

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT (incorporating Flood Risk & Foul Sewer/Drainage Assessments)

**Replace existing caravan and 2x outbuildings with
new permanent dwelling**

at

**Oak Tree House
Bishopstone Lane
Ansty
Haywards Heath
RH17 5AR**

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1.0 Introduction

Murray Planning Associates has been instructed by Mr Selkirk to prepare and submit a planning application to replace an existing static caravan (in established residential use) and 2x domestic outbuildings with a permanent dwelling structure.

The application has not been subject to any pre-application discussions with Mid Sussex District Council.

This statement sets out 1) an assessment of the site context; 2) a summary of the relevant policy framework; 3) an assessment of the proposed development; followed by 4) conclusions based on the preceding sections.

This statement should be read in alongside the following documents and drawings:

- Site Location Plan
- Existing Site Plan
- Proposed Site Plan
- Ground Floor Plan
- First Floor Plan
- Proposed Elevations
- Proposed Visualisations (1 & 2)
- Tree Survey & Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Ecological Assessment
- BNG Statement
- CIL Form
- Application Forms & Ownership Certificates

2.0 Site Context

The site lies to the east of Bishopstone Lane, approximately midway between the A272 junction to the north and the A2300 junction to the south. The site lies within a semi-rural setting, with countryside to the west and east, but within an area of sporadic residential development to the north and south.

The site forms a broadly rectangular shaped plot, located to the north of a property known as The Willows Cattery (which also includes a detached dwelling). The site was once part of the land associated with The Willows Cattery, but has been subdivided to form an independent plot that has no reliance on the dwelling at the Willows Cattery.

Built form on the site comprises of a static caravan with adjoining building to the rear. There is also a large garage outbuilding structure along the northern boundary of the site. The remainder of the site is a mix of grassland, trees and a pond that forms the domestic curtilage of the site. Access to the site is derived from the north-eastern corner of the site, off Bishopstone Lane. A public footpath runs along the northern boundary of the site.

Relevant Planning History

There is only one planning application associated with the property detailed on Mid Sussex District Council's planning application register, that being a lawful development certificate (Council reference DM/24/2257) to establish the site (the caravan and outbuilding and surrounding land) as a separate residential use to that associated with the adjacent Willows Cattery. The Lawful Certificate was issued in November 2024, confirming the site is in lawful residential use and is now a separate planning unit from Willows Cattery to the south.

3.0 Planning Policy Assessment

Policy Context

The site is located outside of a defined settlement boundary, and within the administrative area of Mid Sussex District Council.

The development plan for the purposes of assessing proposals for this site are the adopted Mid Sussex Local Plan (2018), and national planning policy in the form of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024)

Paragraph 2 of the NPPF notes that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraph 11 advises that decisions (on planning applications) should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. As such, development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

Paragraph 135 lists a number of criteria that planning decisions should comply with. These include ensuring:

- The development will function well and add to the overall quality of the area
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping
- Are sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)

Local Planning Policy – Mid Sussex District Plan (2018)

In the context of the Mid Sussex District Plan, the site is outside of any urban area and as such falls within open countryside. The policies relevant to the site and the proposed development are DP12, DP15, DP26, DP37 and DP38. These policies are looked at in more detail below.

Policy DP12 - This policy relates to the protection and enhancement of countryside, noting that development will be approved if supported by another policy in the local plan. In this case Policy DP15 (discussed below) is the relevant supporting policy.

Policy DP15 – This policy provides guidance on new homes in the countryside, with the final part of the policy (replacement dwellings) being of relevance to this proposal. The policy advises that replacement dwellings will be permitted where the residential use has not been abandoned and highways, access and parking requirements can be met. In addition, the replacement dwelling should maintain or enhance the quality of the natural landscape.

The recently issued lawful development certificate confirms the site as being in residential use and independent of The Willows Cattery to the south. A principle of replacing the existing dwelling (caravan) has therefore been established.

The development seeks to remove a static caravan and immediately adjacent outbuilding, as well as the removal of an existing garage outbuilding on site, and to provide a new dwelling towards a more central position within the site compared with the existing location of the caravan. Sufficient space is retained for internal vehicle movements (allowing vehicles to exit the site in forward gear), while the existing access point is to be retained.

The new dwelling is to be located towards the centre of the site, well away from the western boundary and the road. There is also a public footpath to the north of the site, though as the site is well screened from the surroundings by an existing fence and vegetation, it is not considered likely that the replacement dwelling would have any adverse impact on the landscape from the public realm.

The palette of building materials (timber cladding, render etc) seeks to ensure the building has a minimal visual impact to any short or long distance views and complies with the character of the area. Overall, the design and scale of development is considered to comply with the landscape character in compliance with Policy DP15.

Policy DP26 – This policy requires all developments to be of high quality design. The policy includes a number of criteria for development to comply with, including:

- Being of high quality design and layout including appropriate landscaping and greenspace
- Creating a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape
- Do not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents

The scale and height of development are to increase compared to the existing caravan and outbuildings, though are not considered disproportionate additions, relative to the existing built form on the site and that found within the surrounding area. The first floor will be accommodated within the roof space of the dwelling to reduce the mass and bulk of the building compared to a traditional two storey property.

The central location within the plot ensures the dwelling will not have any harmful impact on the neighbouring properties to the north and south.

The design incorporates some solar panels on the south-eastern roof slope to help provide renewable energy to the site. The panels are not considered likely to be visible to the public realm. Other sustainable features comprise an air source heat pump and an EV charging point. Overall, the proposal is considered to comply with the aims and objectives of Policy DP26.

Policy DP37 - This policy relates to trees and notes that development that leads to the loss of trees that contribute to the visual amenity or character of an area will not normally be permitted.

The site contains a number of trees of varying quality (see tree survey document). The dwelling has been sited to ensure that the property does not intrude into the root protection area of any trees on site, all of which will be retained. The proposal therefore complies with Policy DP37 by ensuring that all trees on site will be retained, resulting in no loss of visual amenity or character.

Policy DP38 - This policy relates to biodiversity and in brief seeks to ensure that development improves, enhances and restores biodiversity and green infrastructure so that there is a net gain biodiversity, while protecting existing biodiversity interests on site to ensure there is no net loss of biodiversity.

A walkover survey of the site has not revealed any notable/protected species as being present at the site. The ecology assessment also recommends some ecological enhancements to improve the site habitat and make provision for shelter for bats and birds, along with reptile and amphibian species.

Assuming the recommendations within the ecological assessment are carried out, the proposal will result in a net increase in biodiversity and green infrastructure, in accordance with Policy DP38.

Emerging Local Plan

The Council are in the process of replacing the existing local plan with a new plan covering the 2021-2039 time period. A brief review of the emerging plan reveals that the site remains in the countryside and no new planning constraints have been identified in the surrounding area.

4.0 The Proposed Development

Amount

The proposed development comprises a detached dwelling providing approximately 188sqm floorspace (measured internally). However, the removal of the existing caravan and 2x outbuildings would result in a loss of around 123 sqm of floor space (gross internal). The net result would therefore be around a 65sqm increase in built form to the site, though it should be noted that this would all be concentrated in one building, and some of the floorspace will be within the roofspace of the dwelling.

The proposals would retain a sensible balance between built and unbuilt space both from the public realm and across the site as a whole.

Layout

The proposed layout has been largely determined by the desire to place the new dwelling towards a more central location within the site, while respecting the root protection areas of established trees.

The proposed dwelling is to be sited to the north-east of the existing caravan and adjoining outbuilding. The dwelling will be roughly in line with the dwelling to the south and will utilise the existing access point into the site from Bishopstone Lane.

Scale

The scale of the proposed development would be 1.5 storeys in height, resulting in an increase in the height of the dwelling over the existing caravan and outbuildings. Nonetheless, the neighbouring dwellings are all believed to

be 1.5 storey properties, and therefore the proposed dwelling will not look out of keeping in comparison with the built up surroundings.

As has been the case with all other aspects of the design, we have sought to avoid any overdevelopment of the plot and provide a level of development that is sympathetic to the site and its surroundings.

Appearance

The site is outside of a settlement boundary, though not isolated from other residential development. There are not considered to be any prevailing characteristics to the built form in the wider area. However, the design and appearance of the proposed dwelling is considered a modern interpretation of a traditional build for a rural area, with a barn shape design and the use of timber cladding.

It is considered that the proposed design would make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the site and the wider surroundings, especially in comparison with the appearance of the existing caravan and outbuilding.

Landscaping

The area of the site where the dwelling is to be located is reasonably well screened by existing landscaping towards the road frontage to the west, and to the north and south by the established mature trees. The proposed development does not seek to remove any landscape features of interest on the site.

It is not anticipated the dwelling will be overly publicly visible from the public realm compared with other residential use in the immediate surroundings. In

any case, the building will be appropriate to its context and will not have a negative impact upon the site's landscape setting or the surroundings.

Trees

A tree survey/assessment accompanies this application. The assessment identifies there are no protected trees within the site, and that the proposal can be accommodated without losing any trees.

Parts of the proposed development such as the parking and turning area will slightly encroach into the root protection areas of nearby trees, though it should be noted that the site already has an established access and parking/turning space that intrudes into the root protection area of the nearest trees.

Overall, with the use of standard tree protection conditions, it is considered the proposal can be accommodated without causing harm to the health of any nearby trees.

Biodiversity

As a self-build proposal, the development is exempt from the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements (see the accompanying BNG statement). Nonetheless, the proposal will comply with the recommendations in the ecological assessment and provide enhancements to the habitat and shelter on site. This can be controlled by condition if necessary. As such, the proposal will result in a biodiversity enhancement across the site.

The accompanying Ecological Impact Assessment confirms that the site is likely absent of bat roosts (after 2x bat surveys were conducted). The Assessment also concludes that the site is not of any value to other protected species, and as such they are not considered likely to be living on the site.

The Assessment also makes recommendations on how to enhance the grassland habitat across the site to improve biodiversity once the development is completed. This can be controlled by a standard worded condition if necessary.

Accessibility and Parking

The proposal does not affect the level of parking necessary to serve the site, while sufficient space is left within the site for ample parking and turning space. No alterations to the site access point are proposed.

Noise

The site is already in residential use. The residential use is to be retained without increasing the density of development. As such, it is not anticipated that the replacement dwelling would result in any adverse noise impact on the surroundings over and above the noise already associated with the site.

Flood Risk Assessment

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore not affected by flooding from river or coastal flooding. The pond on site is identified as being a potential surface water flood risk feature.

It should be noted that the pond is at least 2m below the ground level where the proposed dwelling is to be established. As such, any flood event would have to see water levels rise by at least 2m before there was any danger to those residing at the site.

The site is already in recognised residential use, and the application does not seek to increase the density of development. The proposal therefore does

not increase the flood risk on site by way of a substantial increase in development (and potential surface run off).

The new dwelling will be positioned closer to the road than the existing caravan. In the event of a surface water flood from the pond, it will be easier to escape from the site onto Bishopstone Lane. As such, the proposed development would reduce the risk to human health from flooding on the site.

Foul Sewer/Drainage Assessment

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Document¹ advises on the use of non-mains sewerage with regard to new development.

The first presumption for new developments must be to connect to a public sewer system. In this case, due to the rural nature of the site, there are no public sewers running under, or in close proximity to the site to allow a connection to be made.

The PPG goes on to note that where public sewer access is not available, a package treatment plant should be considered. As such, it is proposed that a private drainage system consisting of a septic tank/sewage treatment plant is considered the ideal way to provide suitable sewage facilities to serve the site.

The site is currently connected to the septic tank of the adjacent Willows Cattery. A new sewage treatment plant will be located on site, allowing the site to be independent of the adjacent site. The new sewage treatment plant will be located well away from the development and other nearby houses and will be of a suitable specification to serve the development. This can be controlled by condition if necessary.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/water-supply-wastewater-and-water-quality>

The intention will also be to provide sustainable drainage system facilities such as rainwater harvesting and permeable paving to the parking area to the front. Again, this can be controlled by condition if necessary.

5.0 Conclusions

The site is located outside of a defined settlement boundary, but is not isolated from other forms of development, including residential use.

A recent lawful development certificate has confirmed that the site is in lawful residential use that is separate from the Willows Cattery to the south. The proposed development comprises a replacement dwelling (to replace an existing caravan and 2x outbuildings), which is acceptable in principle in accordance with Policy DP15 of the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan (2018).

The proposed scheme also accords with the relevant development control policies in the Local Plan, and aligns with the policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

The proposals have adopted a contextual approach by carefully assessing the site in terms of its immediate setting and its relationship with the wider area. Having undertaken this assessment, the proposed development relocates the built form to a single, more central position on the site, while the design is considered to provide an enhancement to the character and appearance of the site.

The overall design and appearance of the dwelling is considered appropriate to the predominantly rural setting of the site, while the proposal will not harm the surrounding landscape. The scale of development is considered appropriate and complies with local plan policy DP26.

Other relevant matters, such as trees and ecology have also been thoroughly assessed as part of the application submission, and it has been determined that the proposal will not have any adverse impact on trees within the site, nor any ecological interests in the local area.

In summary, it is considered that the proposals are appropriate, are supported by planning policy and will not impact upon any interests of acknowledged importance. As such, we believe the proposed development should be supported by the District Council.