

Ms. J. Holmes
Assistant Chief Executive
Development Management
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex RH16 1SS

20th January 2025

Our Ref: J005161

Dear Ms. Holmes,

**FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE CONVERSION OF AN EXISTING
OUTBUILDING TO A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING INCLUDING ITS PARTIAL
DEMOLITION, ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING, REMOVAL OF TWO
OUTBUILDINGS, ERECTION OF A DETACHED GARAGE, AND REMOVAL OF
HARDSTANDING FOR THE FORMATION OF A GARDEN AT FLORAN FARM,
HOPHURST HILL, CRAWLEY, RH10 4LP**

I refer to the above. WS Planning & Architecture have been instructed by Mr. A. Batten to prepare and submit a planning application regarding the conversion of an existing outbuilding to a residential dwelling including its partial demolition, associated landscaping, removal of two outbuildings, erection of a detached garage, and removal of hardstanding for the formation of a garden at Floran Farm, Hophurst Hill, Crawley Down, RH10 4LP.

In support of the application we attach,

Completed application forms

Drawing No. J004869-CD-01 – Site Location Plan

Drawing No. J004869-CD-03 – Ex Site Plan

Drawing No. J004869-DD-04 – Ex Floor Plans

Drawing No. J004869-DD-05 – Ex Elevations

Drawing No. J004869-DD-06 – Ex Elevations Outbuilding 1

Drawing No. J004869-DD-07 – Ex Elevations Outbuilding 2

Drawing No. J004869-DD-08-A – PP Site Plan

Drawing No. J004869-DD-09 – PP Elevations

Drawing No. J004869-DD-10 – PP Floor Plans

This Cover Letter should be read in conjunction with the submitted documents.

WS Planning & Architecture

enquiries@wspace.co.uk | wspace.co.uk

Reg Office: 5 Pool House, Bancroft Road, Reigate Surrey, RH2 7RP

Company No. GB3763487 | WS Planning & Architecture is a trading name of Woods, Sanders & Co Ltd

Managing Director: Mr B Woods BA TP MRTPI

Planning Director: Mr S Copping BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

Architectural Director: Mr L Barker BA (Hons) BArch (Hons) RIBA

Surrey Office

5 Pool House
Bancroft Road
Reigate
Surrey RH2 7RP
01737 225 711

London Office

TBXH@ Sunley House
4 Bedford Park
Croydon
CR0 2AP
020 3828 1180

Kent Office

Brouard Architects
1 Bromley Lane
Chislehurst
Kent BR7 6LH
01689 857253

Application Site

The site comprises a large outbuilding currently in a mixed use, two smaller outbuildings used as site managers' cabins, and a large parcel of existing hardstanding where a number of vehicles, caravans, and miscellaneous debris is stored.

The outbuilding itself is mostly used as a car workshop, with three attached garages, and is used for general storage. There are also two no. existing residential units on the ground floor, with an existing courtyard garden.

The site shares an existing access off Hophurst Hill as Floran Farm. The application site is situated outside of the development boundary of East Grinstead within the countryside as defined in the District Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan. An aerial image of the application site is shown below in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1 – aerial image of the application site edged in red

Relevant Planning History

The application site and its surroundings host an extensive planning history, however, none of the applications hold any relevance to the current proposal, and therefore in the interests of brevity, they have not been included.

Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The NPPF was revised in December 2024 to reflect the new Labour government's drive for residential development.

Paragraph 11 details the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 39 highlights that **“local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”**.

Chapter 5 refers to ‘Delivering a sufficient supply of homes’. Paragraph 73 highlights that “small and medium sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area”.

Paragraph 110 states that **“the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making”**. This paragraph acknowledges that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.

Paragraph 135 states that “Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) **will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;**
- b) **are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;**
- c) **are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);**
- d) **establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;**

- e) **optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and**
- f) **create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”**

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031

Mid Sussex District Council adopted its District Plan on 28th March 2018. An extract from the Policies Map is shown below in **Figure 2**, with the application site approximately edged red.

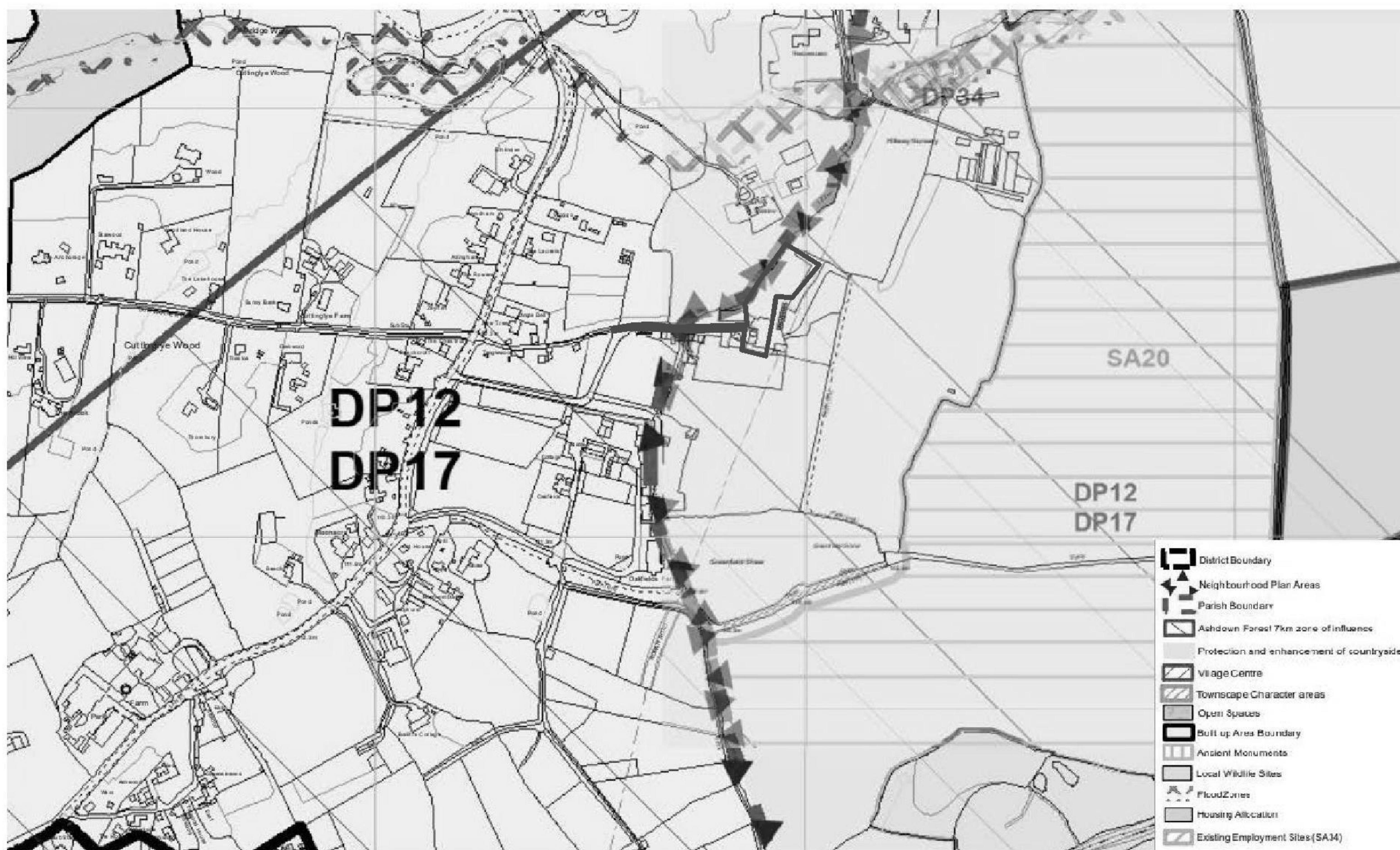


Figure 2 – Local Plan map with application site edged in red

Policy DP12 relates to Protection and Enhancement of Countryside and states that **“Development will be permitted in the countryside... provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:**

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

Policy DP15 refers to 'New homes in the Countryside' and allows new homes in the countryside provided they are not contrary to Policy DP12.

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 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 DP27);**
- **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.'**

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, also, in part states:

'...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);'

Policy DP29 refers to Noise, Air and Light Pollution and states **“the environment... and the quality of people’s life will be protected from unacceptable levels of noise, light and air pollution”**.

DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan supports the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland, hedgerows, and encourages new planting.

DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in part states:

'Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

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

Application Proposal

The application seeks the conversion of the existing outbuilding to a singular residential dwelling.

Conversion of outbuilding and associated alterations

The existing outbuilding hosts a lean-to structure which runs the length of the building. This is proposed to be demolished to make way for a new, landscaped side garden

area. **Figure 3** shows the area to be demolished in red on plan and in a photo. A small wooden porch on the west of the building is also proposed to be demolished. **Figure 4** shows the area to be demolished in red on plan and in a photo. The demolition of these sections of the building would improve the openness of the countryside, and the visual amenity of the site as a whole. The landscaped side garden would further increase the visual amenity, and provide an area within the site where a biodiversity improvements can be directed.

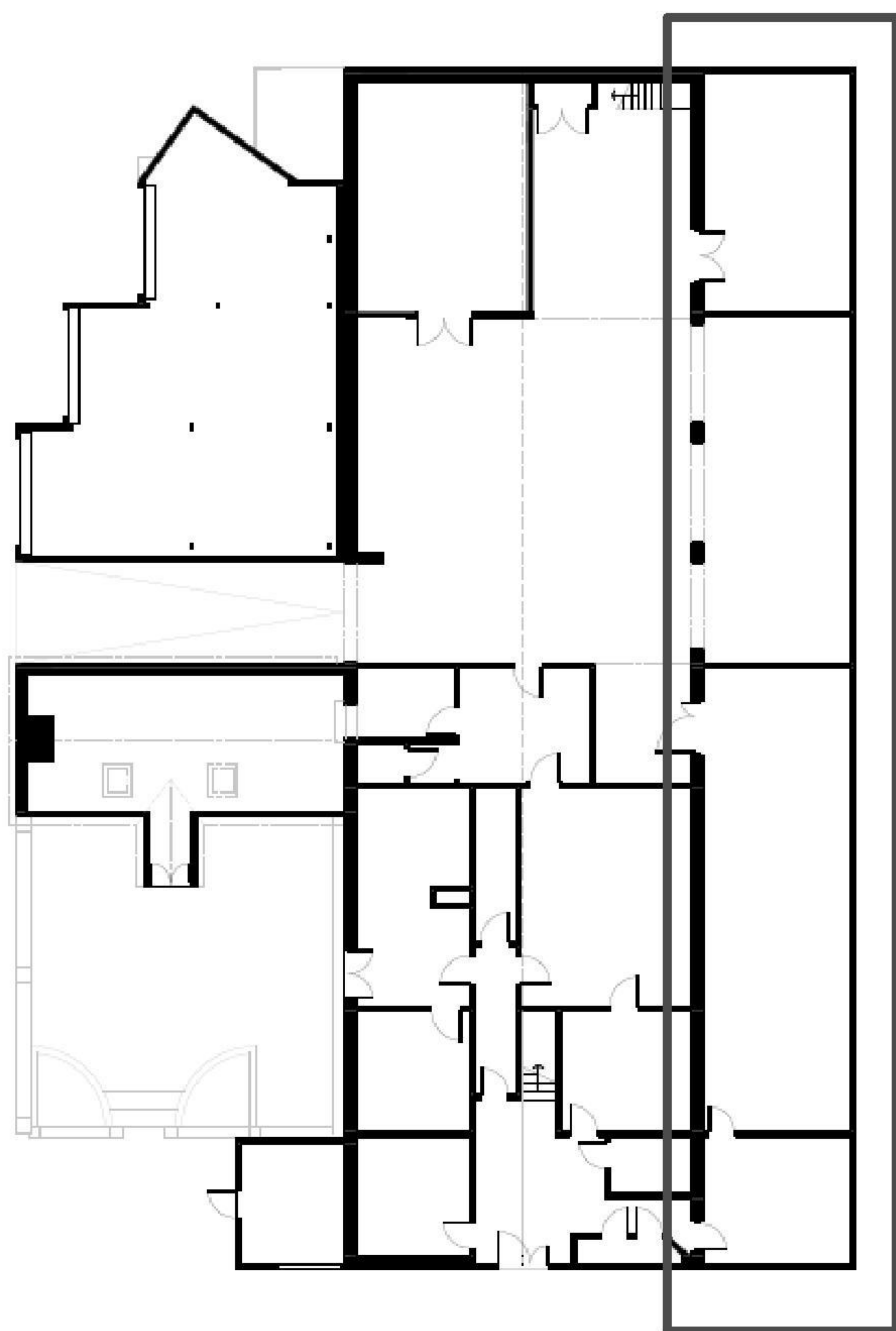


Figure 3 – lean-to to be demolished



Figure 4 – wooden porch to be demolished

Windows would be inserted on the north elevation, the east elevation where there are existing openings between the main building and the lean-to to be demolished, the south elevation, and a window and a door on the west elevation.

Internal walls would be inserted in the north section of the outbuilding to create two spacious reception rooms, and a new staircase to replace the existing. A minor change to the interior walls on the south side of the dwelling would delineate a grand entrance hall.

The three attached garages would remain as existing to the west elevation. A new front door would be sited between them and one of the existing residential units, opening to a new entrance hall. To the north of the hall would be a large reception room with a vaulted ceiling, beyond which a room in which the proposed staircase is sited in the middle, to allow for a dual use of the space without compromising on the open-plan feel.

To the south of the entrance hall would be a number of smaller reception rooms (with the potential to be used as bedrooms for the applicants to use the dwelling more comfortably as they age). This section of the building hosts two existing residential units, which would be converted alongside the rest of the building to provide a singular residential unit. The main spaces within the units would provide new garden room with their entrances being repurposed to provide direct access to the courtyard garden, and easier access to the proposed side garden.

The first floor would be separated by the vaulted ceiling just north of the entrance hall, which would help provide additional privacy within the home.

The changes to the building would result in the cessation of the use of the two existing residential units, and overall improve the visual appearance of the building whilst making the internal space usable as a dwelling. The changes would comprise a marked improvement of the visual amenity of the building.

Removal of two outbuildings and erection of garage

Just north of the outbuilding to be converted, are two site managers' cabin outbuildings. **Figure 5** shows a photo of the outbuildings. These are proposed to be removed, and on their footprint a three-bay/six-car garage be proposed. Given the existing use of the main outbuilding as a car workshop, there would need to be somewhere else on site to store the cars. The garage would be of a similar, single storey height, and flat-roof form as the buildings to be removed.



Figure 5 – cabins to be removed

The current outbuildings are unsightly, and their replacement with a new build garage would comprise a visual improvement. Given the siting of the new garage on the existing footprint of the cabins, there would be no impact on the rural character, or openness of the countryside.

Removal of hardstanding for the formation of a garden

The proposal also comprises the removal of a large area of hardstanding, on which a vast number of vehicles and other debris is sited. **Figure 6** shows an aerial photo. This would be seeded to grass, and would form the dwelling's formal garden. The formation of the garden would provide opportunity for enhanced landscaping, and the provision biodiversity enhancements on site. Given that according to the DEFRA index,

hardstanding hosts a value of 0, its removal would only present a positive gain in biodiversity terms.



Figure 6 – hardstanding area to be removed

It should be considered that the removal of hardstanding be a substantial benefit to the proposal. The proposal, by its nature of conversion, and its de minimis built form of only the garage building, means it is exempt from being required to provide a net gain of biodiversity. Therefore, the enhancement of the site in this way, and the ability to provide a net gain in biodiversity in an instance where it is not required should be afforded substantial weight.

The removal of the hardstanding and objects stored on it would only present a positive impact on the openness of the countryside, allowing it to be sensitively restored to a well-landscaped garden, which would appear much more in-keeping with the rural and open character of the surrounding countryside.

Summary

In conclusion, the proposal comprises the conversion of an existing building to a residential unit. The proposal would not harm the openness of the countryside, but would rather improve the visual amenity of the site, and better complement the countryside's rural character than the existing site condition.

It is therefore the case that the development is wholly compliant with the Local Plan, and as such should be encouraged by the LPA, and permission ought to be granted.

If you would like to make arrangements to visit the site, then please advise us of suitable dates and we will discuss with the applicant on what assistance can be provided.

Yours sincerely,

