

Planning Statement

Alterations to existing dwelling and erection of new three-bedroom dwelling to the rear

Gilridge, Brighton Road, Handcross, West Sussex, RH17 6BZ

Prepared for

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Prepared by

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. dowsettmayhew Planning Partnership are instructed by our clients, Mr Barry Davis and Ms Sophie Moon, to prepare a Planning Statement to support a full planning application seeking alterations to the existing dwelling, Gilridge, Brighton Road, Handcross and the erection of a new three bedroom dwelling to its rear.
- 1.2. Gilridge is an existing four bedroom detached chalet style bungalow set within a generous plot on the western side of Brighton Road. Earlier this year planning permission was granted for its demolition and the erection of three new dwellings (application DM/24/0445 refers). The applicants have subsequently reconsidered the proposals and would now like to retain the existing dwelling, and seek the erection of just a single new dwelling to its rear.
- 1.3. The application is to be considered in relation to the following list of drawings and supporting documents:
 - Site Location & Block Plan (23/114/LOC Rev E);
 - Existing Site Plan (23/114/site Rev A);
 - Existing Ground & First Floor Plans (23/114/sk01 Rev A);
 - Existing Elevations (23/114/sk02 Rev A);
 - Existing Roof Plan (23/114/sk03 Rev A);
 - Existing Street Scene (23/114/sk04 Rev A);
 - “Gilridge” Proposed Ground Floor & First Floor Plans (23/114/sk05 Rev E);
 - “Gilridge” Proposed Roof Plan (23/114/sk06 Rev E);
 - “Gilridge” Proposed Elevations (23/114/sk07 Rev D);
 - Proposed Ground Floor and Roof Plans PLOT 2 (23/114/sk08 Rev G);
 - Proposed Elevations PLOT 2 (23/114/sk09 Rev G);
 - Proposed Site Plan (23/114/sk10 Rev G);
 - Proposed Street Scene (23/114/sk11 Rev E);
 - Proposed Drainage Plan (23/114/sk12 Rev C);
 - Proposed Landscaping Plan (23/114/sk13 Rev C);
 - Fire Appliance Access & Turning (23/114/SK14 Rev A);
 - Delivery Access & Turning (23/114/SK15 Rev A);

- Proposed Elevations PLOT 2 with pergola/solar shading shown (23/1144/sk16 Rev F);
- Design and Access Statement Rev C;
- Planning Noise Impact Assessment;
- Bike storage details;
- Car charger point details;
- Drainage Assessment Rev C;
- Existing Site Photos;
- Flood Map for Planning;
- Materials Schedule Rev C;
- Maintenance & Preparation for Planting Proposal Rev B;
- Sustainability Statement Rev B;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal; and
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.

- 1.4. Additionally this statement sets out relevant planning policy, planning history, and assesses the scheme in accordance with the requirements of the Development Plan and other material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1. The application site lies on the western side of Brighton Road (B2110) close to the centre of the village of Handcross. The A23 (London to Brighton) lies to the west of the site at a lower level. The site extends to some 0.11 hectares and currently hosts a single detached four bedroom chalet style dwelling, known as Gilridge, that is positioned towards the front (east) of the site.
- 2.2. Gated vehicular access off Brighton Road exists and serves a large tarmac parking and turning area to the front of the existing dwelling.
- 2.3. To the immediate north the application site abuts a site known as Seaspaces House. This is a commercial property, understood to be currently occupied by Municipality Security Ltd. The site is dominated by large single storey buildings that extend the length of the site alongside the mutual boundary with the application site. The remainder of the site is hard surfaced and used for parking and turning. Planning permission has historically been granted for the redevelopment of this site with seven new houses, however the consent has never been implemented and has now time expired (DM/17/0587). More recently consent has been sought and granted for the change of use of the existing building into 5 smaller Class E units (application DM/24/1768 refers).



Figure 1 - Site location

- 2.4. To the immediate south of the application site is Hillcrest, a two storey detached dwelling which sits roughly alongside Gilridge. Single storey additions to either side of Hillcrest mean that the dwelling currently spans the entire width of its plot. Planning permission has recently been granted for an extension to this property. The approved scheme will see the dwelling extended with a two storey side extension, rear single storey extension, and dormer windows to the roof. To the front (east) of the dwelling is a large expanse of parking/turning that would be retained. To the rear (west) the garden serving the dwelling extends up to the edge of the A23.
- 2.5. To the south of Hillcrest is The Laurels, another detached two storey dwelling beyond which is St Georges Cottages, a relatively new development of seven dwellings approved in 2013 (13/03768/FUL).
- 2.6. As set out above the application site extends to the west to the edge of the A23 which sits at a lower level to the application site. A well vegetated landscaped, banked buffer sits between the application site and this trunk road.
- 2.7. To the east of the application site, on the opposite side of the Brighton Road, are three adjoining cottages (1-3 Triangle Cottages) that sit at the junction of Brighton Road and the B2114 (Staplefield Road).

- 2.8. The application site falls firmly within the built up area boundary of Handcross as defined by the Development Plan. It also falls just outside of the designated Conservation Area. The whole of the site falls within the High Weald National Landscape (formally Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) (see Figure 2).

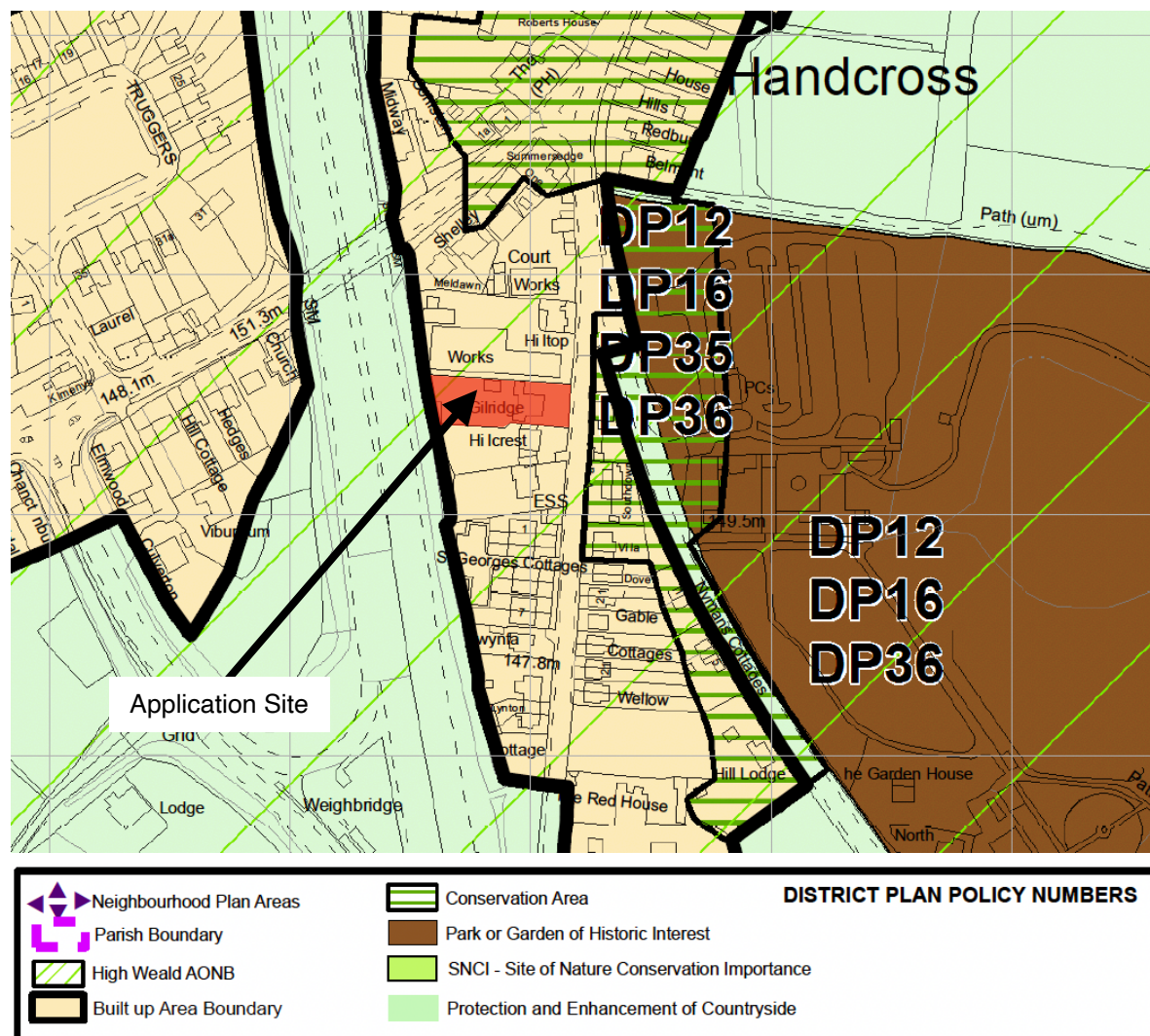


Figure 2: Extract from District Plan Inset Map 18b

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1. The Council's online planning register indicates that the following historic applications relate to the application site:
- SV/039/80 - Car port and covered way - Approved - 22nd October 1980.
 - SV/079/97 - Erection small timber workshop for part-time car cleaning service - Approved - 25th January 1988.

- DM/24/0445 - Demolition of existing chalet bungalow and outbuildings. Erection of a pair of 3 bed semi-detached dwellings and a 3 bed detached dwellings to include associated parking spaces and a new access driveway (Amended plans and supporting statements submitted 11.07.2024) - Approved - 9th August 2024.

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1. Permission is sought for alterations to the existing dwelling and the erection of a new detached dwelling in its garden to the rear.
- 4.2. In terms of alterations to Gilridge it is proposed to demolish the existing car port and small wrap around extension on the north/west elevation. In addition, the existing garden room on the southern end of the dwelling will be reduced in depth with the existing living room knocked through and extended internally into the retained space. New window and door arrangements are proposed in the front and rear elevations as a consequence. These works are technically permitted development and could be carried out regardless of the outcome of this application.
- 4.3. Removal of the existing car port and extension to the north/west elevation allows a new access drive to the extended into the site, past the existing dwelling along the northern boundary of the site, to access a new three bedroom dwelling to be erected in the rear garden.
- 4.4. The proposed dwelling to the rear would be a single storey three-bedroom unit. The position and design of this dwelling is identical to that approved under application DM/24/0445.

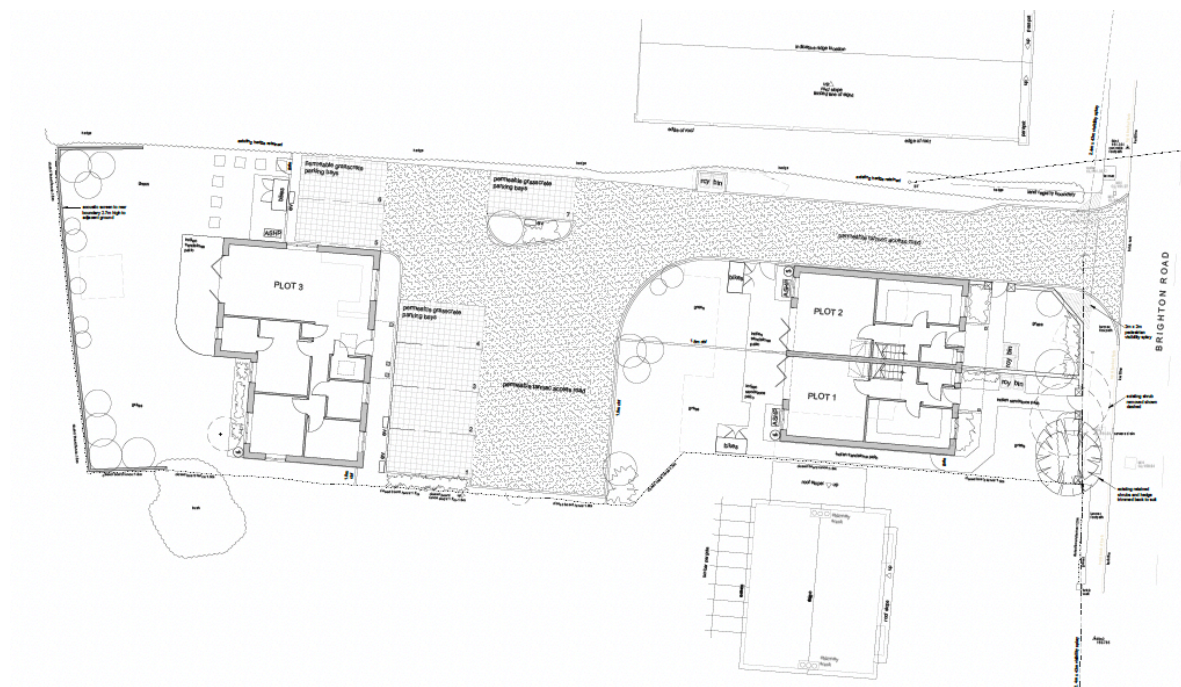


Figure 3 - Site layout as approved under Application DM/24/0445

- 4.5. As approved under application DM/24/0445 the new dwelling to the rear of the plot will be provided with private amenity space to the rear, with two parking spaces provided between the

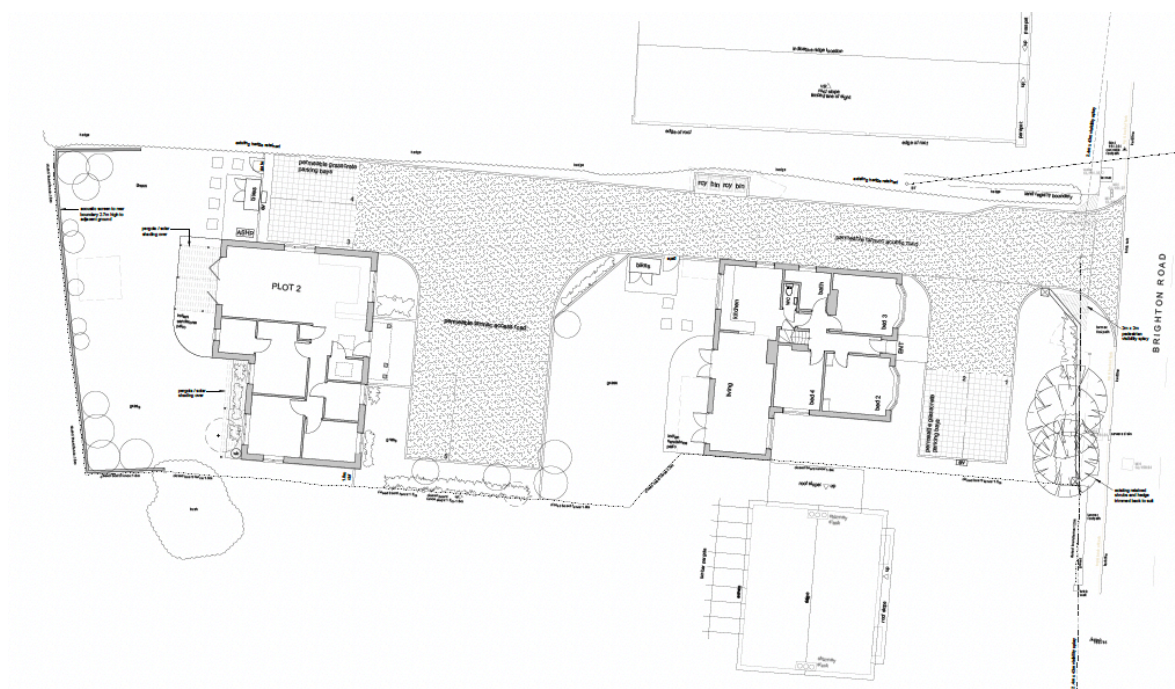


Figure 4 - Proposed Site Layout

dwelling and the northern boundary. Secure and covered cycle parking is to be provided within the rear garden.

- 4.6. Gilridge will retain two existing parking spaces on the drive to the front of the dwelling. A fifth parking space for visitors is proposed between the two dwellings, within the turning head.
- 4.7. Gilridge will maintain a floor area of some 120 sqm. The new dwelling to the rear would have a floor area of some 88.3 sqm, arranged as a simple L-shaped footprint with a gable ended roof.
- 4.8. It is proposed that the new dwelling would be constructed from a local stock brick and set under a plain clay tiled roof.

5. PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 38(3) states that the Development Plan includes the adopted Development Plan Documents (DPDs). Material considerations include National Planning Guidance, and in particular the NPPF, together with supplementary planning documents adopted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).
- 5.2. The approved Development Plan, in relation to this application, for the purposes of the Act, comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the 'made' Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan.

- 5.3. Other material considerations relevant to the determination of this application include the Mid Sussex Design Guide.

Mid Sussex District Plan

- 5.4. The Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP) was adopted on 28th March 2018. It covers the period 2014 - 2031 and sets out a vision for how Mid Sussex wants to evolve and a delivery strategy for how that will be achieved.

- 5.5. The following policies are considered most relevant to these proposals:

- DP4: Housing
- DP6: Settlement Hierarchy
- DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- DP21: Transport
- DP26: Character and Design
- DP27: Dwellings Space Standards
- DP28: Accessibility
- DP29: Noise, Air and Light Pollution
- DP30: Housing Mix
- DP35: Conservation Areas
- DP38: Biodiversity
- DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction
- DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage
- DP42: Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment

Site Allocations DPD

- 5.6. The Mid Sussex Site Allocations Development Plan Document was adopted on 29th June 2022. The Site Allocations DPD identifies sufficient housing sites to provide a five year housing land supply to 2031 and also makes sure that enough land is allocated to meet identified employment need.

- 5.7. The following policy is considered most relevant to these proposals:

- Policy SA38: Air Quality

Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan

5.8. The Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan was ‘made’ by the District Council on 25th September 2019, and seeks to guide and influence development in the Parish up to 2031.

5.9. The following policies are considered most relevant to these proposals:

- Policy 1: Protecting the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Policy 2: Sustainable Development Measures
- Policy 4: Conservation Areas

6. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

6.1. The NPPF sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner (paragraph 7). Paragraph 8 goes on to explain that *“Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways”*: an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.

6.2. Paragraph 9 states that planning decisions *“should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.”*

6.3. Paragraph 10 states that, *“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development.**”*

6.4. Paragraph 11 states that *“plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development... For decision-taking this means:*

- *Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- *Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of this Framework taken as a whole,*

having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.”

- 6.5. Paragraph 39 states that local planning authorities “*should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way... Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.*”
- 6.6. Chapter 5 notes the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes (paragraph 61).
- 6.7. Chapter 9 seeks to promote sustainable transport with paragraph 116 stating that “*development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.*”
- 6.8. Chapter 11 seeks to promote the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses and paragraph 125 states that planning decisions should: “*c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, proposals for which should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused...d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.*”
- 6.9. Chapter 12 relates to achieving well-designed places and paragraph 131 states that “*good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.*”

High Weald AONB Management Plan

- 6.10. The High Weald AONB Management Plan states that the primary purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. However, there is recognition that other underlying principles are important aspects of the designations success. These include the need to maintain a “thriving community life” with particular emphasis on farming and forestry, and the need to promote understanding and enjoyment of the areas special qualities.
- 6.11. These subsidiary purposes are defined in relevant legislation and associated guidance and state that in pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture forestry and other rural industries, and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.
- 6.12. The Plan describes the High Weald as “*An outstandingly beautiful landscape cherished by people and celebrated for its scenery, tranquility and wildlife. Its ridges and valleys are clothed with an intricate mosaic of small fields interspersed with farmsteads and surrounded by hedgerows and abundant woods, all arranged around a network of historic routeways. One of the best surviving medieval landscape in northwest Europe...*”

- 6.13. The Plan notes that the natural beauty of the High Weald comprises five defining components of character that have made the area recognisably distinct and homogenous. These components are:
- *Geology, Landform and Water Systems - A deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams;*
 - *Settlement - Dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late medieval villages founded on trade and non agricultural rural industries;*
 - *Routeways - A dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths);*
 - *Woodland - Abundance of Ancient Woodland, highly interconnected and in small holdings; and*
 - *Field and Heath - Small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing, with distinctive zones of lowland heaths and inner river valleys.*
- 6.14. Within the “settlement” section the vision is to protect the distinctive and historic pattern of settlements in a way that contributes to the natural environment and improves the connections between settlements and the countryside.
- 6.15. In support of this Objective S1 seeks to reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside. Objective S2 seeks to protect the historic pattern and character of settlements. Objective S3 seeks to enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and to ensure development reflects the character of the High Weald in its scale, layout and design.

Mid Sussex Design Guide 2020

- 6.16. The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' Supplementary Planning Document (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 the planning application.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Consultation Draft

- 6.17. The District Council is currently in the process of reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current adopted District Plan. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 8th July 2024 and a number of initial hearings were held in October 2024.
- 6.18. On the basis there are a number of unresolved objections to the majority of the policies in the draft plan in accordance with paragraph 49 of the NPPF, only minimal weight can be given to the emerging Plan at this time.

- 6.19. Nonetheless it is pertinent to note that the draft plan acknowledges that in order to meet local housing needs in full the Plan needs to make provision for 7,459 dwellings (in addition to existing commitments and allocations yet to be implemented). Whilst the majority of this need will be met through new allocations, approximately 1,768 dwellings are expected to be delivered through windfall sites and applications such as this.

7. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1. In the assessment of this proposal it is considered that the main issues are:

- Principle of Development;
- Design and Impact on the Character of the Area (including consideration of the High Weald National Landscape and setting of the Conservation Area);
- Impact on Amenity;
- Highways, Access and Parking;
- Noise;
- Ecology and Biodiversity;
- Sustainability.

- 7.2. Each is now considered in turn below.

Principle Of Development

- 7.3. Policy DP4 sets out the Council's proposed housing delivery target for the period 2014 - 2031. This confirms that there is a minimum District housing requirement of 16,390 dwellings between 2014-2031. Whilst the large majority of these dwellings are to be delivered through commitments and allocations a small percentage are anticipated to be delivered through windfall proposals.
- 7.4. To facilitate such windfall development Policy DP6 confirms that development within defined built up area boundaries will be permitted, provided it is of an appropriate nature and scale and does not cause harm to the character and function of the settlement. Policy DP6 goes on to identify Handcross as being a Category 3 settlement - a medium sized village that provides essential services for the needs of its own residents and immediate surrounding communities.
- 7.5. The Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan also recognises the importance of windfall development, highlighting the fact that the NPPF confirms that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built out quickly. It goes on to state that local planning authorities should *"support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions - giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes¹."*

¹ Paragraph 73 - NPPF, December 2024

- 7.6. The NPPF also makes clear the importance of significantly boosting the supply of homes and the Council's own emerging Draft District Plan identifies the need for additional housing to meet established local housing needs.
- 7.7. With this in mind, and with the application site set firmly within the defined built up area of Handcross there should be no "in principle" objection to the redevelopment of this site with higher density residential development. Certainly there was no objection from the Council to the principle of additional residential development at this site when they considered application DM/24/0445.

Design And Impact On The Character Of The Area

- 7.8. Policy DP16 of the District Plan relates to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now known as the High Weald National Landscape) and states that development within the High Weald AONB (National Landscape) will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan. This policy is supported by Policy 1 of the Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.9. Policy DP26 relates to Character and Design and requires all new development to be well designed and to reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages of the District whilst being sensitive to the countryside.
- 7.10. Policy DP27 requires all new dwellings to meet the minimum nationally described space standards.
- 7.11. Policy DP30 seeks to support sustainable communities by ensuring housing development provides a mix of dwelling types and sizes that reflect current and future local housing needs. The supporting text to this policy notes a significant need for family size houses of 2-3 bedrooms.
- 7.12. Policy DP35 relates to Conservation Areas and seeks to ensure that development protects the setting of designated Conservation Areas and in particular views into and out of the area. This policy is supported by Policy 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.13. Handcross Conservation Area was designated in 1990 and encompasses the historic core of the village (see Figure 5). Whilst the application site falls outside of the designation it does sit immediately opposite the southern end of the Conservation Area where it extends down towards Nymans Gardens. Here the Conservation Area includes several older buildings and trees are an important feature in the street scene providing an attractive approach to the village.
- 7.14. The Council's own Conservation Area description highlights the following features in particular as contributing to the character of the area:
- the 19th Century terraced dwellings and shops on both sides of the High Street which have retained most of their original features;
 - the use of natural and traditional building materials;

- the variety in ages and styles of the houses, several of which are Listed Buildings;
- Chodds Farm which is an attractive Listed Building dating back to the 18th Century and is fronted by a visually important line of pollarded limes; and
- the trees bordering the eastern side of Staplefield Road.

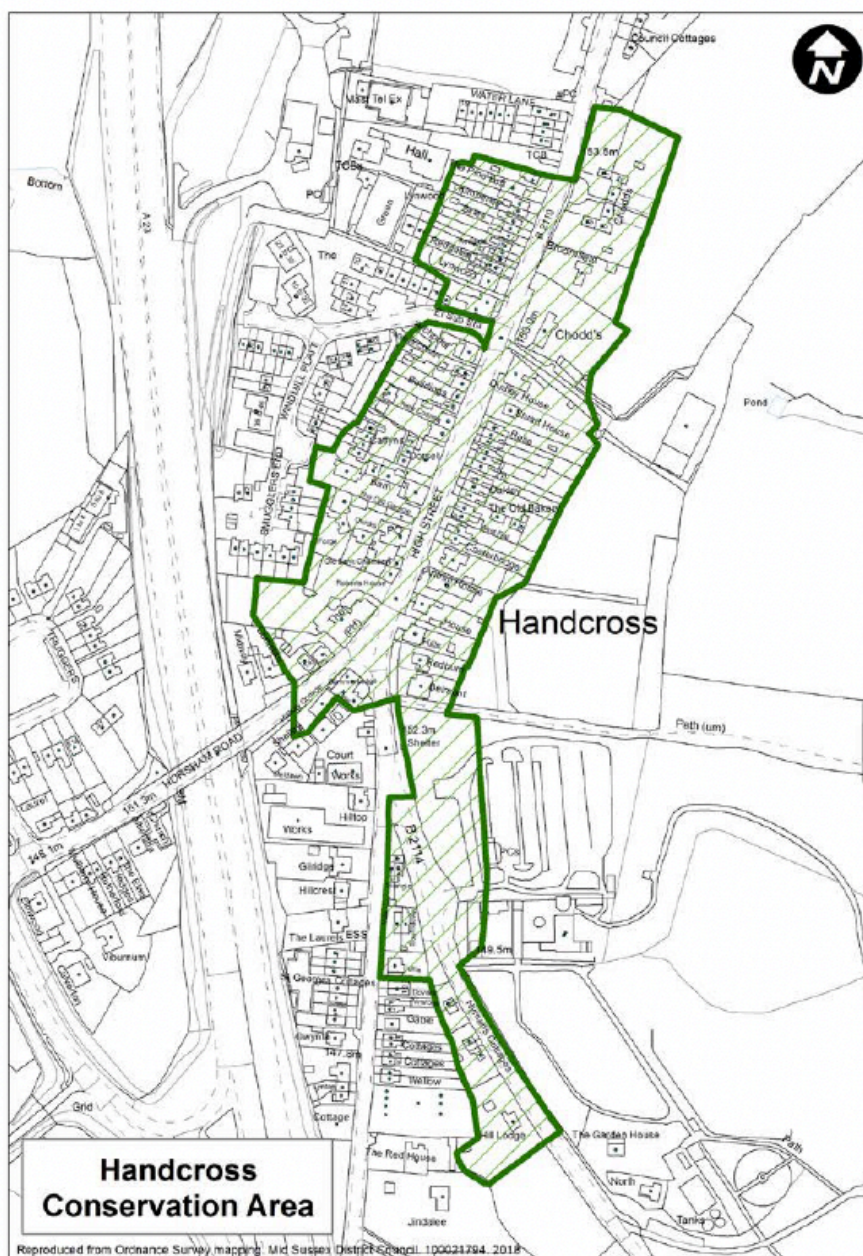


Figure 5: Handcross Conservation Area

- 7.15. Being located outside of the Conservation Area, the proposals do not directly impact any of these specific features. However as a scheme potentially impacting the setting of the Conservation Area, care has been taken to ensure that the proposals do not detract from the character and appearance of the designated area.

- 7.16. The proposed alteration to the existing dwelling are very minor and involve the removal of two small existing extensions and the extension of the existing driveway into the rear of the site.
- 7.17. At the moment the entire frontage of the dwelling is hardsurfaced and used for parking/turning. The proposals will reduce the extent of hardsurfacing to the front of the existing dwelling and allow the introduction of some soft landscaping. It is also proposed to replace the existing close boarded fence currently marking the front boundary with a more sympathetic low brick wall.
- 7.18. The Council's Conservation Officer previously noted that the existing dwelling *"is typical of its type and period, but is not of any particular architectural merit, and makes a neutral contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area."* With very little alteration to the existing structure and with modest improvements being proposed to its landscaped setting it can be concluded that the neutral impact on the setting of the Conservation Area is maintained if not marginally improved.
- 7.19. The proposed dwelling to the rear of the existing dwelling will be screened by the existing dwelling and will not be prominent in the street scene. It is of identical position, scale and appearances to that approved under application DM/24/0445.
- 7.20. When considering application DM/24/0445, officers noted:
- 7.21. *"The proposal is also seeking to construct a detached bungalow to the western (rear), while introducing some rearward development, this is not uncommon with the wider locality, with the development of Walter Mews and St Georges Cottages to the south, as well Seaspace House to the north extending fully to the west (rear) of the site. Therefore, it is considered that the rearward development is acceptable in this instance, especially as the dwelling to the rear is a bungalow ensuring it remains subservient to the dwelling at the frontage."*
- 7.22. *The proposed dwellings have been shown to be constructed of an appropriate palette of materials which is reflective of the wider character, details of which can be controlled by a suitably worded condition. The plot sizes are considered to be commensurate with the size of the plots of the more modern additions along Brighton Road... It is therefore considered that the proposed development would be of an appropriate design, size and scale that is in-keeping with the character of the locality and would comply with the above mentioned policies."*
- 7.23. *In relation to the impact upon the wider AONB, the proposed development would not form an isolated form of development, it is surrounded by dwellings to the south and east, with the commercial premises to the north and the A23 to the west, which it will be viewed in context of. Furthermore, it is considered to be of an appropriate design, size and scale and as such it is also considered to preserve the character of the AONB in accordance with policy DP16 of the District Plan, policy 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan and paragraph 182 of the NPPF."*
- 7.24. The introduction of a new dwelling into the depth of the plot has already been accepted by the Council, as has a dwelling of identical scale and appearance with a very similar access arrangement. Whilst it is now proposed to retain the existing dwelling at the front of the site, the scheme still seeks to make better use of existing previously development land as

encouraged by the NPPF and proposes a dwelling of subservient scale to the existing dwelling towards the front of the site.

- 7.25. Given the extant consent it is submitted that there are no grounds to resist the proposals in relation to their impact on the character of the wider area and that they will contribute positively to the street scene as a consequence of the high quality design, appearance and layout as required by the Development Plan.

Impact On Amenity

- 7.26. Policy DP26 of the District Plan seeks to ensure all new development 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.
- 7.27. In considering impact on nearby residents, the main relationship to consider is that with Hilltop to the immediate south of the application site. The site to the immediate north is in commercial use and the entire northern boundary is dominated by an existing building.
- 7.28. As set out above Hilltop is a two storey dwelling set within a good sized plot. With the intention now being to retain the existing dwelling at the front of the plot the existing relationship between the properties is retained.
- 7.29. A generous distance of some 23 metres is provided between the front elevation of the dwelling and the rear elevation of Hilltop. This distance secures an acceptable relationship with this existing dwelling and is identical to the relationship accepted by the Council in their consideration of application DM/24/0445.
- 7.30. When considering the impact of the previous proposals on residential amenity officers concluded:
- 7.31. *“In terms of overlooking and a loss of privacy, within the built up area boundaries a degree of overlooking is considered acceptable... while plot 3 has side facing windows, it is only single storey and there is suitable boundary screening... Therefore, the resulting relationships are not considered to cause significant harm in terms of overlooking and a loss of privacy.”*
- 7.32. In considering the potential impact on the amenity of future occupiers each dwelling is provided with private external amenity space of a size appropriate to the scale of the dwelling. Furthermore the dwellings meet minimum space standards.
- 7.33. The main issue in respect to amenity of future occupiers is the close proximity of the proposed new dwelling to the A23. Again this as a relationship already accepted by the Council and there should be no reason for the Council to now take an alternative view. Application DM/24/0445 was submitted with a detailed noise assessment and the previous application was specifically amended to address potential issues of noise disturbance from the A23.
- 7.34. It was agreed previously that the addition of acoustic fencing and design features to mitigate noise disturbance (e.g. suitable glazing and building fabric, trickle vents, solar shading,

mechanical ventilation etc.) would be sufficient to control external noise ingress to the habitable spaces of the proposed dwelling. These same design features are repeated in the current proposals and can be secured by a suitably worded planning condition.

- 7.35. Accordingly it is submitted that a good level of amenity will be provided to future occupiers and the scheme in compliance with the requirements of the Development Plan.

Highways, Access, And Parking

- 7.36. Policy DP21 seeks to ensure all new development supports the objectives of the West Sussex Transport Plan 2011-2026. The policy goes on to set out a number of matters that will be taken into account when considering development proposals and whether the objectives of the Transport Plan will be met.
- 7.37. As set out above, the site falls within the built up area of an existing settlement that is identified as being a Category 3 settlement in the Mid Sussex Local Plan. Category 3 settlements are defined as being:
- 7.38. *“Medium sized villages providing essential services for the needs of their own residents and immediate surrounding communities. Whilst more limited, these can include key services such as primary schools, shops, recreation and community facilities, often shared with neighbouring settlements.”*
- 7.39. Handcross benefits from a number of small shops (including a butchers, convenience store, newsagents etc), as well as two schools, churches and a public house. All of these facilities are within walking distance of the application site. In addition the site is in close proximity to a bus stop which provides a frequent service to higher order settlements such as Crawley, Haywards Heath and Brighton. It is therefore submitted that the site is in a suitably sustainable location.
- 7.40. Access to the site is taken directly from Brighton Road, with an adjustment to the existing access required to accommodate the proposed development and to provide appropriate visibility splays (2.4 metres by 43 metres). The access will lead to the 2 parking spaces proposed to the north of the proposed dwelling and the single visitors parking space set in-between the dwellings.
- 7.41. Tracking diagrams have been provided to demonstrate how delivery and emergency vehicles can access the site and turn to exit in a forward gear whilst all parking spaces are occupied. A small refuse storage area is provided for the new dwelling along the access drive to avoid excessive carry distances for collection operatives.
- 7.42. Whilst the development of this site will increase vehicle activity to and from the site, it is submitted that this will be a very modest increase that will have negligible impact on the capacity of the wider road network.
- 7.43. Each dwelling is to be provided with two parking spaces with an additional space provided within the site for visitors. Each of the dwellings will also be provided with on-site secure and covered cycle parking. Each dwelling is to be provided with EV charging connections. The

proposals therefore accord with adopted parking standards and meet the Council's expectations in terms of charging electric vehicles.

- 7.44. For these reasons it is submitted that the proposals accords with the requirements of Policy DP21.

Noise

- 7.45. Policy DP29 seeks to ensure noise sensitive development, such as residential, will not be permitted in close proximity to existing or proposed development generating high levels of noise unless adequate sound insulation measures, as supported by a noise assessment are incorporated within the development.
- 7.46. As set out above the previous application was submitted with a Planning Noise Impact Assessment that had been prepared by Anderson Acoustics. This report confirmed that the close proximity of the site to the A23 means that the noise conditions at the site would be categorised as "Medium to High Risk". As such the external building fabric of the proposed dwellings needed to be sufficient to control external noise ingress to habitable space and glazing needed to achieve minimum sounds reduction performance in bedrooms and living rooms. Additionally a 2.7metre high solid fence was recommended to reduce noise impact on the private amenity areas.
- 7.47. As set out above, the recommendations of that Noise Impact Assessment have been fully taken into consideration in the design of the proposed dwelling, and with these measures in place appropriate internal noise levels within habitable spaces can be achieved.

Ecology And Biodiversity

- 7.48. Since the approval of application DM/24/0445 it has become a legislative requirement, for developers of all land in England, to ensure habitats for wildlife on development sites are enhanced. The Applicant is now required to demonstrate a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) by demonstrating a minimum 10% net increase in habitat value compared to the pre-development baseline. This position is echoed through the requirements of Policy DP38 which seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity, by ensuring all new development contributes and takes opportunities to improve enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity.
- 7.49. In line with guidance, the Biodiversity Metric was used to calculate biodiversity losses and gains for habitats within the application site. This confirms that the development of this site as proposed would result in a 26.27% net loss of habitat units. Due to the constraints of the site, it is not possible to achieve the mandatory 10% BNG on site. Accordingly in order to meet the mandatory 10% BNG requirement the applicants intend to purchase 0.04 off-site units. Off-setting through the purchase of off-site credits is an endorsed process of the BNG requirements and can be secured through the statutory condition set out in the the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Schedule 7A, Part 2, 13 (2) which requires the submission and approval of a Biodiversity Gain Plan prior to the commencement of any development.

- 7.50. The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) which confirms that the existing site is currently in residential use, is not subject of any particular habitat or ecological designation and there are no significant trees or areas of vegetation that would need to be removed as part of the development of the site. No protected species have been identified at the site and whilst a preliminary roost assessment has been recommended to rule out the presence of bats from within the buildings to be removed from the site, extant consent does already exist for the total demolition of all structures at the site and this was approved without the need for any ecological surveys. On this basis, it is submitted that a Roost Assessment is unnecessary in this instance.
- 7.51. At the front of the site it is proposed to reduce the extent of existing tarmac and introduce more soft landscaping and native planting. The new garden areas will be designed with native planting and Bee and Swift Bricks are to be incorporated into the construction of the new dwelling. All of these provisions will secure additional biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with the requirements of Policy DP38.

Sustainability

- 7.52. Policy DP39 requires all development proposals to improve the sustainability of development by incorporating, where appropriate and feasible, sustainable design and construction measures. This policy is supported by Policy 2 of the Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.53. The application is supported by a Sustainability Statement which outlines how the proposals follow the principles of the energy hierarchy and incorporate energy efficient design measures, and low/zero carbon energy sources.
- 7.54. The building envelope of the proposed dwelling is to have enhanced thermal performance therefore reducing energy demand. Energy consumption is then to be reduced through the specification of mechanical and electrical systems. Water saving devices are to be used to ensure water is used efficiently and a water butt is to be provided to facilitate recycling of rainwater for garden watering.
- 7.55. Photovoltaic panels are proposed to the roof of the new dwelling and it will also be provided with an Air Source Heat Pump.
- 7.56. All of these provisions will improve the sustainability of the development as required by policy DP39.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND OVERALL PLANNING BALANCE

- 8.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.2. Permission is sought for alterations to an existing dwelling and the erection of new three-bedroom dwelling to its rear. The site falls firmly within the built up area of Handcross. Policy DP6 confirms that development within defined built up area boundaries will be permitted, provided it

is of an appropriate nature and scale and does not cause harm to the character and function of the settlement.

- 8.3. The scheme seeks to make better use of the site as encouraged by the NPPF but in a sympathetic manner. It is submitted that the proposed dwelling represents an appropriate response to the street scene and prevailing character and ensures that the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area is preserved. Containment of the development within the existing built form of the settlement ensures that the wider landscape and scenic beauty of the High Weald National Landscape is also conserved.
- 8.4. The proposed dwelling will provide a good standard of accommodation for future occupiers, and no harm will be caused to the amenity of existing neighbouring occupiers.
- 8.5. Safe and suitable access and parking arrangements can be provided for the proposed dwelling.
- 8.6. For the above reasons, it is submitted that the application proposals are acceptable and should be approved.