

Justification for the Change of Use – Conversion of Existing Barn

*Pickhams Cottage
Cuckfield Road
Hurstpierpoint
BN6 9LL*

This statement seeks to assist the planning and listed building consent application for the conversion of the listed barn at Pickhams Cottage to residential use.

The proposed development seeks the sympathetic conversion of a redundant barn building into a high-quality residential dwelling, in full accordance with Paragraph 84 of the NPPF (excluding point a). The existing barn has not been used for agricultural purposes in its current location and has instead been used for incidental domestic storage associated with the main house. As such, it is considered functionally redundant in agricultural terms and does not serve a viable rural purpose.

The barn is located in close proximity to the existing listed dwelling, approximately 15 metres away, and shares the same access. The proposal represents a consolidation of development within an existing residential curtilage, rather than the introduction of a new isolated dwelling in the countryside. The proposal does not represent an intensification of development in the countryside but rather a logical and sustainable reuse of an existing building within an established residential setting. While the proposal introduces a residential use, any resulting harm is limited and is outweighed by the clear public benefit of securing the repair, preservation and viable long-term use of a listed building.

The project is justified by the building's permanent and substantial construction, as evidenced by the structural survey, ensuring that the proposal constitutes a conversion rather than a rebuild. By utilising the embodied carbon of the existing structure, the development represents a more sustainable alternative to new-build construction. The building is currently in a deteriorating condition and requires structural repairs to secure its long-term future. The proposed conversion provides a viable and sustainable use that will enable these necessary works to be carried out and ensure the ongoing maintenance of the building.

Architecturally, the design sets out to preserve the rural character and vernacular of the landscape through minimal structural intervention as outlined in the structural report thereby providing a visual enhancement to the immediate setting. The scale of the proposed extension is modest and subservient to the existing barn, and it is not visible from the access road. The overall visual impact of the proposal within the wider landscape is therefore limited. The scheme adopts a conservation-led approach, retaining the existing timber frame and ensuring that the character and structural form of the building remain clearly legible externally and internally.

Furthermore, the conversion will secure the long-term viable use and maintenance of the building and contributing to the diversity of the local housing stock without encroaching upon the openness of the countryside. By securing a sustainable new use for the redundant structure, the proposal prevents the 'substantial harm' that would result from its continued decay and eventual loss from the Grade II listed setting.

CDMS Sussex, April 2026