and well below the projecting brick course at the base of the first floor tile hanging.

3. Removal of Partition Between the Dining Room and Study

Reason for Proposal:

To open up the rather poky Study area into the adjacent room making it a more usable space.

Design Criteria:

A minimal intervention. Where the partition has been removed the walls, ceiling and floor will be made good to match existing surfaces.

4. Strip out old Kitchen to create new Boot Room

Reason for Proposal:

Old Kitchen now redundant.

Design Criteria:

Remove cabinets and related fittings and services. Repair walls and floor where units etc removed. Install new floor finishes and redecorate.

5. Works to rear part of North Cottage

Reason for Proposal: To remove redundant Kitchen and Bathroom. To construct two new stud and plasterboard partitions with doors to form a Rear Hall with a Cloakroom to replace the Bathroom and a Utility Room to replace the Kitchen.

Design Criteria:

To remove existing modern partitions, fittings and services and repair the walls and ceilings. Use existing service runs to install new sanitary ware etc.



6. Block Redundant Former Entrance Door & Remove Partition

Reason for Proposal: Two front doors were inserted when the house was divided and a partition inserted between them to divide the properties.

We propose to remove the partition and block one of the doors behind. The door will be retained externally.

Design Criteria:

To create a single entrance to serve the combined dwellings, but to retain both doors externally so the former status as a semi-detached pair can be read.

First Floor

7. Insert new Bathroom in Former North Cottage

Reason for Proposal: The original Bathroom at this end of the house was downstairs and is to be removed. The house is still to be divided at this level with its own staircase, so a Bathroom is required for the Bedroom.

Design Criteria:

A minimal intervention involving the removal of part of a modern partition and the addition of a new stud and plasterboard partition. A door will be removed and the aperture blocked.

New sanitary ware will be installed and connected into the existing soil stack below for the redundant Bathroom.

Second Floor

8. Insert new Bathroom in Former North Cottage with new Window

Reason for Proposal:

As at 7. above, the second floor Bedroom needs a Bathroom as the only other Bathroom is within a Bedroom. The first floor Bathroom will have to be internal, but this Bathroom will have an external wall. This will give us the opportunity to insert a new window, matching the adjacent.

Design Criteria:

See 7. Above, connecting into a new extension to the existing soil stack.

Window to match existing to minimise the effect of the intervention externally.

External

9. Demolish redundant Privy

Reason for Proposal:

This late C19/early C20 structure set away from the house has long been redundant as WCs were installed in the cottages.

It is also directly adjacent to the site of the proposed extension.



4.0 Planning Policy

In the creation of this planning application, both national and local planning policy has been considered and taken into account in order to meet the needs and requirements of both.

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was issued on 27th March 2012 (updated most recently in December 2024) to define National Planning Policy for England.

It provides guidance on, amongst other matters, design criteria and the surroundings and wider environment of domestic dwellings. There is a particular emphasis on sustainable development and infrastructure provision, as well as 'well-designed places':

National Planning Policy Framework 2024	
Para 7	<i>The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes... 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 needs</i>
Para 8	<i>Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that sustainable development has 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 are economic, social and environmental.</i>
Para 10	<i>So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development</i>
Para 11	<i>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.</i>
Para 39	<i>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.</i>
Para 131	<i>Achieving well-designed places - The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.</i>
Para 135	<i>Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: i. 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</i>



	ii. <i>are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping</i> iii. <i>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)</i> iv. <i>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..</i> v. <i>optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustainably an appropriate amount and mix of development ...</i> vi. <i>creates 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...</i>
Chapter 15	<i>Conserving and enhancing the natural environment</i> – <i>planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment.</i>
Para 202	<i>Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.</i>
Para 208	<i>Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.</i>
Para 210	<i>In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:</i> <i>a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;</i> <i>b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and</i> <i>c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.</i>
Section 12	<i>– Achieving well-designed place</i> <i>Para 131. The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.</i>

The above policies and guidance have been taken into consideration throughout the design process, particularly those relating to and having an impact on the heritage asset.

4.2 Mid Sussex District Plan 2018

The Mid Sussex District Plan was adopted on 28th March 2018. In accordance with National Policy, legislation, and a commitment in the adopted District Plan, the District Council have commenced a review of the District Plan. The District Plan 2021 – 2039 was submitted for Examination on 8th July 2024. Until such time as the Review document is adopted, the existing District Plan shall form the basis of our approach.



The District Plan has been invaluable guiding the principles of the proposed works and particularly relevant policies are:

Mid Sussex District Plan	
DP12	<i>- Protection of Countryside. "The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District.</i>
DP16	<i>-AONB. "Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular; • The identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting; • The traditional interaction of people with nature, and appropriate land management; • Character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB; and • The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage."</i>
DP17	<i>DP17: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Strategic Objectives: 3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities. Evidence Base: Ashdown Forest Visitor Survey Data Analysis, Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Mid Sussex District Plan, Visitor Access Patterns on Ashdown Forest. In order to prevent adverse effects on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, new development likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination with other development, will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. Within a 400 metres buffer zone around Ashdown Forest, mitigation measures are unlikely to be capable of protecting the integrity of the SPA and, therefore, residential development will not be permitted. Within a 7km zone of influence around the Ashdown Forest SPA, residential development leading to a net increase in dwellings will be required to contribute to mitigation through: 1) The provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to the minimum level of 8Ha per 1,000 net increase in population; or a financial contribution to SANGs elsewhere; or the provision of bespoke mitigation; and 2) A financial contribution to the Ashdown Forest Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy. Large schemes proposed adjacent or close to the boundary of the 7km zone of influence may require mitigation for the SPA. Such proposals for development will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Where bespoke mitigation is provided, these measures will need to be in place before occupation of development and must be managed and maintained in perpetuity. The effectiveness of such mitigation will need to be demonstrated prior to approval of the development. Bespoke mitigation will need to be discussed and agreed by the District Council as the competent authority following advice from Natural England.</i>
DP26	<i>Character and Design. "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; • Protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area; • 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); • Positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design."</i>



DP27	<i>Dwelling Space Standards. "Minimum nationally described space standards for internal floor space and storage space will be applied to all new residential development.</i>
DP38	<i>Biodiversity. "Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:</i> <i>• Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments; and</i> <i>• Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances); and</i> <i>• Minimises habitat and species fragmentation and maximises opportunities to enhance and restore ecological corridors to connect natural habitats and increase coherence and resilience; and</i> <i>• Promotes the restoration, management and expansion of priority habitats in the District; and</i> <i>• Avoids damage to, protects and enhances the special characteristics of internationally designated Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation; nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and locally designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodland or to other areas identified as being of nature conservation or geological interest, including wildlife corridors, aged or veteran trees, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, and Nature Improvement Areas."</i>

4.3 Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan

Policy THP8 Countryside Protection Outside the Built up Area Boundary (which is shown on the proposals map on page 24 of the Neighbourhood Plan), states that priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the countryside from inappropriate development. A proposal for development will only be permitted where: -

- a) It is allocated for development in Policy THP1 or would be in accordance with Policies THP7 and THP14 of this Plan or other relevant planning policies applying to the area; and:*
- b) It must not have a detrimental impact on, and would enhance, areas of substantial landscape value or sensitivity,*
- and c) It must not have an adverse impact on the landscape setting of Turners Hill*
- and d) It must maintain the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside from public vantage points within, and adjacent to, the built up area;*
- and e) Within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty it must conserve and enhance the natural beauty and would have regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan.*
- f) It is essential to meet specific necessary utility infrastructure needs and no alternative feasible site is available*



5.0 General Planning Considerations

5.1 Statement of Significance

Bramblehill Farmhouse is an attractive dwelling dating back to the C17 or earlier. Although many original features remain internally, the Late Victorian or Edwardian alterations amounted to a complete overbuilding.

This overbuilding is of good quality with local clay bricks and tiles used for the walls and roof.

The overbuilding probably coincided with and reflects the conversion into two separate dwellings. The proposed reconversion aims to respect the history of these changes by removing only redundant Kitchens and a Bathroom, with minimal remodelling internally to provide replacement facilities.

The Archaeological Interpretive Report & Heritage Statement that accompanies this application gives further clarification of the significance of the proposed works and assesses their impact as required by the NPPF.

5.2 Access

Access to the site will be unchanged and will continue to utilise the entrance from the B2135. The proposals will not affect the current parking arrangements.

5.3 Impact Assessment

The proposals have been devised to minimise the impact of the proposed conversion on the house.

The impacts of the proposals are:

- Minor alterations to remove and add internal partitions and sanitary ware,
- Externally the addition of a single window at second floor level on the north elevation to light a new Bathroom.
- Externally the formation of a new aperture in the south wall with associated alterations to provide steps down internally and junctions with the new extension.
- The removal of the old brick and tile privy.
- The construction of a new freestanding extension to the south with a glazed link corridor to the existing house.

The proposed alterations are all to the more recent parts of the house, leaving all original features intact.

The analysis of these items in section 3 above and the attached Historic Building Assessment describe how we propose to reduce the impact of these alterations on the historic building and the immediate context.



6.0 Conclusion

The late C19/early C20 remodelling aimed to upgrade the original timber framed farmhouse and convert it into two cottages, probably for estate workers.

The present proposals are aimed at restoring the farmhouse to form a single family house. This is being done with a minimum of internal alteration and the general character of the building as a pair of cottages is to be retained, with the two staircases and front doors.

The extension has been designed to have a minimal impact of the house, using the same materials and roof form but set lower and at a distance from the house in the tradition of the Kitchen wings that were originally attached to houses of this kind.