

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/1169	Case Officer:	Anna Tidey
Application Type:	Householder Application		
Proposal:	Convert existing barn into one bedroom ancillary accommodation.		
Site:	Annexe, Keysford, Treemans Road, Horsted Keynes, West Sussex, RH17 7EA, ,		
Validation Date	12 May 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	13 Nov 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	18 Dec 2025
Target Date:	7 Jul 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Anna Tidey

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
--	--	-------------------------------	---

Signed and Agreed By:	Stephen Ashdown	Date:	18 Dec 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/1169

**Annexe, Keysford, Treemans Road, Horsted Keynes, West Sussex, RH17 7EA,
Convert existing barn into one bedroom ancillary accommodation.
Mrs Kathryn Wade**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

One representation received from a neighbour which contains the following points:

- The existing barn has no windows overlooking the courtyard, which is overlooked by the adjacent property at Old Keysford Hall and the applicant's property, Keysford.
- It is noted that the amended plans show only one window and two roof lights in the eastern wall and roof. These windows will not present a privacy issue.
- The proposal is for ancillary domestic accommodation to the main house.
- If approved, it is requested that the renovated barn will remain part of the main Keysford residence.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Conservation Officer:

Keysford, is with its attached neighbour Old Keysford Hall, a Grade II listed building dating originally from c.1701 according to the list description, and enlarged in 1923, and set in a rural position outside Horsted Keynes. The house was originally the farmhouse to a historic farmstead. The western side of the yard is enclosed by a substantial timber framed weatherboarded barn, curtilage listed, and the subject of this application.

The current proposal is for the conversion of the barn into two bedroom ancillary accommodation. The applications for planning and Listed Building Consent follow on from pre-application advice and the refusal of a previous proposal.

The Archaeological Interpretive Survey (AIS) notes that the three bay threshing barn was constructed in the late C16th- early C17th, with significant alterations carried out in the C19th and 20th. The AIS gives a detailed description of the evolution of the building.

The proposed works have been amended and respond positively to earlier comments, and to the further information following the preparation of the AIS. The principle of the conversion is not considered contentious, and many of the works are considered sympathetic to the building, retaining key aspects of its plan form and fabric. The retention of features such as the floor surfaces and feeding troughs is noted and welcomed.

However, a number of issues remain which require further consideration/revision/ information:

- the proposed retention of 'mullions' above the west facing barn door.
- enclosing the space above the existing partitions to the northern bay to create an enclosed mezzanine level bedroom and bathroom. This element of the proposal should be omitted in favour of an open mezzanine.
- Sections/sectional elevations should be provided to show the proposed mezzanine to the southern bay, including the fixings of the base of the staircase to the threshing floor.
- The proposed internal alterations include the creation of a doorway cut through the C19th part-height partition adjacent to the threshing floor. The partial loss of this feature is contentious.
- Details required of the proposed fixed window within the opening to the western midstreys doors.
- The existing side hung doors should be retained and fixed open.
- The proposed new rooflights are over-scaled and no surviving historic rafters cut.

- Further information should be provided to clarify the enlargement of an existing opening to the eastern elevation.
- Further details should be provided at this stage of the method of insulation to the roof, walls and floor of the building.
- Floor surfaces of interest (in particular the threshing floor) should be retained and exposed wherever possible, with further details.
- A method statement and appropriate detailed drawings (such as typical elevations and sections) should be provided.

The building contains a number of features of interest which should be conserved and exposed, ie:

- Pegholes to the corner of each post within the barn
- Taper burn to the intermediate post in truss D
- Mortices for missing wall studs, shadow line of a missing window head, and exposed notches for a mullion window to the western girt
- Timber 'slides' to the western midstrete doors.
- Internal door to be re-used for bedroom 1.
- Peg rack above the window in the western elevation.
- Empty sockets for former stall partitions within the brick flooring of the northern bay of the barn.
- Pigeon housing at the apex of the south gable.
- Brick and plank and muntin partition wall in Truss C.

Although the principle of conversion remains acceptable, the scope of the application in including a second bedroom and bathroom at mezzanine level remains problematic, and amendments and/or further information or clarification is needed.

Conservation Officer - further comments: Further information from the contractor that he/she has inspected the historic floors and that the methodologies will be practical is required.

Typical revised details of the insulation are required.

-Further information and revised floor plans, the raising and relaying of the threshing floor, the installation of insulation to walls and roof, and the retention of features of interest, the contractor to be employed in lifting and relaying the historic timber and brick floors have been provided and for the greater part, are acceptable and address the concerns previously raised.

Information is lacking in respect of the dovecot to the southern gable. However, this information can be required by condition.

The annotated drawings provide the clarification of the floor insulation required, and remain acceptable in my opinion.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable, as revised, preserving the special interest of the curtilage listed building and the setting of Old Keysford Hall/Keysford. This meets the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF. Recommends planning conditions to cover detailed elements of the conversion works.

Ecologist:

No Ecological objection.

We have reviewed the Bat Survey Report (Batscan Ltd., June 2024) and Ecological Impact Assessment (Environmental Assessment Services Ltd., July 2023), relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected & Priority species and habitats, and identification of appropriate mitigation measures.

We have also reviewed the information submitted to meet the requirements of mandatory biodiversity net gains, which includes the Application Form.

We note that the single dusk emergence survey in June 2024 identified a Brown Long-eared bat day roost (Bat Survey Report (Batscan Ltd., June 2024)) and therefore a licence for bats will be required.

As it has been identified that bats will be disturbed during works to the listed building, the LPA is obliged to advise that mitigation measures are finalised and/or the works are adjusted to reduce potential impacts to these animals during the construction phase. Mitigation measures to limit the harm to protected species MUST be in place prior to the commencement of any of the works subject to this consent. This is to ensure the conservation of protected and Priority species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

Therefore, it is recommended that an informative is attached to the decision for this application. This is to conserve protected species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998. With this secured, we are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application.

Flood Risk and Drainage:

There does not appear to be an increase in built footprint at ground floor level.

The FRA confirms that the site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at very low risk of fluvial flooding. The Risk of Flooding from Surface Water mapping suggests the site is shown to be at very low to high surface water flood risk (comparable to flood zones 1 to 3b). The high surface water is associated with an isolated low spot on the front driveway and not an overland flow route. The barn is in an area at very low risk from surface water flooding (comparable to flood zone 1).

The proposed application is a minor development and fits within the Environment Agency Standing Advice.

Given the above, we have no objection on flood risk grounds. This is subject to the proposed development incorporating all flood mitigation measures set out within the Flood Risk Assessment (by Gould Baxter, May 2025, Revision A).

Drainage should be managed via Building Regulations and Building Control, as necessary.

Southern Water:

The development site is not located within Southern Water's statutory area for water supply services.

Contaminated Land Officer:

The proposal involves converting a historic agricultural barn dating from the late 16th or early 17th century into residential use. Agricultural sites with such a long history often present contamination risks because of past activities. These may include the use and storage of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers, fuel and oil spills from machinery, and the presence of hazardous building materials such as asbestos or lead-based paints introduced during later alterations.

Given the sensitive nature of the proposed end use, it is essential to ensure that the site is suitable for residential occupation and does not pose unacceptable risks to human health or the environment. The applicant should demonstrate that the land is either free from contamination or that appropriate remediation measures will be implemented. To achieve this, contaminated land conditions are recommended. These conditions will require a phased approach, beginning with a desk-based assessment and site walkover, followed by intrusive investigation if risks are identified, and culminating in a remediation strategy and validation report where necessary.

Additionally, a discovery strategy should also be attached, so that in the event that contamination not already identified through the desktop study, or site investigation is found, works stop until such time that a further assessment has been made, and further remediation methods are put in place if needed.

Recommends Approval with conditions.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Horsted Keynes Parish Council: No objections.

INTRODUCTION

This application seeks planning permission to create ancillary accommodation by the conversion and adaptation of an existing curtilage listed barn, in the grounds of Keysford, off Treemans Road in Horsted Keynes.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/25/1168. Listed Building Consent to convert existing barn into one bedroom ancillary accommodation. Yet to be determined.

DM/24/1652. Listed Building Consent -Internal work creating additional floor, consisting of 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms downstairs with stairs leading to first floor providing kitchen/dining area and sitting room. The proposal is for ancillary accommodation to the main house. Refused September 2024.

DM/24/1651. Internal work creating additional floor, consisting of 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms downstairs with stairs leading to first floor providing kitchen/dining area and sitting room. The proposal is for ancillary accommodation to the main house. Refused September 2024.

DM/23/1117. Listed Building Consent -Internal work creating additional floor, consisting of 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms downstairs with stairs leading to first floor providing kitchen/dining area and sitting room. The proposal is for ancillary accommodation to the main house. Withdrawn February 2024.

DM/23/1116. Internal work creating additional floor, consisting of 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms downstairs with stairs leading to first floor providing kitchen/dining area and sitting room. The proposal is for ancillary accommodation to the main house. Withdrawn February 2024.

11/04022/LBC. Listed Building Consent - Internal work creating additional floor, downstairs 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms with stairs leading to first floor providing kitchen-dining area and sitting room. The proposal is for ancillary accommodation to the main house. (Re-instating Planning Permission Ref: 07/02819). Approved February 2012.

11/04021/FUL. Internal work creating additional floor, downstairs 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms with stairs leading to first floor providing kitchen-dining area and sitting room. The proposal is for ancillary accommodation to the main house. (Re-instating Planning Permission Ref: 07/02819). Approved February 2012.

07/02821/LBC. Listed Building Consent - Internal work creating an additional floor, downstairs 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms with stairs leading to first floor with kitchen - Dining area and sitting room. The proposal is for ancillary accommodation to the main house. Approved November 2007.

07/02819/COU. Internal work creating an additional floor, downstairs 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms with stairs leading to first floor providing kitchen - Dining area and sitting room. The proposal is for ancillary accommodation to the main house. Approved November 2007.

01/01494/FUL. Conversion of outbuilding/games room to two bedrooms and one bathroom. Approved September 2001.

SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The site is a wooden framed barn which forms part of a range of outbuildings and garages located to the north of Keysford and forming a courtyard to the west of Old Keysford Hall, both of which are Grade II Listed buildings. The barn is in the ownership of Keysford and is already in use for ancillary domestic and storage purposes.

Attached to the southern gable end of the barn is a single storey brick built building which accommodates separate annexe accommodation, which consists of a lounge with a small kitchenette space and a bedroom with a small bathroom. Whilst not forming part of the site area of the barn to which this application relates the layout of the space within that building is shown on the submitted existing floor plans, and the proposed floor plans indicate the intention to retain this brick building as a pool/games room.

The barn that is the subject of the current application is two storey in height, with a gabled roofline, which extends into a catslide roof over a single storey element on the western elevation. Externally the barn is finished with weathered horizontal timber cladding and it has a clay tiled roof. Double entry doors are sited in the western elevation and pedestrian doors also provide access from the lawn on that side of the building into the southern section of the barn, and into the attached single storey brick section.

Internally there are partition walls, which serve two rooms (apple store/former livestock accommodation), which are sited at the northern end of the barn with a partial first floor above. The main part of the barn is open to the full two storey height, with the timber framing of the roof exposed internally.

To the east of the barn there is a large courtyard/circular turning driveway serving the garages in the northern section of the range of outbuildings to which the barn is attached. Beyond that is the adjoining property at Old Keysford Hall.

The site is within the countryside, in the High Weald National Landscape/Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), within the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation and also within an Amber Impact Zone for Great Crested Newts.

APPLICATION DETAILS

This application has been submitted as a householder application and seeks planning permission to carry out works to the barn to create 'ancillary accommodation to the main house'.

In detail the works to the barn consist of the following:

- The formation of an entrance hall in the single storey element on the western side of the barn.
- Retention of feeding troughs and original flooring details.
- The retention of the two existing bays in the central part of the barn, to create ground floor living areas, open to the roof full height, with the creation of a doorway between the former threshing bay and the southernmost bay.
- The formation of a bedroom with an ensuite in the apple store room at the rear of the barn, connecting to the remainder of the ground floor via existing doorway openings.
- To create a first floor open mezzanine/play area space, with an added safety balustrade, with access being provided to the upper floor via a vertical timber access ladder.
- The reintroduction and addition of new windows and doors, and new rooflights in the east and west facing elevations and roof slopes of the barn at ground and first floor levels.

The application has been accompanied by a detailed Design and Access Statement (DAS), which has been amended during the course of the determination of the application. This explains the details of the application as it was originally submitted. The conversion scheme has been simplified during the course of determining the application, as the submitted amended plans have removed elements such as the staircase to the first floor and the first floor bedroom space has been altered to a raised open play area. The DAS includes the following:

- The conversion will allow the barn to become ancillary space to serve the main house.
- The barn will retain its natural feather edge cladding with red brick base. New insertions of glazing and its framing will form a natural oiled finish.
- The conservation roof-lights will be finished in a black metal frame.
- Internal features within the timber framework of the barn to be retained are detailed.
- Detailed sections have been provided to explain the method for introducing new insulation to the roof, walls and to the threshing floor.

The application has also been accompanied by supporting documents: a Heritage Statement, an Archaeological Interpretive Survey, a Flood Risk Assessment, all of which have been revised during the course of the determination, a planning statement for the floor insulation and updated plans for the insulation installation, a Preliminary Contamination Risk Assessment and a Bat Survey Report, all of which are available to view on the planning file.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Specifically Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states:

'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) And local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and*
- c) Any other material considerations.'*

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides:

'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.'

The requirement to determine applications "in accordance with the plan" does not mean applications must comply with each and every policy, but is to be approached on the basis of the plan taken as a whole. This reflects the fact, acknowledged by the Courts, that development plans can have broad statements of policy, many of which may be mutually irreconcilable so that in a particular case one must give way to another.

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.

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance) does not form part of the development plan, but is an important material consideration.

Mid Sussex District Plan

The District Plan was adopted at Full Council on 28th March 2018.

Relevant policies:

- DP12 Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
- DP15 New Homes in the Countryside
- DP16 High Weald AONB
- DP17 Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC
- DP21 Transport
- DP26 Character and design
- DP34 Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
- DP38 Biodiversity
- DP39 Sustainable Design and Construction
- DP41 Flood Risk and Drainage

Site Allocations DPD

The SADPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

There are no relevant policies.

Neighbourhood Plan

Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan, made May 2023.

Policy HK1 Location of New Development
Policy HK4 Maintaining Local Character and Good Quality Design
Policy HK5 Infill Development and Domestic Extensions
Policy HK6 Conserving Local Heritage
Policy HK9 The High Weald AONB
Policy HK10 Protection and Improvement of Natural Habitats
Policy HK13 Light Pollution

Other Material Considerations

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

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. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and the stage 1 hearings were concluded on the 31st October 2024. There are unresolved objections to some of the Policies in the draft District Plan and as such, only minimal weight can be given to the Plan and this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

Relevant policies:

DPS2 Sustainable Design and Construction
DPS2 Flood Risk and Drainage
DPS6 Health and Wellbeing
DPB1 Character and Design
DPN8 Light Impacts and Dark Skies
DPC1 Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
DPC4 High Weald AONB
DPC6 Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC
DPB2 Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

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.

High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2024-2029

The High Weald Housing Design Guide 2020

High Weald National Landscape - Technical Advice Note: Dark Skies Planning Advice Note - July 2024

ASSESSMENT

It is considered that the main issues that need to be considered in the determination of this application are as follows:

- The principle of the development
- Impact upon the Countryside and High Weald National Landscape (AONB)
- Design
- Impact upon Listed Buildings
- Impact on residential amenities
- HRA Assessment
- Ecology
- Drainage
- Contamination
- Biodiversity Net Gain

The principle of the development

The proposal seeks permission to use the barn as ancillary accommodation to Keysford Barn and whilst it is physically separate from the main house it is located within the established garden curtilage of that listed property.

District Plan Policy DP15 is relevant in determining this application. This refers to 'granny annexes' that are physically separate to the main dwelling. In such cases annexes are treated as a new home in the countryside and assessed accordingly. Policy DP15 also refers to the reuse of agricultural buildings for residential use. The policy states:

'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:

- o 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*
- o 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*
- o Affordable housing in accordance with Policy DP32: Rural Exception Sites; or*
- o 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:*
- o The need cannot be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on or any other existing accommodation near the agricultural unit; and*
- o 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*
- o It can be proven that the farming enterprise is economically viable; and*
- o It can be proven that the size of the dwelling is commensurate with the established functional requirement of the agricultural unit.*

Temporary agricultural dwellings essential to support a new farming activity either on a newly created agricultural unit or on an established one will be subject to the criteria above and should normally be provided by temporary accommodation.

Applications for the removal of agricultural occupancy conditions will only be permitted where it can be proven that there is no longer any need for the dwelling for someone solely, mainly or last working in agriculture or forestry or other rural based enterprise. This will be based on an up to date assessment of

the demand for farm (or other occupational) dwellings in the area as a whole, and not just on a particular holding.

New 'granny annexes' that are physically separate to the dwelling are defined as a new home and are subject to the same requirements as above.

Re-use of rural buildings for residential use

The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings for residential use in the countryside will be permitted where it is not a recently constructed agricultural building which has not been or has been little used for its original purpose and:

- o the re-use would secure the future of a heritage asset; or*
- o the re-use would lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting and the quality of the rural and landscape character of the area is maintained.*

Replacement dwellings in the countryside

Replacement dwellings in the countryside will be permitted where:

- o The residential use has not been abandoned;*
- o Highway, access and parking requirements can be met; and*
- o The replacement dwelling maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the natural and/or built landscape particularly in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, especially if a significant change in scale from the existing dwelling is proposed.'*

Also relevant in the determination of this application is Neighbourhood Plan Policy HK1, which refers to the location of new development. This states:

'New development in Horsted Keynes parish will be focused within the built-up area boundary (BUAB) of Horsted Keynes village as identified on the Policies Map, including allocations in the adopted Site Allocations DPD (sites SA 28 and SA 29). This is in order to promote sustainable development of the village and to safeguard the nationally important landscape of the High Weald AONB. Any infilling or redevelopment within the BUAB should be of an appropriate scale and nature and not harm the character and function of the village.

The expansion of Horsted Keynes beyond the built-up area boundary will only be supported where:

- o they comply with policy DP6 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, which allows for development for fewer than 10 dwellings where the proposed development is contiguous with the existing BUAB, or*
- o they relate to necessary utilities infrastructure and where no reasonable alternative location is available, and*
- o they comply with other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan in particular those relating to community-led housing (policy HK2), conserving the local heritage (policy HK6), protection of the High Weald AONB (policy HK9) and expansion of business premises (policy HK14).*

In all cases, the proposed development should respond positively to 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, and should demonstrate that it conserves and enhances the landscape and scenic beauty, particularly the impact on the High Weald AONB, and include appropriate mitigation measures as necessary.'

The proposed accommodation within the barn is physically separated from the main dwelling, but the application description confirms that the accommodation provided would be ancillary to the main house.

At ground floor level one bedroom and living room space would be accommodated, and an open play area would be accommodated on the first floor mezzanine, with access via a timber ladder. The application has been made for householder consent and it is considered that a planning condition can be attached to an approval to limit the use of the accommodation only to be used ancillary to the house, to prevent any future separation of the building from Keysford.

Given the overall scale and form of the proposed development, the proposed use with, and the relationship to the dwellinghouse it is considered that the proposed accommodation would not create a harmful impact upon the rural setting of the property or the wider landscape. The proposal will therefore accord with District Plan Policy DP12.

With regards to DP15 the adaptation of the barn for additional ancillary accommodation would, in principle, secure the future of the barn as a heritage asset, being sited within the setting of the two adjacent Grade II Listed Buildings. Further consideration of the extent and impact of the internal and external works to adapt the building are discussed below.

The proposed development is acceptable in principle and is considered to accord with District Plan Policies DP12, DP15 and DP26, the aims of Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan Policy HK1 and the Design Guide principles.

Impact upon the Countryside and High Weald National Landscape (AONB)

The site for this application lies in open countryside and within the High Weald National Landscape/AONB.

One of the objectives of achieving sustainable development is to ensure that proposals '*protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*' (para 8, NPPF). In addition, the NPPF states at paragraph 189 that 'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues'

The legal framework for AONBs in England and Wales is provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000 which at Section 82 reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs: to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Section 84 of the CRoW requires Local Planning Authorities to 'take all such action as appears to them expedient for accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB'.

A similar ethos is found within The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the AONB.

NPPF paragraph 190 states: '*When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*

- *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- *the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.*

The primary objective of the MSDC District Plan with respect to the countryside is to secure its protection by minimising the amount of land taken for development that does not need to be there.

Policy DP12 is relevant in the determination of this application. This states:

"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:

*o it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or
o it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.'*

District Plan Policy DP16 states:

'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;

*o the identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting;
o the traditional interaction of people with nature, and appropriate land management;
o character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB; and
o the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.*

Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.

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

Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan also contains Policy HK9 which seeks to conserve and enhance the AONB. This states:

'As appropriate to their scale, nature, and location, development proposals should conserve and enhance the following components of the landscape in the parish which, taken together, help to make it of national importance:

*o take opportunities, where watercourses and water bodies are within or adjacent to the development site, to restore their natural function in order to improve water quality; prevent flooding and enhance wetland habitats;
o respect the settlement pattern of the parish and use local materials (see paragraph 5.29) that enhance the appearance of development and help to reconnect development with the landscape;
o relate well to historic routeways and do not divert them from their original course or damage their rural character by loss of banks, hedgerows, verges or other important features;
o do not result in the loss or degradation of Ancient Woodland or historic features within it and, where appropriate contribute to its ongoing management;
o conserve and enhance the ecology of fields, trees and hedgerows; retain and reinstate historic field systems and the boundaries which define them; and direct development away from medieval or earlier fields, especially where these form coherent field systems with other medieval features.*

Residential development should utilise the guidance in the High Weald Housing Design Guide (2019) in order to meet the requirement for landscape-led designs which conserve and enhance the special character of the AONB and also comply with policies HK4 and HK5 of this plan. Development proposals need to exercise particular care in protecting and enhancing the AONB by respecting the key features above, which are identified in the High Weald AONB Landscape Character Maps.'

A Public Footpath runs from Treemans Road to Keysford Lane to the west of the site, with the route extending from the north towards the site, then turning west along part of the boundary of the site. The barn which is the subject of this application and the other buildings on the site will be visible in public views from this path.

The barn is sited within the curtilage of Keysford and the single storey element is already in use for annexe accommodation. It is considered that the proposed ancillary use of the larger barn would not harm the wider appearance of the AONB.

The degree of new fenestration that is proposed to allow the use of the barn for ancillary accommodation has been carefully limited to avoid new openings and to control night time light spill. This accords with the aims set out in Neighbourhood Plan Policy HK13 and recently published guidance contained in the High Weald National Landscape - Technical Advice Note: Dark Skies Planning Advice Note - July 2024. This document states:

'The High Weald AONB is characterised by having some of the darkest skies in the South-east of England, with the least skyglow. As well as contributing to the sense of remoteness and peacefulness, a number of nocturnal species for nature recovery within the High Weald are dependent on dark skies for feeding. Dark skies are also an intrinsic part of the landscape setting of the settlement pattern within the High Weald; and are important to the character and setting of the historic environment, in particular isolated farmsteads, small hamlets, and villages typically unlit by streetlighting.'

'The Management Plan includes specific objectives (DS1 and DS2) that seek to preserve the dark skies of the High Weald AONB, and to protect wildlife and habitats from light pollution across the High Weald.'

In terms of the impact upon the wider AONB, the proposed barn conversion would not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB. It is considered that the ancillary use of the barn may result in some additional night time light spill, located next to the neighbouring dwellings at Keysford and Old Keysford Hall, but the degree of harm will not be contrary to the aims of Neighbourhood Plan Policy HK13 or the High Weald National Landscape - Technical Advice Note: Dark Skies.

Design

Policy DP26 of the District Plan seeks to promote well located and designed development, to protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities and support sustainable communities and create accessible environments. The wording of Policy DP26 states:

'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- * is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- * contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- * creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- * protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- * protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- * does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy 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.'*

Also relevant in the determination of the application is the design guidance contained in the Mid Sussex Design Guide, which seeks good design in house alterations and extensions.

The proposed barn conversion will utilise the building as it stands and does not involve any extensions to it. The proposed plans indicate that there will be little intervention in the division of the existing internal space to create the proposed accommodation at ground and first floor levels. External changes are limited and are sympathetic to the heritage status of the building. The provision of altered doors, and the placement of new rooflights and windows are sympathetic to the original building layout and features.

Further comments in respect of the proposed changes to the barn are discussed below, with reference to the advice provided by the Conservation Officer.

Impact upon Listed Buildings

The barn that is the subject of this application is curtilage Listed. Keysford and Old Keysford Hall are both Grade II Listed Buildings.

The Council, as the Local Planning Authority, has a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving heritage assets. Listed Buildings and their settings are afforded special protection under the planning regime by virtue of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (PLBCAA); paragraphs 200-214 of the NPPF and Policy DP34 of the District Plan.

Detailed elements affecting the internal and external fabric of the Listed Building are the subject of Listed Building Consent application DM/25/1168.

District Plan Policy DP34 is relevant in the determination of this application. It states:

'Listed Buildings

Development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- o A thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting has been demonstrated. This will be proportionate to the importance of the building and potential impact of the proposal;*
- o Alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. Proposals for the conversion or change of use of a listed building retain its significance and character whilst ensuring that the building remains in a viable use; o Traditional building materials and construction techniques are normally used. The installation of uPVC windows and doors will not be acceptable;*
- o Satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy installations are not sited in a prominent location, and where possible within the curtilage rather than on the building itself; o Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building;*
- o Where the historic fabric of a building may be affected by alterations or other proposals, the applicant is expected to fund the recording or exploratory opening up of historic fabric.*

Other Heritage Assets

Development that retains buildings which are not listed but are of architectural or historic merit, or which make a significant and positive contribution to the street scene will be permitted in preference to their demolition and redevelopment.

The Council will seek to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the character and quality of life of the District. Significance can be defined as the special interest of a heritage asset, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

Proposals affecting such heritage assets will be considered in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and current Government guidance.'

Also relevant in the determination of this application is neighbourhood Plan Policy HK6. This refers to conserving local heritage and states:

'Development proposals should preserve or enhance the special character and setting of the Horsted Keynes and Birch Grove Conservation Areas, and preserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest of listed buildings and their settings, and will be assessed against policies DP34 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.'

Detailed comments have been provided by the Conservation Officer during the course of determining the application, and these are reproduced above. Various details have been clarified with the submission of additional supporting plans and revised documents to address her concerns.

In converting the barn to ancillary accommodation it is recognised that both the fabric and the appearance of the building will be altered. The changes that are proposed seek to retain the agricultural appearance of the building, to retain historic features and reflect its original character and use.

Original concerns regarding the proposed internal works, loss of fabric and features of interest: including the partition walls, apple store structure, and the original wall between the main barn and outshot and the structural implications of the conversion works have now been suitably addressed. It is considered that the details submitted with the application clearly explain the required works to allow the conversion and address the potential impacts upon the fabric and features of the Curtilage Listed barn.

The proposal will allow the preservation of the curtilage listed barn, which makes a positive contribution as a building of special interest to the setting of Keysford/Old Keysford Hall.

The relevant NPPF guidance on proposals affecting heritage assets is contained in Paragraphs 207 to 210, which state:

'207. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.'

208. 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.'

209. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.'

210. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

a. the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

b. the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

c. the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'

The proposal will preserve the barn, itself a curtilage Listed Building and the adjacent Listed Buildings at Old Keysford Hall and Keysford and therefore meet the aims and requirements of District Plan Policy DP34, Neighbourhood Plan Policy HK6 and relevant guidance contained in the NPPF.

Impact on residential amenities

In assessing the potential impact of the proposed conversion works upon the neighbouring amenities consideration needs to be given to District Plan Policy DP26. Policy DP26 requires that *'All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of the new dwellings.'*

In addition Principle DG45 in the Design Guide refers to the need to consider privacy of existing and future residents and it is noted that privacy may be affected by the relationship of buildings to each other.

The barn at Keysford is located to the north of Keysford, and falls within the curtilage of this property. Old Keysford Hall, which is located approx. 25m to the south west of the barn, is in separate ownership. That dwelling has a close relationship to the barn, being sited parallel to it and facing into the east side of the courtyard/turning space in front of the barn. Views from windows in the Old Keysford Hall will provide views of the building and the immediate curtilage.

The occupants of the adjacent dwelling at Old Keysford Hall have made representations on the proposed conversion and refer to the proposed new fenestration in the eastern facing elevation of the barn, which they consider will not present a privacy issue. They also request that the use of the ancillary accommodation is limited for the main Keysford residence only.

Given the distance and siting of the new bedroom window, and the high level location of the two eastern facing rooflights within the barn conversion it is considered that the new windows would not create a harmful degree of overlooking onto the neighbouring property. The introduction of the windows in the eastern elevation are therefore considered an acceptable introduction to the curtilage Listed Building, subject to detailed plans being provided to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development.

The proposal complies with District Plan Policy DP26, and the relevant Design Guide principles on amenity.

HRA Assessment

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the competent authority - in this case, Mid Sussex District Council - has a duty to ensure that any plans or projects that they regulate (including plan making and determining planning applications) will have no adverse effect on the integrity of a European site of nature conservation importance. The European site of focus is the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The potential effects of development on Ashdown Forest were assessed during the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process for the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031. This process identified likely significant effects on the Ashdown Forest SPA from recreational disturbance and on the Ashdown Forest SAC from atmospheric pollution.

An overall Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken for the planning application which includes the type of development proposed.

Recreational disturbance

Increased recreational activity arising from new residential development and related population growth is likely to disturb the protected near-ground and ground nesting birds on Ashdown Forest.

In accordance with advice from Natural England, the HRA for the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, and as detailed in District Plan Policy DP17, mitigation measures are necessary to counteract the effects of a potential increase in recreational pressure and are required for developments resulting in a net

increase in dwellings within a 7km zone of influence around the Ashdown Forest SPA. A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) mitigation approach has been developed. This mitigation approach has been agreed with Natural England.

This planning application does not result in a net increase in dwellings within the 7km zone of influence and so mitigation is not required.

Atmospheric pollution

Increased traffic emissions as a consequence of new development may result in additional atmospheric pollution on Ashdown Forest. The main pollutant effects of interest are acid deposition and eutrophication by nitrogen deposition. High levels of nitrogen may detrimentally affect the composition of an ecosystem and lead to loss of species.

It is considered that the proposed development will not lead to a significant increase in traffic across Ashdown Forest. There is not considered to be a significant in combination effect on the Ashdown Forest SAC by this development proposal.

Conclusion of the Habitats Regulations Assessment

The Habitats Regulations Assessment concludes that there would be no likely significant effects, alone or in combination, on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC from the types of development identified which includes this proposed development.

No mitigation is required in relation to the Ashdown Forest SPA or SAC.

A full HRA (that is, the appropriate assessment stage that ascertains the effect on integrity of the European site) of the proposed development is not required.

Ecology

The Ecologist has been consulted on this application and his comments are reported above.

The relevant District Plan Policy is DP38. This states:

'Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

- o 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*
- o 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*
- o Minimises habitat and species fragmentation and maximises opportunities to enhance and restore ecological corridors to connect natural habitats and increase coherence and resilience; and*
- o Promotes the restoration, management and expansion of priority habitats in the District; and*
- o 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.*

Designated sites will be given protection and appropriate weight according to their importance and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks.

Valued soils will be protected and enhanced, including the best and most versatile agricultural land, and development should not contribute to unacceptable levels of soil pollution.

Geodiversity will be protected by ensuring development prevents harm to geological conservation interests, and where possible, enhances such interests. Geological conservation interests include Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites.'

The Ecologist has reviewed the submitted Bat Survey Report and has confirmed that the application has been accompanied with sufficient ecological information available to support the determination of this application. They have recommended that a detailed informative is attached to the approval to ensure that the applicant is aware that mitigation measures to limit the harm to protected species must be in place prior to the commencement of any of the development works. This is to ensure the conservation of protected and Priority species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

The views of the Council's ecologist are accepted and with this informative in place the proposal is found to accord with the aims of District Plan Policy DP38 and the relevant NPPF guidance.

Drainage

Part of the entrance courtyard on the eastern side of the barn falls within an area of 1 in 1000 year surface water flooding. The application has been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment, and the details have been reviewed by the MSDC Flood and Drainage Team. Their comments are reported above.

The relevant District Plan Policy with regards to drainage is DP41. This states:

'Proposals for development will need to follow a sequential risk-based approach, ensure development is safe across its lifetime and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. The District Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) should be used to identify areas at present and future flood risk from a range of sources including fluvial (rivers and streams), surface water (pluvial), groundwater, infrastructure and reservoirs.

Particular attention will be paid to those areas of the District that have experienced flooding in the past and proposals for development should seek to reduce the risk of flooding by achieving a reduction from existing run-off rates.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be implemented in all new developments of 10 dwellings or more, or equivalent non-residential or mixed development unless demonstrated to be inappropriate, to avoid any increase in flood risk and protect surface and ground water quality. Arrangements for the long term maintenance and management of SuDS should also be identified.

For the redevelopment of brownfield sites, any surface water draining to the foul sewer must be disconnected and managed through SuDS following the remediation of any previously contaminated land.

SuDS should be sensitively designed and located to promote improved biodiversity, an enhanced landscape and good quality spaces that improve public amenities in the area, where possible.

The preferred hierarchy of managing surface water drainage from any development is:

- 1. Infiltration Measures*
- 2. Attenuation and discharge to watercourses; and if these cannot be met,*
- 3. Discharge to surface water only sewers.*

Land that is considered to be required for current and future flood management will be safeguarded from development and proposals will have regard to relevant flood risk plans and strategies.'

The MSDC Drainage Engineers have raised no objection to the proposal on flood risk grounds, subject to the proposed development incorporating all flood mitigation measures set out within the Flood Risk

Assessment, which can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition. Having regards to this, it is considered that the proposal accords with the aims of District Plan Policy DP41.

Contamination

As the proposal involves the use of a barn, formerly used for agricultural purposes, for ancillary residential accommodation the Contaminated Land Officer has been requested to comment on the proposal. The application has been submitted with an accompanying Preliminary Contamination Risk Assessment.

Planning conditions have been recommended in the consultees response to ensure that the site is suitable for residential occupation and does not pose unacceptable risks to human health or the environment. A preliminary risk assessment and site investigation scheme are required and a verification report to follow this to demonstrate that any remediation scheme required and approved has been implemented to accord with the approved details

Subject to the works being carried out accordingly the proposal is considered to address the aims of District Plan Policy DP26.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This is a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. As a householder application this development is exempt from the requirement to provide biodiversity net gain.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The proposed works include a variety of internal and external alterations to curtilage Listed barn at Keysford. The details of the proposed conversion works and their impact upon the historic fabric of the building have been examined and additional supporting information provided during the course of determining the application.

It is considered that the conversion to ancillary accommodation will conserve the building and protect its future as a heritage asset. The conversion works will enhance the external appearance of the building, whilst preserving the important internal features. The conversion will maintain the special interest of the curtilage listed barn and ensure its future and the positive contribution which it makes to the setting of Keysford/Old Keysford Hall.

The proposal will accord with District Plan Policies DP26 and DP34 and with the relevant provisions of the NPPF and adopted design guidance in respect to the design of the conversion.

Careful consideration has been given to the impact of the proposed changes and alterations to the building upon the neighbouring residents of Old Keysford Hall. It is considered that the neighbours living conditions and privacy would not be adversely impacted by the proposed alterations. The proposal complies with District Plan Policy DP26, and the relevant Design Guide principles on amenity.

The Ecologist has confirmed that the application has been accompanied with sufficient ecological information available to support the determination of this application, with a recommended informative. With this informative in place the proposal is found to accord with the aims of District Plan Policy DP38 and the relevant NPPF guidance.

The conversion scheme has been assessed by the Council's Contaminated Land Officer. Planning conditions are recommended to require the submission of a preliminary risk assessment and site investigation scheme, and a verification report to follow this, to ensure that the site is suitable for residential occupation and does not pose unacceptable risks to human health or the environment. Subject to the works being carried out accordingly the proposal is considered to address the aims of District Plan Policy DP26.

Consequently the application is recommended for approval, subject to a number of planning conditions, which have been reviewed and accepted by the applicant.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Anna Tidey