

Awbrook House

Planning Statement

August 2026



Site:

Awbrook House

Slugwash Lane

Haywards Heath

RH17 7TB

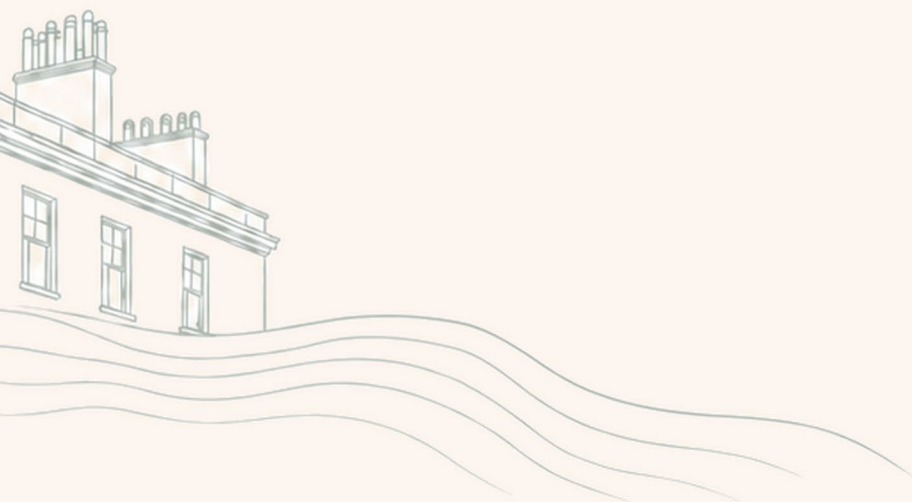
Project:

The construction and ancillary outbuilding at Awbrook House

Revision Audit

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1. Rubix Planners – Chartered Planners

- 1.1. Rubix Planning Ltd is an independent Chartered Town Planning consultancy providing professional planning and development advice across London and the South East of England. The practice is regulated by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and operates in accordance with the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct.
- 1.2. This Planning Support Statement has been prepared under the supervision of an MRTPI Chartered Town Planner.
- 1.3. The advice contained within this Statement is based on a review of the site context, the proposed development, and the relevant planning policy framework.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. This Planning Support Statement has been prepared to accompany a householder planning application to Mid Sussex District Council for the erection of a detached residential outbuilding within the domestic curtilage of Awbrook House, Slugwash Lane, Haywards Heath.
- 2.2. The proposal comprises an 'L'-shaped outbuilding, providing three vehicle bays and a workshop. The building is intended to serve purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling, including the storage of domestic vehicles, site machinery and a tractor, together with equipment required for the ongoing maintenance of the applicant's large residential curtilage. There are no existing buildings within the site that are appropriate or capable of meeting these functional needs.
- 2.3. This Statement describes the site and its context, summarises relevant planning policy, and assesses the proposal against the main planning considerations. It concludes that the development is appropriate in scale, appropriately sited and designed, and would not result in material harm to the character of the area or neighbouring residential amenity.
- 2.4. The assessment concludes that the proposed development represents an appropriate



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and proportionate form of ancillary residential development that can be accommodated without material harm to the character of the area, the countryside setting, or neighbouring amenity. On this basis, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted. On this basis, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

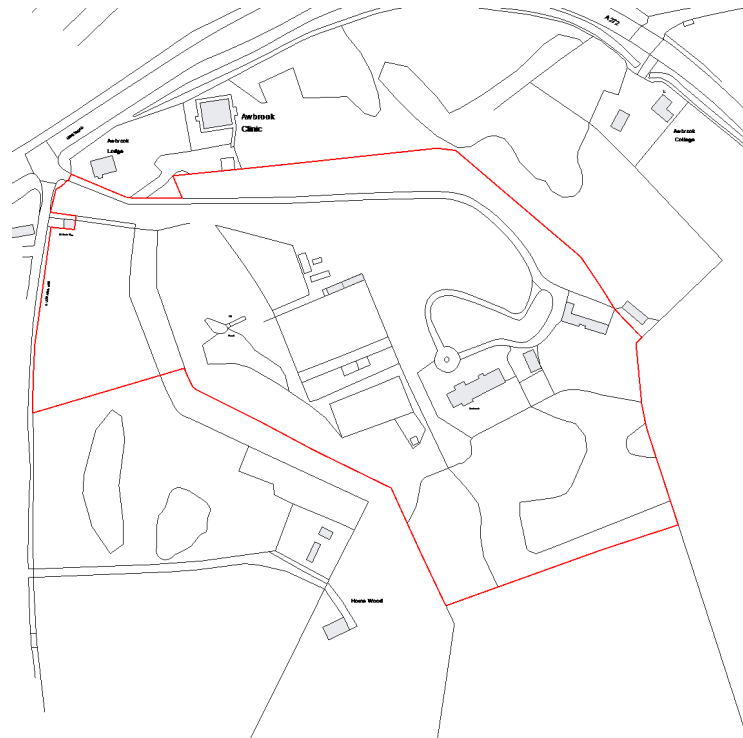


Figure 1 – Site Location – not to scale

3. Site Description & Context

- 3.1. Awbrook House is a detached residential property located on Slugwash Lane, a rural lane characterised by dispersed dwellings set within generous plots and a predominantly countryside setting. The lane is lightly developed, with properties typically screened by mature vegetation and boundary treatment, contributing to a strong sense of rural character and privacy.
- 3.2. The application site comprises the established residential curtilage of Awbrook House. The dwelling sits comfortably within its plot and benefits from associated domestic structures within the site, including garaging, a historic walled garden and a former stable



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block now in a state of disrepair. Historic Ordnance Survey mapping indicates that additional buildings previously occupied parts of the site, and a number of exposed foundations remain evident, reflecting the historic presence of built form which has since been removed. The curtilage is clearly delineated and reads unambiguously as domestic in character, with no encroachment into open countryside beyond the residential plot.

- 3.3. The surrounding area comprises a loose pattern of individual residential properties set within generous plots along Slugwash Lane, with development characterised by spacing between dwellings rather than continuous built frontage. Built form is domestic in scale and largely screened by boundary planting and vegetation, resulting in a settled residential character within a wider countryside setting. The pattern of development reflects the long-established use of the lane for residential properties rather than any planned or uniform form of development.
- 3.4. Awbrook House is not located within a conservation area, and the site does not contain any listed buildings. There are no heritage designations affecting the application site. The site is not subject to any settlement boundary designation that would preclude ancillary domestic development within the residential curtilage.
- 3.5. The proposed location of the outbuilding lies within the existing garden area associated with the dwelling, well contained by the established layout of the site and existing landscaping. The relationship between the proposed development and the host dwelling is clearly subordinate, and the siting reflects typical domestic arrangements found in comparable properties within the area.
- 3.6. Overall, the site context is one where ancillary residential development of an appropriate scale can be accommodated without undermining the character of the area or the established pattern of development, subject to appropriate siting and design considerations.

4. Relevant Planning History

- 4.1. There is no planning history at Awbrook House that is directly relevant to the current proposal. There are no extant permissions or refusals relating to residential outbuildings



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within the site's curtilage that would materially influence the determination of this application.

- 4.2. The proposal has therefore been assessed on its own merits against the adopted Development Plan and other material considerations.

5. Planning Policy Context

- 5.1. The statutory Development Plan for the purposes of determining this application comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031 (adopted March 2018), together with any relevant made neighbourhood plans. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material consideration.

National Planning Policy Framework - February 2025

- 5.2. The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and provides the overarching policy context for decision-taking.
- 5.3. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that development proposals should be approved where they accord with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This principle underpins the assessment of the current proposal.
- 5.4. Section 12 of the Framework places strong emphasis on achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 131 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and is fundamental to creating places that function well and add to the overall quality of an area. Paragraph 135 requires development to be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built and landscape context, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.
- 5.5. Paragraph 139 makes clear that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. Conversely, well-designed development that responds appropriately to its context is actively supported.



- 5.6. Section 14 of the NPPF addresses meeting the challenge of climate change and sustainable development. Paragraph 159 requires development to be planned in a way that avoids increased vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and contributes to mitigation and adaptation where proportionate to the scale of development.
- 5.7. Section 15 of the Framework is concerned with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 180 requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Development should avoid unacceptable harm to landscape character and should be appropriately located and designed.
- 5.8. Paragraph 184 confirms that decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location, taking into account the likely effects on the natural environment and the character of the area.
- 5.9. In relation to residential amenity, paragraph 135(f) requires development to create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. This includes consideration of privacy, outlook, noise, and general living conditions.
- 5.10. The NPPF supports development that is well designed, responsive to its context, and capable of being accommodated without harm to landscape character or residential amenity.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031

- 5.11. The Mid Sussex District Plan provides the local policy framework against which the application must be assessed. The most relevant policies are as follows.
- 5.12. **Policy DP12 (Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside)** seeks to safeguard the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Development outside built-up area boundaries is restricted to appropriate forms of development that do not undermine rural character. Ancillary residential development within the curtilage of an existing dwelling is not precluded by this policy, provided it remains subordinate and does not result in material harm to the countryside.



- 5.13. **Policy DP26 (Character and Design)** requires all development to demonstrate high quality design that responds positively to the character, scale, and appearance of the surrounding area. Development should integrate well with its site and surroundings and should not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.
- 5.14. **Policy DP29 (Noise, Air and Light Pollution)** seeks to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable impacts on the living conditions of nearby residents. Proposals should avoid generating noise, disturbance, or activity that would be inappropriate in a residential or rural context.
- 5.15. **Policy DP37 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows)** aims to protect trees, hedgerows, and woodland that contribute positively to landscape character. Development should avoid unnecessary loss of vegetation and should integrate sensitively with existing landscape features.
- 5.16. **Policy DP38 (Biodiversity)** requires development to protect and, where possible, enhance biodiversity interests. The level of information and mitigation required should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal.
- 5.17. **Policy DP39 (Sustainable Design and Construction)** promotes sustainable development principles, including efficient use of resources and appropriate design responses, proportionate to the scale of development proposed.

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

- 5.18. The Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document provides detailed guidance on the delivery of high quality, context-led design and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It places emphasis on understanding the site, its surroundings, and the relationship between new development and the host property.
- 5.19. The Design Guide makes clear that new buildings within residential plots should respond to the character of the site rather than impose a generic or standardised form. Design is expected to arise from the specific qualities of the plot, including its size, layout, landscape structure and the appearance of the main dwelling. Paragraphs 2.3 to 2.5 require development to respond positively to local character, landscape features and



settlement pattern, particularly in rural parts of the District where dispersed development and openness are defining characteristics.

- 5.20. Residential outbuildings are expected to remain secondary to the host dwelling. The Design Guide emphasises that ancillary buildings should be clearly subordinate in scale and visual presence, avoiding excessive height, bulk or architectural emphasis. Paragraphs 9.1 and 9.2 confirm that extensions and ancillary buildings should respect the scale, form and character of the host dwelling and should not result in overdevelopment of the site. Outbuildings are expected to read as supporting structures within the curtilage, rather than competing elements or focal features.
- 5.21. The positioning of outbuildings within a plot is treated as a key design consideration. The Design Guide advises that ancillary structures should be carefully located to reflect the established layout of the site and to avoid a sense of overdevelopment. Appropriate separation from boundaries and neighbouring properties is expected, allowing the host dwelling to remain the dominant element within the plot.
- 5.22. In rural and semi-rural locations, the Design Guide highlights the importance of responding to landscape character. Development is expected to respect the openness of the countryside and the dispersed pattern of buildings, avoiding forms or detailing that would introduce an urban or suburban appearance. New structures should sit comfortably within their setting and, where appropriate, be softened by existing or proposed landscaping.
- 5.23. The Design Guide also addresses scale and proportion, noting that the cumulative effect of development within a residential plot should be considered. The addition of outbuildings should not erode the spacious qualities of a site or result in an overly intensive arrangement of buildings, even where individual elements are modest in isolation.
- 5.24. Materials and detailing are expected to complement the host dwelling and its surroundings. The Design Guide encourages a restrained approach for ancillary buildings, with simple forms and finishes that sit quietly within the site. In rural contexts, materials should weather naturally and avoid drawing unnecessary attention.



- 5.25. Residential amenity is identified as a core consideration throughout the Design Guide. Ancillary buildings should be designed and sited so as not to result in overlooking, loss of privacy, an overbearing presence or undue disturbance to neighbouring occupiers. Careful attention to orientation, separation distances and the placement of openings is encouraged.
- 5.26. A consistent theme throughout the Design Guide is proportionality. Ancillary development should be appropriate to its stated purpose and should not incorporate features that suggest independent or self-contained occupation. This approach reflects the wider objective of ensuring that residential plots are not incrementally intensified in a manner that would undermine planning control.

6. Assessment of the Proposed Development

- 6.1. The proposed development comprises the erection of a detached residential outbuilding within the established domestic curtilage of Awbrook House. The assessment below considers the proposal against the principal planning considerations arising from the site context and the relevant planning policy framework.
- 6.2.
- 6.3. The proposal takes the form of an 'L'-shaped building with a footprint of approximately 132 sq m, providing three vehicle bays and an associated workshop. The building is intended to accommodate domestic vehicles, site machinery and a tractor, together with equipment required for the maintenance of the applicant's large residential curtilage. There are no existing buildings within the site that are suitable or capable of meeting these functional needs.
- 6.4. The outbuilding would be of portal-frame construction, set on a concrete slab, with an eaves height of approximately 2.4–2.5 metres and a ridge height of approximately 3.5 metres. External finishes comprise green profiled metal cladding to the walls and roof. The form and appearance are deliberately functional and restrained, consistent with a domestic ancillary structure rather than a primary residential building.



- 6.5. The proposed building would be used solely for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling. It would not operate as a separate planning unit, would not provide facilities enabling independent occupation, and would remain functionally and physically subordinate to the host dwelling.

Principle of Development

- 6.6. The principle of ancillary development within the curtilage of an existing dwelling is well established in planning terms. The proposal does not introduce a new dwelling, a separate unit of accommodation, or a commercial use, nor does it alter the lawful residential use of the site.
- 6.7. Although the site lies within a rural setting, countryside protection policies are primarily concerned with resisting new and isolated residential development or the unjustified expansion of built form beyond established residential curtilage. The proposed outbuilding is located wholly within the defined domestic curtilage of Awbrook House and serves a clear and justified ancillary residential function.
- 6.8. The proposal is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to considerations of scale, siting, design and impact.

Scale, Siting & Design

- 6.9. The scale of the proposed outbuilding is appropriate when assessed in the context of the size, layout and functional requirements of the site. While the building has a substantial footprint, this is directly related to its intended use, including the accommodation of multiple vehicles, site machinery and a tractor associated with the maintenance of a large residential curtilage. The proposal does not represent overdevelopment of the site.
- 6.10. The 'L'-shaped form has been selected to reduce visual bulk and to allow the building to sit comfortably within the available space, reflecting the established layout of the curtilage. The siting ensures appropriate separation from site boundaries and neighbouring properties, and avoids any encroachment into adjoining land beyond the residential plot.



- 6.11. In design terms, the outbuilding adopts a simple, utilitarian form appropriate to its ancillary function. The portal-frame construction and restrained external finishes ensure that the building reads as a functional domestic structure rather than a focal or dominant element. The limited height and uncomplicated roof form further reduce visual presence and ensure that the host dwelling remains the principal building within the site.

Impact on Character & Appearance of the Area

- 6.12. The surrounding area is characterised by dispersed residential properties set within generous plots, with ancillary buildings commonly associated with larger rural dwellings. Development is typically filtered by landscaping and boundary treatment, contributing to a settled residential character within a wider countryside setting.
- 6.13. The proposed outbuilding would not undermine this character. Its siting within the established residential curtilage, combined with its functional appearance and modest height, ensures that it would not appear incongruous or visually intrusive. The 'L'-shaped form and restrained materials allow the building to sit quietly within its setting and avoid undue prominence.
- 6.14. Any visual change arising from the development would be localised and contained within the site. The proposal would therefore preserve the character and appearance of both the immediate area and its wider rural context.

Residential Amenity

- 6.15. The proposed development has been carefully assessed in relation to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, with particular regard to Awbrook Cottage.
- 6.16. The height, scale and positioning of the outbuilding ensure that it would not appear overbearing and would not result in loss of privacy, overlooking or unacceptable overshadowing. The use of the building would remain incidental to the residential occupation of Awbrook House and would not generate activity, noise or disturbance beyond that typically associated with a single dwelling and its associated domestic



maintenance.

- 6.17. The relationship with neighbouring properties is therefore such that residential amenity would be preserved.

Landscape & Visual Considerations

- 6.18. The site benefits from an established landscape framework and boundary treatment which already provides a degree of visual containment. The proposal has been designed to sit within this framework without the need for the removal of significant vegetation.
- 6.19. In addition, the development incorporates purpose-designed boundary screening along the relevant site boundary to mitigate views from Awbrook Cottage and from the public realm. This comprises low level English Yew hedging, planted at a density of two plants per linear metre, with an initial height of approximately 1.2–1.5 metres, together with five hornbeam trees (*Carpinus betulus* ‘Frans Fontaine’) of advanced nursery maturity.
- 6.20. This combination of evergreen hedging and structural tree planting will provide immediate and longer-term screening, softening views towards the outbuilding and ensuring that it reads as a discreet element within the wider garden setting. Over time, the planting will further integrate the development into the landscape and reinforce the sense of containment.
- 6.21. With this mitigation in place, the proposal would result in no material harm to landscape character or visual amenity.

7. Planning Balance

- 7.1. The determination of this application requires an assessment of the proposal against the adopted Development Plan, having regard to other material considerations.
- 7.2. The proposal comprises a detached ancillary residential outbuilding located wholly



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within the established domestic curtilage of Awbrook House. It does not introduce a new dwelling, an independent residential unit, or any form of commercial use, and it does not extend built form beyond the defined residential plot. The development is therefore fundamentally different in nature from the forms of development that countryside protection policies seek to restrict.

- 7.3. Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan seeks to protect the character and appearance of the countryside by resisting inappropriate development outside built-up area boundaries. In this case, the proposal represents a proportionate and justified form of ancillary development, directly related to the lawful residential use of the site. The outbuilding is required to accommodate domestic vehicles, site machinery and a tractor associated with the maintenance of a large residential curtilage, and there are no existing buildings within the site capable of meeting these functional needs. The proposal does not undermine the objectives of Policy DP12 and results in no material harm to countryside character.
- 7.4. Policy DP26 requires development to achieve a high standard of design and to respond positively to its context. The proposed outbuilding is subordinate to the host dwelling in both visual and functional terms, and its scale, 'L'-shaped form and restrained appearance ensure that it sits comfortably within the site. The development respects the established pattern of dispersed residential development along Slugwash Lane and does not introduce an incongruous or dominant feature.
- 7.5. Residential amenity has been carefully considered, with particular regard to the relationship with Awbrook Cottage. The siting, scale and height of the outbuilding ensure that it does not give rise to overbearing effects, loss of privacy or unacceptable disturbance. In addition, the incorporation of purpose-designed boundary screening provides effective mitigation of potential visual impacts when viewed from neighbouring land and from the public realm. As a result, the proposal accords with Policies DP26 and DP29 in safeguarding residential amenity.
- 7.6. Policies DP37 and DP38 seek to protect landscape features and biodiversity. The proposal does not require the removal of significant vegetation and is supported by new boundary planting that reinforces landscape structure and visual containment. No



biodiversity harm arises from development within an established residential garden, and the scale of the proposal is such that no further mitigation is required.

- 7.7. Policy DP39 promotes sustainable design and construction principles in a manner proportionate to the scale of development. The proposal represents a contained and efficient use of land within an existing residential plot and avoids unnecessary environmental or visual impacts, consistent with the aims of this policy.
- 7.8. National planning policy strongly supports well-designed development that responds appropriately to its context and can be accommodated without harm to landscape character or residential amenity. The proposal aligns with these objectives and does not give rise to any adverse impacts that would justify refusal.
- 7.9. When assessed as a whole, the proposal represents an appropriate, proportionate and well-considered form of ancillary residential development. It meets a clear domestic need, is contained within the residential curtilage, incorporates effective mitigation, and accords with the relevant policies of the Development Plan. There are no material considerations that indicate planning permission should be withheld.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. This Planning Support Statement has assessed the proposed ancillary residential outbuilding at Awbrook House against the relevant provisions of the Development Plan and other material considerations.
- 8.2. The proposal comprises a detached 'L'-shaped outbuilding providing three vehicle bays and a workshop to meet the functional domestic needs of the occupiers. The building is intended solely for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling, including the storage of domestic vehicles, site machinery and a tractor associated with the maintenance of a large residential curtilage. There are no existing buildings within the site that are suitable to accommodate these requirements.



- 8.3. The development is located wholly within the established residential curtilage of Awbrook House and does not extend built form into the surrounding countryside. It would not function as a separate planning unit and would not introduce any independent or commercial use. The principle of development is therefore acceptable.
- 8.4. The scale, siting and design of the outbuilding ensure that it remains clearly subordinate to the host dwelling and sits comfortably within the layout of the site. The 'L'-shaped form, limited height and restrained appearance reduce visual bulk and prevent the development from appearing dominant or incongruous within its setting.
- 8.5. The relationship with neighbouring properties, including Awbrook Cottage, has been carefully considered. The proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts on residential amenity through overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing effect or disturbance. In addition, the incorporation of purpose-designed boundary screening provides effective mitigation of potential visual impacts when viewed from neighbouring land and from the public realm.
- 8.6. The proposal would not result in harm to landscape character or biodiversity and does not require the removal of significant vegetation. The development accords with national planning policy and with the relevant policies of the Mid Sussex District Plan, including those relating to countryside protection, design quality, landscape character and residential amenity.
- 8.7. When assessed in the round, the proposal represents an appropriate and proportionate form of ancillary residential development that meets a clear domestic need and can be accommodated without material harm. On this basis, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

