

## MME PLANNING SERVICES

Removal of existing outbuilding and erection of 1no  
detached self-build / custom build dwelling with  
associated works.

at

1 Hilltop Cottages, The Mount, Ifield, Crawley, West  
Sussex, RH11 0LF

Planning Statement

Ref: P-017b

November 2025

Version 1



*Figure 1: Site Location*

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 MME Planning Services is instructed to submit this full planning application for the removal of an existing outbuilding and erection of 1no detached self-build / custom-build dwelling with associated works at 1 Hilltop Cottages, The Mount, Ifield, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 0LF
- 1.2 This statement sets out the proposed scheme in detail with regard to the following aspects: the planning history of the site, the development proposals, the relevant planning policy, the planning merits of the scheme and how the proposals comply with the Council's policies.

## **2. Site, Surroundings and Background**

- 2.1 The application site relates to an existing residential property located on the southern side of The Mount, Ifield, outside any designated built-up area boundary. The site is therefore located within the countryside in policy terms. The existing property at 1 Hilltop Cottages consists of a two-storey semi-detached dwelling. A large paddock area with a historic barn building is located further to the south of the site.
- 2.2 The site is positioned within a cluster of existing buildings which consist of a mixture of residential, agricultural and equestrian uses. Access to the site is via a track located to the east of the site which is shared with a number of other properties. There is also a Grade II listed building at The Mount Farm, located further to the west.
- 2.3 The existing dwelling at 1 Hilltop Cottages has been previously extended and benefits from a large side garden consisting mainly of lawned grass and a small outbuilding located in the south-eastern corner of the site. Existing parking is present to the south of the existing dwelling and also serves 2 Hilltop Cottages.

## **3. Planning History**

- 3.1 [Erection of a pitched roof to replace flat roof Site: 1 Hilltop Cottages The Mount Ifield](#)

Ref. No: RS/33/96 | Status: Application Permitted

### 3.2 Single storey rear extension and front porch

Ref. No: DC/07/1335 | Status: Application Permitted

## 4. Proposals

- 4.1 As detailed above, planning permission is sought for the removal of an existing outbuilding and the erection of 1no two-storey detached 3-bed dwelling and associated works. The proposed dwelling would be located within the existing side garden /curtilage of the existing dwelling at 1 Hilltop Cottages. The proposed dwelling would be served by an existing access to the east.
- 4.2 The proposed dwelling would have an overall width of approximately 8.1m, an overall depth of approximately 10.2m and an overall height to the ridge of approximately 7m. The proposed dwelling has been designed with a Sussex hipped roof design with a traditional design and appearance. The proposed dwelling would have a GIA of 116sqm.

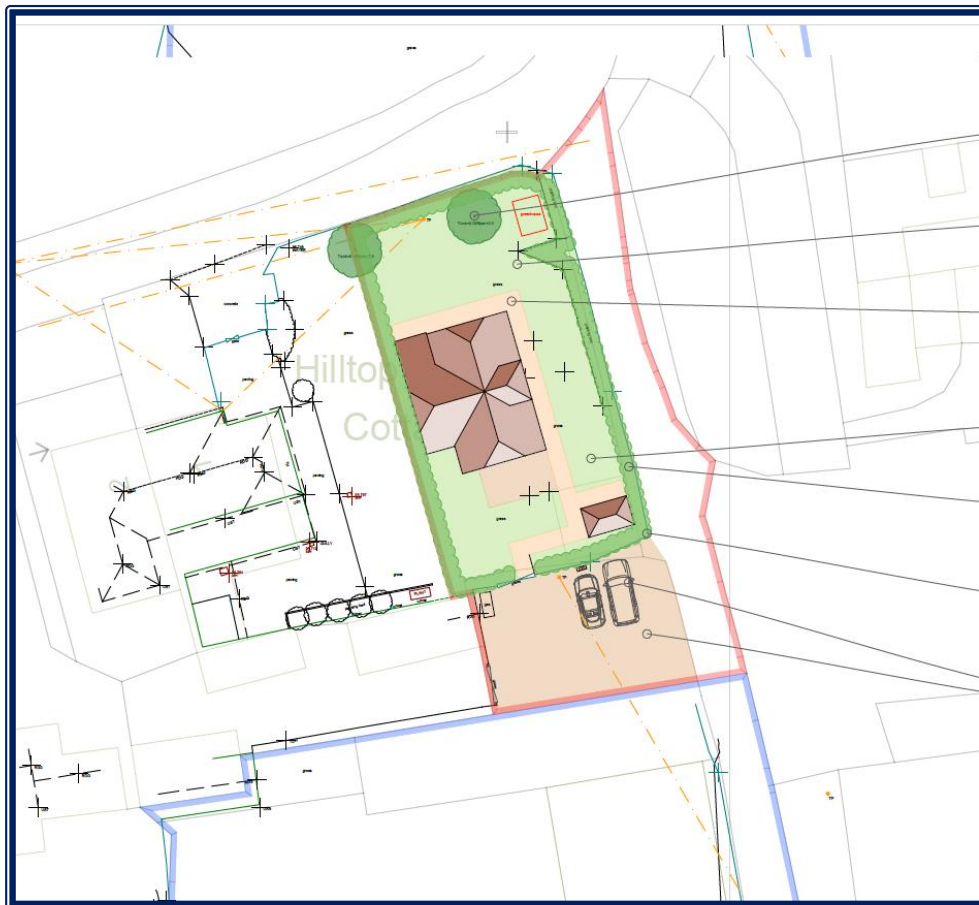


Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan

- 4.3 The proposed design is considered to be in keeping with the setting and the overall scale would be comparable to existing development within the immediate vicinity, and appropriate in terms of the size of the plot. Additional planting is proposed as part of the works.
- 4.4 It is proposed to provide additional planting and landscape enhancements, with hedging to the boundaries. This is considered to be appropriate in this location where it is evident that there is a mixture of boundary treatments to properties within the vicinity. The proposals also include the provision of a small cycle / bin store.



*Figure 3: Proposed Elevations*

- 4.5 The orientation and positioning of the dwelling would be reflective of the existing properties at 1 and 2 Hilltop Cottages with its principal elevation facing towards the north.

- 4.6 The proposed development is considered to be appropriately separated from neighbouring properties to avoid any impact on amenity and would provide a good level of accommodation for future occupiers. Sufficient parking would also be provided, with the development served by an existing access from the private lane.

## **5. Planning Policy**

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and National Guidance

- 5.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework for the preparation of local plans for housing and other development. The NPPF should be read as a whole.
- 5.2 Running throughout the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development is achieved through three main objectives which are – economic, social and environmental.
- 5.3 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that for decision-taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless the policies of the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or, any adverse impact of doing so would 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits' when assessed against the policies of the NPPF when taken as a whole (NPPF paragraph 11 (d)).

### Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015)

- 5.4 Paragraph 34 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council has submitted its new local plan for examination, however at this stage, the emerging policies carry limited to no weight in decision-making.

- 5.5 A Local Development Scheme (LDS) was published in February 2025 by the Council. The LDS sets out the production timetable for the New Local Plan anticipated to be adopted April 2026. Notwithstanding the above, as the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for determining this application are now considered to be 'out of date'. This position is further highlighted given that the Horsham District Local Plan examination hearing meetings scheduled for January 2025 were cancelled by the appointed Inspector, and in April 2025 has advised that the Plan is withdrawn due to concerns about its legal compliance.
- 5.6 The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing development within the District, with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying limited weight in decision-making.
- 5.7 While considered to be out of date, the main HDPF policies relevant to this application are as follows:
- Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
  - Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
  - Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
  - Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
  - Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
  - Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs
  - Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
  - Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
  - Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
  - Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
  - Policy 33 - Development Principles
  - Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
  - Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
  - Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
  - Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
  - Policy 41 - Parking

#### Rusper Neighbourhood Plan (RNP) (2021)

5.8 While also considered to be out of date, the Neighbourhood Plan policies relevant to this application are as follows:

- Policy RUS1 – Spatial Plan
- Policy RUS3 – Design Policy
- Policy RUS10 – Dark Skies Policy
- Policy RUS11 – Promoting Sustainable Transport

#### Planning Advice Note(s) (PAN)

5.9 Relevant PANs to this application are as follows:

- Shaping Development in Horsham District
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

## **6. Planning Considerations**

### Principle of Development

- 6.1 The HDPF spatial development strategy as contained within policies 2, 3 & 4 directs development to sites within built-up area boundaries, encourage the effective use of brownfield land, and aim to manage development around the edges of existing settlements in order to protect the rural character and landscape.
- 6.2 The site is located outside of the built-up area and is not allocated within Horsham's adopted development plan (comprising in this case the HDPF and the RNP), noting again that these are now out of date. As a result, residential development in this location would conflict with the requirements of Policies 2 and 4 (Settlement Expansion) of the HDPF. The site is also not in an isolated location therefore the opportunities afforded by Paragraph 84 of the NPPF do not apply in this instance.
- 6.3 Notwithstanding the above, the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, with the latest Authority Monitoring Report (April 2025) detailing a supply of only 1 year. Therefore, the tilted balance contained in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged.

- 6.4 While the Council has submitted the New Horsham District Local Plan for examination, as detailed above, the appointed Inspector has advised that the new Local Plan be withdrawn (April 2025) and the process is re-started. As such, the weight given to the above policies and the New Local Plan is therefore limited to none at this stage.
- 6.5 In addition, the Council has failed its most recent Housing Delivery Test, with the December 2024 test results demonstrating that the Council has only delivered 62% of its housing target in the preceding three years. This itself also triggers the presumption in favour of sustainable development under Paragraph 11(d). This is irrespective of a Council's five-year housing land supply position.
- 6.6 It is noted that limited weight should be attached to the conflict with Policy 26 in respect of development outside of built-up area boundaries given that the deficient housing supply position dictates that these boundaries are out of date. As such, the fact that a site may lie outside of the built-up area boundary does not, in and of itself, constitute a reason to refuse the application.
- 6.7 Further to the above, Paragraph 14 of the NPPF notes that "in situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11(d)) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:
- a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and
  - b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement".
- 6.8 It is highlighted that the RNP does not include allocations to meet the Parish's housing needs, therefore paragraph 14 of the NPPF as set out above, does not apply and the presumption in favour of sustainable development would not be affected in this instance.
- 6.9 Furthermore, the proposal would also be acceptable in principle as it represents development on previously developed land / brownfield land. The definition of previously developed land within the NPPF is as follows – *"Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.*

*This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape”.*

- 6.10 The use and more effective use of previously developed land attracts support in the NPPF, as well as in Policy 2 of the HDPF. Under this definition, residential garden land outside of built-up areas is previously developed land / brownfield land. This weighs in favour of the proposed development.
- 6.11 As detailed above, the site is surrounded by development on all sides. Given this character and the context, the development is therefore considered to represent infill development, on previously developed land.



Figure 4: Map showing relationship of the site (Green Arrow) with existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) (red lines) connecting the site directly into the Built-Up Area (blue line / area) to the south-east.

- 6.12 While it is acknowledged that future residents would likely be reliant upon private vehicles to access facilities, leading to some harm in this regard, this harm would be tempered by the short distance to Crawley and Rusper. Alternative options such as cycling and walking are available and overall, occupants of the proposed dwelling would have reasonably good access to services. The map below shows the PROW network which provides direct access from the site into Crawley.
- 6.13 It is noted that there are a number of other recent decisions that have granted residential developments outside of the defined built-up areas in other parts of the District. Examples include reference numbers DC/22/0495 and DC/22/2250 which each sought permission for 1no dwelling and were granted at appeal in August 2023 and March 2024 respectively, and DC/23/2278 which sought permission for 8no dwellings and was granted by the Council's planning committee North in April 2024. The site considered under reference DC/23/2278 was located a greater distance from any built-up area boundary when compared to the application site, however was considered to be suitable for housing.
- 6.14 Lastly, a very recent appeal decision issued in October 2025 under planning reference DC/24/1486, granted permission for a new build dwelling approximately 2 miles away from the closest built-up area boundary. Within the appeal decision the Inspector states that –
- “27. *The proposed dwelling would be in a location that is not considered suitable when assessed against the relevant HDPF and NP policies. The site lacks close proximity to a wide range of essential services and facilities. Although there are some opportunities for travel by means other than private car, reliance on car journeys is likely to be significant. In these respects, the proposal would conflict with key development plan policies.*
28. *Balanced against the harm are a number of benefits. The overall housing supply remains significantly deficient, and the provision of an additional dwelling would make a meaningful contribution to addressing this shortfall. The Framework recognises that small sites can make an important contribution to housing supply and are often built out quickly. There would also be modest economic benefits during construction and through local spending, as well as a small contribution to housing diversity. While the scale of these benefits is modest given that only one dwelling is proposed, in the context of current housing pressures, even a single additional home represents a valuable and positive contribution.*

29. *Taking all matters into account, the adverse impacts of granting permission would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole. Consequently, the proposal benefits from the presumption in favour of sustainable development as defined in paragraph 11d of the Framework.”*

- 6.15 In addition to the above, attention is drawn to a recent appeal decision at Horsham Golf Club, Denne Park, Horsham, RH13 0AX, which allowed a development for 800 units under planning reference DC/23/1178 (Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/W/24/3355546) in July 2025. The inspector for this appeal described the Council’s current 1-year housing land supply position as “lamentable”.
- 6.16 It is evident that the current housing land supply position in Horsham is acute, and the uncertainty surrounding the progress of the new Local Plan means that this situation will continue. The Inspector within the Horsham Golf Club appeal decision at paragraph 58 reaffirms this position, stating that the settlement boundaries in the HDPF are out of date, and that the use of Policy 26 to restrict housing development outside settlement boundaries is not consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.17 Furthermore, it is highlighted that the Horsham Golf Club site does not directly adjoin a defined or proposed Built Up Area Boundary, which is also the case with the application site which is the subject of this application. As such, this appeal decision clearly indicates that the housing supply position would outweigh non-compliance with the criteria set out within the HDPF and Shaping Development in Horsham District guidance, and the fact the site does not adjoin the built-up area boundary should not in itself form the basis for refusal.
- 6.18 While it is acknowledged that every application and site context should be considered on its own merits, taking into account the current situation of the Council in terms of its 5-year housing supply and the above examples, there is an expectation that a consistent approach is applied to decision-making.
- 6.19 It is highlighted that the above permitted dwellings were located a significant distance away from any defined built-up areas. The above examples clearly show that notwithstanding the distances to the respective settlement boundaries, these boundaries are now considered to be out of date given the lack of 5-year housing supply. As such, the tilted balance is engaged and the principle of residential development in this location is acceptable.

- 6.20 The housing supply position of the Council is deficient. 1no additional dwelling would contribute towards the much-needed supply of houses. Small sites can often be built out relatively quickly. There would be economic benefits arising from construction and spend in the local economy. Although these benefits are tempered by the small contribution that 1no dwelling would make in the context of the current circumstances, the additional dwelling would be valuable.
- 6.21 In summary, given the lack of a 5-year housing supply, the surrounding context consisting of a mixture of residential and non-residential uses, the site being designated as previously developed land, and relevant recent examples of housing developments permitted outside of settlement boundaries, the principle of residential development is therefore acceptable. As such, it is contended in these circumstances that limited weight should be afforded to Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF, and to the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### Design, Appearance, and Impact on the Setting

- 6.22 Policy 25 of the HDPF seeks to protect the natural environment and landscape character of the District, including the landform, development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats. Development will be required to protect, conserve, and enhance landscape and townscape character, taking account of areas or features identified as being of landscape importance, individual settlement characteristics and settlement separation. In addition, development will be supported where it maintains and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network.
- 6.23 Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF require development to be of a high standard of design and layout. Development proposals must be locally distinctive in character and respect the character of their surroundings. Where relevant, the scale, massing and appearance of development will be required to relate sympathetically with its built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and to consider any impact on the skyline and important views.
- 6.24 As detailed within the submitted plans, the current proposal has been considered and developed with regard to the overall context of the site and immediate surrounding character. The proposed development and curtilage would follow the existing properties to the west in terms of layout, positioning and orientation. Given the size of the proposed dwelling and the plot, the proposal is considered to sit comfortably within the site and would not result in a cramped form of development or an overdevelopment of the site.

- 6.25 The layout of the dwelling has been formulated to enable an appropriate size garden area to be created for the proposed dwelling. The provision of 1no dwelling would be in keeping and would be commensurate with the prevailing character of surrounding dwellings and would be appropriately sited and scaled, taking into account the character of the area.
- 6.26 While the proposed development is located on a corner plot in close proximity to the public highway given its appropriate design, scale and context, the proposal would be acceptable in terms of impact on the street scene and the overall character of the area. In addition, the proposal for 1no dwelling would not result in any harmful loss of openness in this area. The proposals also include landscape enhancements which seek to retain the landscape character and make a positive contribution to the setting. The applicant would be happy with a landscaping condition to be attached to any permission which requires full details of measures which would result in a further enhancement to the site.
- 6.27 Overall, the proposals would represent appropriate development within this setting and would be in accordance with Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF.

#### Neighbouring Amenity and Environment for Future Occupiers

- 6.28 Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.
- 6.29 Given the relationship of the proposed dwelling, as indicated on the site plan provided, with neighbouring properties, it is considered that the proposals would not have a detrimental impact in terms of overlooking, overbearing impact or loss of light to neighbouring residential properties. In addition, it is contended that there would be no significant issues in terms of harmful noise or disturbance generated as a result of the proposed development, beyond that of the existing use of the site.
- 6.30 The proposed dwelling would be of an appropriate size and would comply with national space standards and appropriate external amenity space would also be provided for future occupiers. In addition, the application is supported by a Noise Impact Assessment which confirms that future occupiers would not be adversely impacted by noise from neighbouring uses or the surrounding area, including Gatwick Airport. It is noted that noise was not considered to be an issue on recent applications for housing in the immediate area.

- 6.31 Overall, the proposed development would not result in demonstrable harm to neighbouring amenity and would therefore be in accordance with Policy 33 of the HDPF.

#### Parking and Highways

- 6.32 Policies 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework relate to transport and parking, and states that more transport choice including community transport where appropriate will be encouraged, as well as a reduction in private car use and greater accessibility to more sustainable modes of transport. The district has a good rail network so the increased use of stations will be encouraged through better pedestrian and cycle links. Adequate parking and facilities must be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users.
- 6.33 The plans indicate that the proposals would be served by an existing access to the site from a private lane, over which the applicant has a right of way, and as such, no highway safety concerns would be apparent. The provision of 1no dwelling would not result in a marked increase in trips to and from the site which would be detrimental to the function of the highway network, particularly when compared to the existing equestrian use of the site.
- 6.34 Sufficient space for vehicle parking would be available on site, and overall, the proposals would be acceptable in this regard.

#### Ecological and Biodiversity Considerations / Enhancements

- 6.35 Policy 31 of the HDPF states that –
- “Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and/or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks”.

- 6.36 The application is supported by a detailed Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA). The submitted ecological information outlines that overall, the proposals would not have a detrimental impact on protected habitats or species with mitigation and enhancement measures proposed.
- 6.37 However, it is noted that there are 2no ponds in close proximity to the site, where the PEA identifies an amber risk score to great crested newts (GCN). eDNA testing has been carried out on the ponds where signs of GCNs have been identified. In order to address this matter, the applicant is happy to apply for a newt licence from NatureSpace under the Great Crested Newt District Licensing Scheme. The licence application has been sent to NatureSpace who are waiting for this planning application to be validated and registered before issuing a licence / certificate.
- 6.38 As such, the submitted details provided and to be provided, indicate that there would be no detrimental impact on habitats or protected species, in accordance with Policy 31 of the HDPF.

## **7. Summary and Conclusion**

- 7.1 Overall, given the position of the Council with regard to its 5-year housing supply, the designation of the site as previously developed land and recent decisions relating to residential development outside of built-up areas, the proposal represents an appropriate form of development, resulting in the sustainable development of this rural location.
- 7.2 The proposals for 1no dwelling would be commensurate with the prevailing character of the vicinity and would result in an overall enhancement of the setting. The proposals would also be acceptable when considered against all other material matters, as detailed within this statement and supporting information.
- 7.3 There are no adverse impacts of granting permission which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of an additional dwelling when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. As a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied and Paragraph 11(d) indicates that permission should be granted.

- 7.4 As such, while now considered to be out of date, the proposals would be in accordance with Policies 4, 25, 26, 31, 32 and 33 of the HDPF and therefore, the Local Planning Authority is respectfully requested to grant planning permission accordingly.