

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/1394	Case Officer:	Peter Davies
Application Type:	Lawful Development Certificate -Existing		
Proposal:	The building works consist of the main 'L' shape garage block, a four bay garage block, a double garage block, an outbuilding and the driveway / parking area.		
Site:	Fen Place Mill, East Street, Turners Hill, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 4QQ, ,		
Validation Date	5 Jun 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	1 Jul 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	20 Jul 2026
Target Date:	31 Jul 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	Peter Davies

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	21 Jul 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/1394

**Fen Place Mill, East Street, Turners Hill, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 4QQ,
The building works consist of the main 'L' shape garage block, a four bay garage block, a double garage block, an outbuilding and the driveway / parking area.
Mr And Mrs Beasley**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No Comment.

INTRODUCTION

The proposal is seeking a Lawful Development Certificate under section 191 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to establish the lawfulness of part of the L shaped garage block, 4 bay garage, 2 bay garage, outbuilding and the driveway and parking area at fen Place Mill, East Street, Turners Hill, Crawley, West Sussex, Rh10 4QQ.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is located on land belonging to Fen Place Mill, a grade II listed building located within the countryside with the site located to the north of the dwelling. The application site consists of a large L-shaped 10 bay garage, 4 bay garage, 2 bay garage, outbuilding and associated hardstanding. To the north, east and west of the site are trees with fields beyond. To the southwest is a lake.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application is seeking a Lawful Development Certificate under section 191 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as to the lawfulness of the existing 4 no. buildings and associated areas of hardstanding.

Building 1 consists of an L shaped 10 bay garage with the length of the north to south side being approximately 29.90 metres and the length of the east to west part of the building being approximately 25.25 metres. Both sides have a depth of 7.30 metres. The building has a pitched roof with an eaves height of approximately 3.0 metres and an overall height of 4.30 metres. the building is constructed from brown render with slate roof tiles.

Building 2 consists of a 4 bay garage on the western part of the site. The building has a width and depth of 12.0 metres and 5.60 metres. The building has a pitched roof with an eaves height of 2.50 metres and an overall height of 3.40 metres. The garage building is constructed from timber with a felt roof.

Building 3 consists of a 2 bay garage with a width and depth of approximately 6.10 metres and 6.15 metres. The building has a pitched roof with an eaves height of 2.60 metres and an overall height of 3.70 metres. The building is constructed from timber with a felt roof.

Building 4 shows to be a building used for boilers. The building will have a width and depth of 4.30 metres and 3.70 metres. The building will have a pitched roof with an eaves height of 2.30 metres and an overall height of 2.95 metres. The building is constructed from timber with a felt roof.

The area between these buildings and connecting to the driveway has been surfaced in tarmac.

The description was amended to remove the wording 'within the residential curtilage.'

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Section 191 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 indicates that the burden of proof lies with the applicant. The relevant test is 'the balance of probability' and Local Planning Authorities are advised that if they have no evidence of their own to contradict or undermine the applicant's version of events there is no good reason to refuse the application provided that the applicants' version is precise and unambiguous to justify the grant of a certificate. This section also indicates that 'if on an application under this section, the LPA are provided with information satisfying them that the use or operations described in the application would be lawful, if instituted or begun at the time the application, they should issue a certificate to that effect; and in any other case they shall refuse the application'.

Time limits for enforcement set out in Section 171B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990:

'(1) Where there has been a breach of planning control consisting in the carrying out without planning permission of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, no enforcement action may be taken after the end of -

(a) in the case of a breach of planning control in England, ten years beginning with the date in which the operations were substantially completed, and

(b) in the case of a breach of planning control in Wales, four years beginning with the date on which the operations were substantially completed.

(2) Where there has been a breach of planning control consisting in the change of use of any building to use as a single dwellinghouse, no enforcement action may be taken after the end of the period of -

(a) in the case of a breach of planning control in England, ten years beginning with the date in which the operations were substantially completed, and

(b) in the case of a breach of planning control in Wales, four years beginning with the date on which the operations were substantially completed.

(2A) There is no restriction on when enforcement action may be taken in relation to a breach of planning control in respect of relevant demolition (within the meaning of section 196D).

3) In the case of any other breach of planning control, no enforcement action may be taken after the end of the period of ten years beginning with the date of the breach.

4) The preceding subsections do not prevent -

a) the service of a breach of condition notice in respect of any breach of planning control if an enforcement notice in respect of the breach is in effect; or

b) taking further enforcement action in respect of any breach of planning control if, during the period of four years ending with that action being taken, the local planning authority have taken or purported to take enforcement action in respect of that breach.'

It should be noted that Section 171B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 was amended by the section 115 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023. The amendments in part removed the previous enforcement period in (2) of section 171(B) which was four years and replaced it with a 10 year enforcement period.

Section 115 of The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 includes transitional arrangements for this change which state that the alterations to section 171(B) made by the 2023 Act

'do not apply where -

(a) in respect of a breach of planning control referred to in section 171B(1) of the 1990 Act (5) (time limits), the operations were substantially completed, or

(b) in respect of a breach of planning control referred to in section 171B(2) of the 1990 Act (time limits), the breach occurred,

before the day on which that section comes into force.'

The 2023 Act came into force on the 25th of July 2024. From the documents that have been submitted it is considered that the breach in question occurred between 2009 and 2014, which was when the works were carried out.

As such the transitional arrangements as set out within the 2023 Act are considered appropriate and the relevant time period is four years. The applicant is required to demonstrate on the balance of probabilities that the buildings have been in place for more than four years from the date of this application.

The onus of proof is firmly on the applicant and the standard of proof is the balance of probability. If there are contradictions in the applicant's evidence on material issues, then the LPA would be entitled to refuse the certificate.

More recently the Localism Act has introduced legislation under section 171BA for cases where the LPA that there has been deliberate concealment. This states:

'171BA Time limits in cases involving concealment

1) Where it appears to the local planning authority that there may have been a breach of planning control in respect of any land in England, the authority may apply to a magistrates' court for an order under this subsection (a "planning enforcement order") in relation to that apparent breach of planning control.

2) If a magistrates' court makes a planning enforcement order in relation to an apparent breach of planning control, the local planning authority may take enforcement action in respect of-

a) the apparent breach, or

b) any of the matters constituting the apparent breach, at any time in the enforcement year.

3) "The enforcement year" for a planning enforcement order is the year that begins at the end of 22 days beginning with the day on which the court's decision to make the order is given, but this is subject to subsection (4).

4) If an application under section 111(1) of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 (statement of case for opinion of High Court) is made in respect of a planning enforcement order, the enforcement year for the order is the year beginning with the day on which the proceedings arising from that application are finally determined or withdrawn.

5) Subsection (2)-

a) applies whether or not the time limits under section 171B have expired, and

b) does not prevent the taking of enforcement action after the end of the enforcement year but within those time limits.'

This confirms that where a person has deliberately set out to mislead the LPA, the time limits set out in Section 171B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 do not apply.

ASSESSMENT

The evidence that has been submitted consists of 4 no. Statutory Declarations from the owner, full time gardener for 28 years, and 2 people who have worked on the land for over 20 years. These statutory declarations show that building 3 was in place in 2009 with buildings 2 and 4 in place by 2013 and works started on building 1 in 2014 and completed by March 2015 including the tarmac hard surfacing. These

include pictures from these dates showing the buildings already in place and during the construction of building 1.

This is supported by Google Earth that shows buildings 2, 3 and 4 in place in 2013 and building 1 during construction in 2014.

With this in mind and in the absence of any contradictory evidence, it is considered that on the balance of probabilities, the buildings and hard surfacing has been in place for more than 4 years from the date of this application.

CONCLUSION

It is considered that the applicant has established on the balance of probabilities that the buildings have been in place for more than 4 years from the date of the Lawful Development Certificate application and a Lawful Development Certificate can be issued.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Peter Davies