

Our ref: HG/se/9722

28 May 2025

Planning Department
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
RH16 1SS

Dear Sir or Madam

**Proposed single-storey extension and porch
Bluebell Barn Nursery, North End, London Road, East Grinstead RH19 1QQ**

On behalf of our client, Mr Nick Porter, we hereby submit an application for a single-story extension and porch to Bluebell Barn Nursery. The application has been submitted via the Planning Portal under reference PP-13506086. The application comprises the following: -

- This supporting statement.
- Application form and ownership certificate A.
- Existing Site Plan; Drawing No. SD2549-01B.
- Existing Ground Floor Plan; Drawing No. SD2549-02B.
- Existing First Floor Plan; Drawing No. SD2549-03A.
- Existing Roof Plan; Drawing No. SD2549-04A.
- Existing Elevations (Sheet 1); Drawing No. SD2549-05B.
- Existing Elevations (Sheet 2); Drawing No. SD2549-06A.
- Proposed Site Plan; Drawing No. SD2549-10-01C.
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan; Drawing No. SD2549-07-01C.
- Proposed First Floor Plan; Drawing No. SD2549-08-01.
- Proposed Roof Plan; Drawing No. SD2549-09-01B.
- Proposed Front and Side Elevations; Drawing No. SD2549-11-01B.
- Proposed Rear and Side Elevations; Drawing No. SD2549-12-01C.

THE SITE

Bluebell Barn Nursery lies on the south side of London Road within North End, to the north-west of East Grinstead. The site is within the built-up area boundary, as defined on the Local Plan Proposals Map. The property is not statutorily or locally listed, is not adjacent to a listed building, and is not within a Conservation Area. There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on, or adjacent to, the site.

As shown in Figure 1, the nursery is set back in its plot with a car park to the front and a play area to the rear. There are two buildings within the site – Bluebell Barn and The Nest. There is an access down both sides of the main building.

The site was originally used as North End School until 1955. Its most recent use was as Fledglings Day Nursery & Pre-School until its closure in December 2023 due to the condition and layout of the building no longer being fit for purpose. The main building (now called Bluebell Barn) continues to be vacant whilst refurbishment works are undertaken to bring it up to standard. The Nest has been operating since January 2024 as a children’s day care nursery.

To the east and west are residential properties. To the south is an allotment. To the north, on the opposite side of London Road, is Tiny Tigers, a children’s day nursery. All other surrounding properties are residential.

There’s a bus stop approximately 30m to the west which provides regular services to Tunbridge Wells, Stone, Forest Row, East Grinstead, Crawley and Caterham. East Grinstead train station is approximately 1.5 miles to the south-east. Imberhorne Lane Long Stay Car Park is 0.3 miles (6-minute walk) to the north-west.

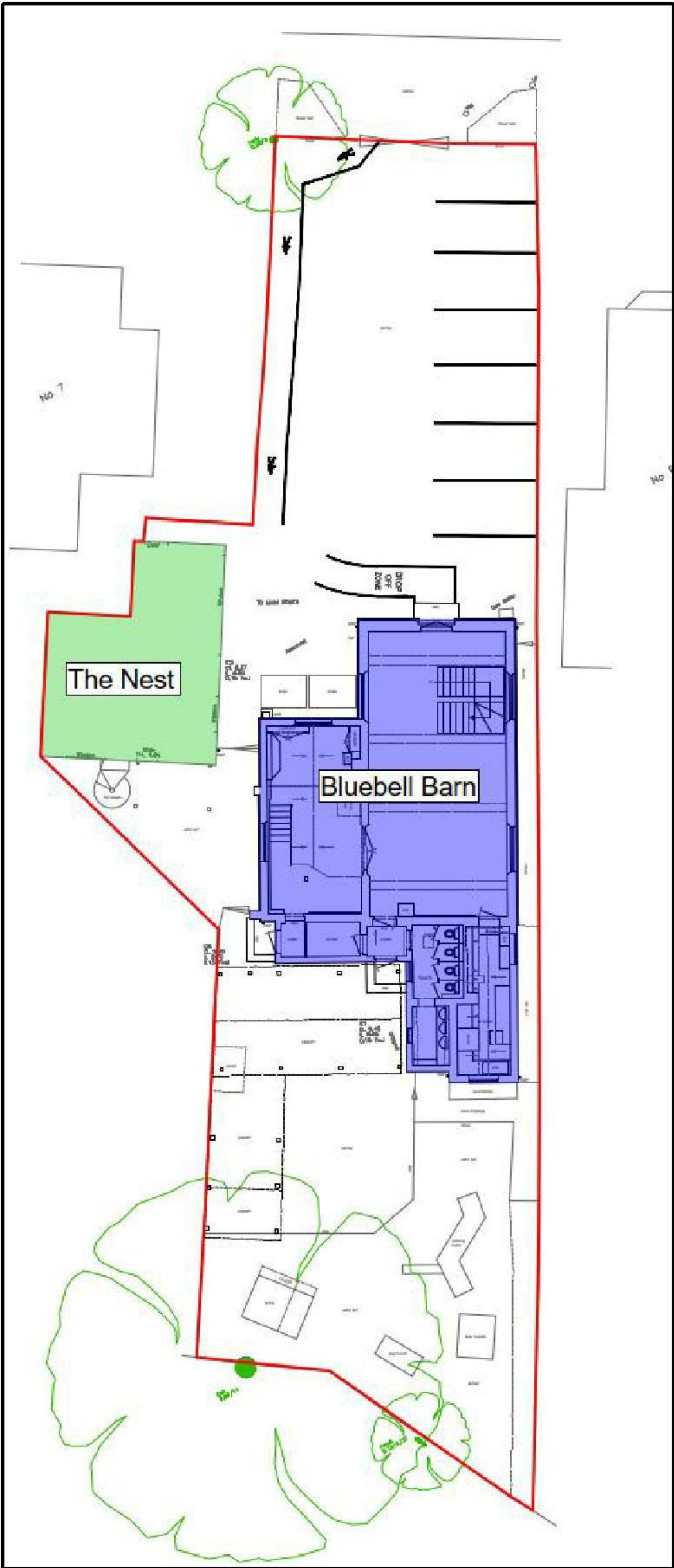


Figure 1 – Existing Site Layout

PLANNING HISTORY

The planning history for the site, as it is available on the Council’s website, is set out below.

Application Reference	Description	Decision	Comments
GR/233/90	Outline application – construction of 4 self contained flats	Approved 23 October 1990	
GR/105/92	Change of use to B1	Approved 03 July 1992	No documents available online

02/01298/FUL	Replacement of first floor window by a door. New external stairs to this door (on the secondary smaller building on the site)	Approved 18 October 2002	
05/00044/FUL	Erection of a single storey rear extension to provide new kitchen	Approved 11 February 2005	No documents available online
11/03054/FUL	Covered area and new mezzanine floor in existing hall	Approved 18 November 2011	All documents downloaded.

THE PROPOSAL

It is proposed to erect a single storey extension and porch on the north-western side of the building.

The single-storey extension follows the form, height, and roof pitch of the part of the building it is extending. It is proposed with brick walls and a tile roof to match the existing materials and will provide a gross internal floor area of 8.5m to be used as an entrance lobby.

The porch is of an open timber-frame construction with a brick base and a tile roof. The roof pitch matches that of the single-storey extension. It has an area of 6.5m and a height of 4.75m which ensures it remains subservient to the main building.

The scheme will provide an improved internal layout as part of the refurbishment works to bring the building up to modern standards and back into use as a children’s day nursery.

PLANNING POLICY

The key planning policy documents are the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (2018), the draft District Plan Review (submission version, 2023) and the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan (2016).

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The NPPF sets out that the planning system has three overarching objectives (economic, social, and environmental) and requires planning applications to be assessed against these (para. 8). At the heart of the Framework is the “*presumption in favour of sustainable development*” (para.11) which, for decision taking, means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date plan without delay; or*
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application area out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole”*

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

Paragraph 98(d) states that, to provide the services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should *“ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community”*.

Paragraph 100a states that *“It is important that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications”*.

[Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 \(2018\)](#)

Policy DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy) defines East Grinstead as a Category 1 settlement; a settlement with a comprehensive range of services and facilities and benefitting from good public transport provision. The policy states that development will be permitted within defined built-up area boundaries.

Policy DP25 (Community Facilities and Local Services) states that *“the provision or improvement of community facilities and local services that contribute to creating sustainable communities will be supported”*.

Policy DP26 (Character and Design) requires all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the area.

[Draft District Plan Review \(Submission Version, 2023\)](#)

Policy DPB1 (Character and Design) requires all new development to be of a high quality and respond appropriately to its context, be inclusive and prioritise sustainability.

Policy DPE1 (Sustainable Economic Development) states that *“sustainable economic development will be achieved by supporting existing businesses and allowing them room to expand”*.

[East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan \(2016\)](#)

Policy EG3 (Promoting Good Design) states that planning permission will normally be granted where the form of the proposed development is proportionate and in keeping with the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the surrounding area.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The key planning considerations are:

- Principle of development.
- Demand for nursery provision.
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- Amenity.
- Trees/ecology.
- Biodiversity net gain.

[Principle of Development](#)

The site is an established early years day care centre. However, since January 2024, only The Nest has been operating as a nursery with the main building, Bluebell Barn, closed due to not being fit for

purpose. The proposal will improve the layout of the building by creating a covered porch and an entrance lobby and forms part of the refurbishment works required to bring the building back into use.

[Demand for Nursery Provision](#)

The Government are currently rolling out a 'working parents entitlement' scheme to increase the number of hours of childcare working families can claim per week. Since September 2024, eligible working parents of children aged between 9 months and 3 years can access 570 hours of funded early education and childcare per year and 1,140 hours for children aged 3-4 years. From September 2025, this will increase further to allow eligible working parents of children aged 9 months and above to access 1,140 hours of funded early education and childcare per year.

The increase in support for working parents has resulted in a significant rise in demand for nursery provision. At the same time, there is a nationwide shortage of childcare places, which has been covered extensively in the media, and means that many are unable to access the provision to which they are entitled.

The proposed extension, together with the refurbishment works, will bring the building back into use and provide approximately 60 childcare places at an established facility which has been closed since December 2023.

[Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area](#)

The site is located within the built-up area and has an established use as a nursery. The proposed extension has a small footprint, is single storey, and respects the existing form and appearance of the building. The proposal will create an attractive addition to the building whilst remaining subservient.

[Amenity](#)

The extension is proposed on the west side of the main building and is screened from the residential properties to the west by The Nest. The proposal is for an entrance lobby and porch which will not increase the number of places at the nursery and will, therefore, have no impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

[Trees/Ecology](#)

There is no habitat on the site. To the front of the building is a tarmac car park. To the rear of the building is a children's outdoor play area which comprises tarmac and artificial grass (see Figures 2 & 3).



Figures 2 & 3 – Sealed surfaces to the front and rear of the building. No habitat is present on site.

Biodiversity Net Gain

In accordance with Schedule 7A of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by The Environment Act 2021), from 02 April 2024, all developments, subject to some exemptions, are required to provide biodiversity net gain of at least 10%.

The biodiversity net gain regulations include a 'de minimis' exemption. In order for this exemption to apply, the following conditions must be met:

- The development must not impact on any onsite priority habitat; and
- If there is an impact on other onsite habitat, that impact must be on less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat with a biodiversity value greater than zero and on less than 5 metres of onsite linear habitat.

The red line application site is a wholly sealed surface (see Figures 2 & 3) which is classified as developed land with a biodiversity value of zero under the statutory biodiversity metric. There is no onsite priority, or other, habitat. The proposed extension is under 25 square metres in size. The proposed scheme meets the de minimis exemption and is exempt from providing biodiversity net gain.

Other Considerations

Flood Risk: The site is within Flood Zone 1, where there is a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. The site area is below 1ha and so a flood risk assessment is not required.

Highways and Parking: The proposal will not affect the existing access or parking arrangements.

CONCLUSION

It is proposed to erect a single-storey extension to provide an entrance lobby with porch at Bluebell Barn Nursery. The proposal would provide an improved layout for users of the nursery and would enhance the appearance of the building through the high-quality design. The extension is proposed as part of refurbishment works to bring Bluebell Barn up to modern standards and back into use. The proposal is compliant with relevant national and local policies.

The statutory planning application fee amounts to £298, plus a service charge of £85, and this has been paid online via the Planning Portal. Please contact me should you require any further information.

Yours faithfully



Hannah Garlinge BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI
For and on behalf of The JTS Partnership LLP