

MME PLANNING SERVICES

Permission in Principle (PIP) application for the
conversion of an existing building to form 1no dwelling.

at

Venters, East Street, Rusper, West Sussex, RH12 4RH

Planning Statement

Ref: P-099a

May 2026

Version 1



Figure 1: Site Location / Red Line Area

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are instructed to prepare and submit a Permission in Principle (PIP) application for the conversion of an existing building to form 1no dwelling within the garden area of Venters, East Street, Rusper, West Sussex, RH12 4RH.
- 1.2 While it is noted that the application is submitted as a PIP, where matters in relation to location of the site, the type of land use proposed and the amount of development are the only considerations, this statement sets out the proposed scheme 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 site is located on the northern side of East Street, outside of any defined built-up area boundary. As such, the site is classified as a countryside location for planning and policy purposes. The site comprises part of the wider residential garden space / curtilage of Venters, and therefore represents previously developed land, as per the NPPF definition.

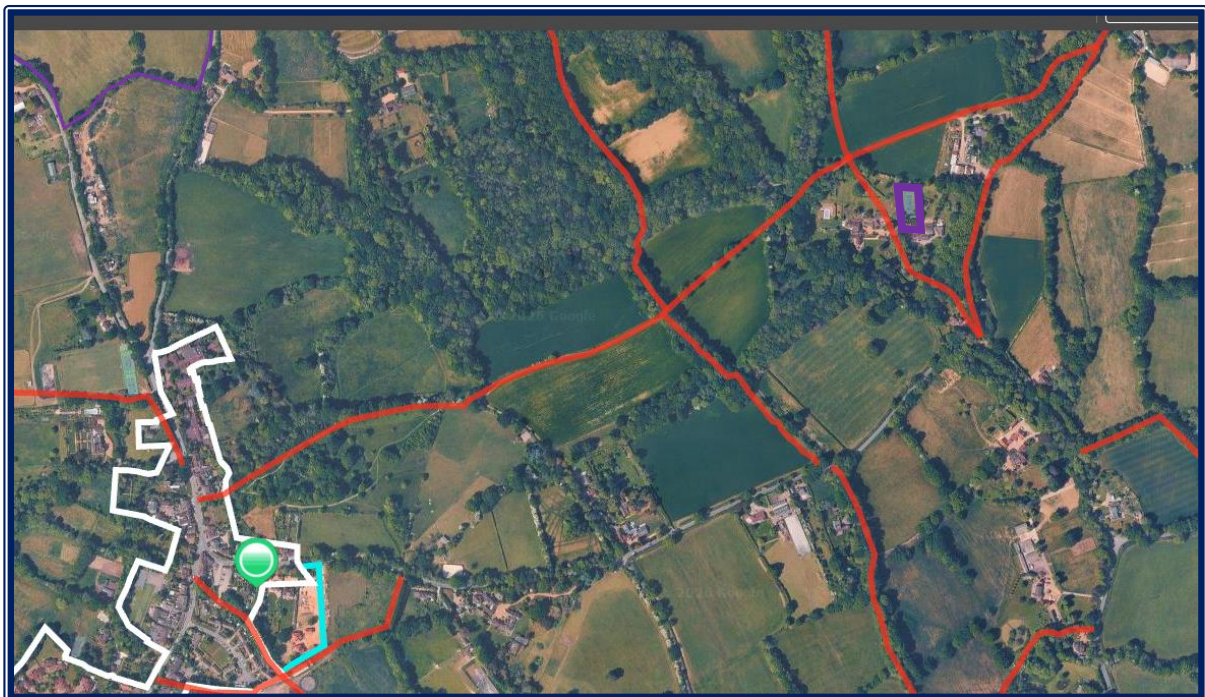


Figure 2: Map showing relationship of the site (in purple) with existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) (red lines) connecting the site directly into the Built-Up Area Boundary (white line / area).

- 2.2 The existing dwelling at Venters is a Grade II listed building, however there are no other designations covering the site. The application building is located approximately 67m away from the main listed dwelling.
- 2.3 Although designated as a countryside location, the site is surrounded by residential development, with existing dwellings located to the north-east, south and east. As such, the site is not considered to be in an isolated rural location.
- 2.4 It is highlighted, as detailed within Figure 2 above, that there is a Public Right of Way (PROW) which connects the site directly to the built-up area of Rusper to the south-west. Given the location of the site and its setting in relation to the built-up-area, and the PROW within the site, it is therefore considered that the site is in a sustainable location.

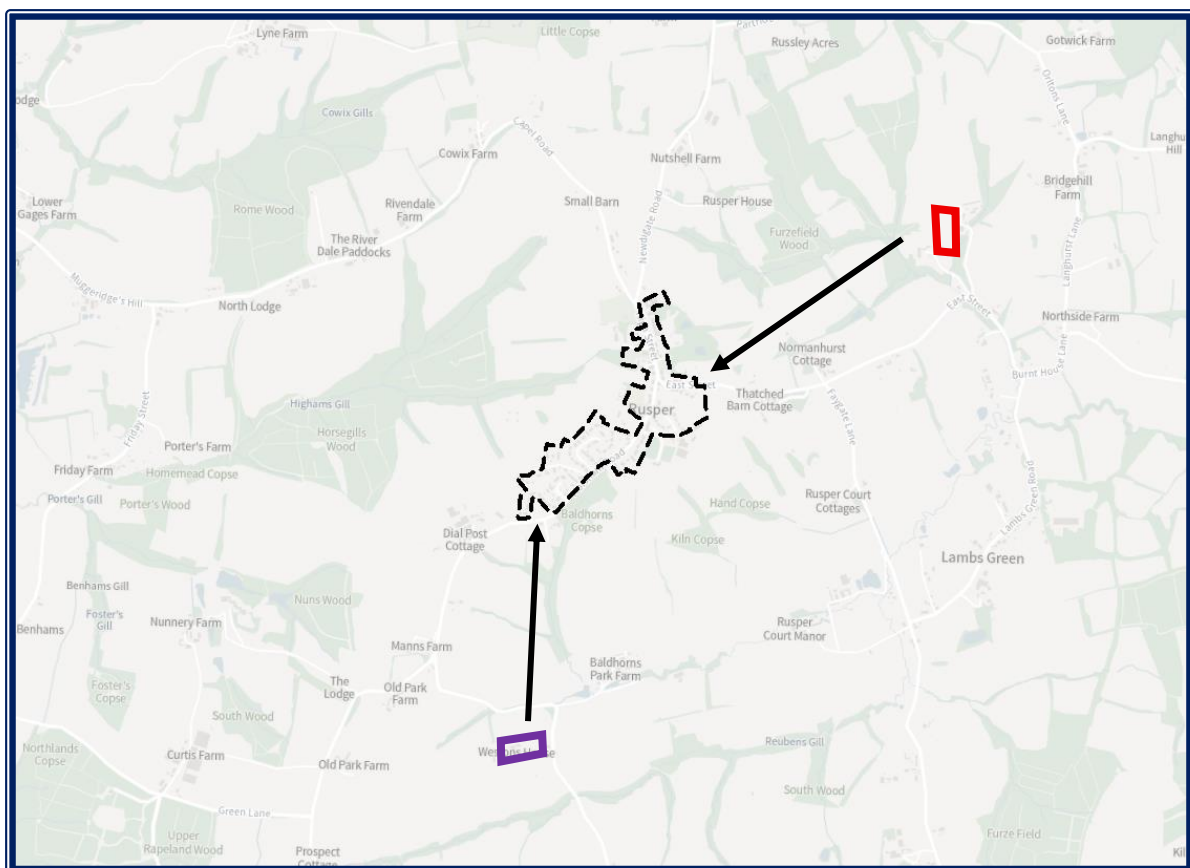


Figure 3: Plan showing relationship of the site (red) with the Built-Up Area Boundary (dashed black line) and a recent example of a permitted application for the conversion of a building to form a dwelling in the countryside under planning reference DC/25/0968 (purple)

- 2.5 Neighbouring and surrounding residential dwellings are generally characterised by an eclectic mix of properties, all with differing plot sizes and positioning within their respective curtilages. Access currently exists to the site via a private access from East Street to the south-east.

3. Planning History

- [Replacement garage and storage sheds outbuildings Site: Venters East Street Rusper](#)

Ref. No: RS/53/02 | Status: Application Permitted, December 2002

4. Proposals

- 4.1 As detailed above, PIP is sought for the conversion of an existing building to form 1 no dwelling. The proposals, while full and final specifications would be reserved for the technical details stage, would consist of the creation of a modest single-storey dwelling, which is considered to be in keeping with the character of the area and limits the impact on the setting.
- 4.2 The proposed use of the site for residential purposes is considered to be acceptable given the existing residential nature of the site and existing residential properties adjoining the site. The location of the site is therefore considered to be appropriate for housing.

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 only limited 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 in 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 advised that the Plan is withdrawn due to concerns about its legal compliance. Proceedings for the new Local Plan are due to re-open in April 2026, however the new local plan carries limited weight in decision-making at this stage.
- 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 11(d) 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 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
- Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
- Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
- Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
- Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
- 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 / appeal 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

Location of Site

- 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 (December 2025) detailing a supply of only 1.7 years. Therefore, the tilted balance contained in Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged.
- 6.4 The situation with the new Horsham Local Plan is currently uncertain and as such, the weight given to the above policies and the new local plan is therefore limited to none at this stage. As will be detailed below, there are no material matters which would represent a reason to refuse this PIP application. In any event, any issues or harm that are identified would need to surmount a high hurdle to prevail in this balance.
- 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 Policies 3, 4 and 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 The proposal relates to the conversion of an existing and established building to a residential dwelling. It is noted that Policy 10 of the HDPF supports the conversion of rural buildings to commercial uses in the first instance. However, given the spatial context of the site and surroundings, it is considered that a residential use would be more reflective of the surrounding land uses, and therefore more appropriate in this regard.
- 6.10 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”.*

- 6.11 Under this definition, residential garden land outside of built-up areas is classed as previously developed land / brownfield land. The application site is therefore considered to be brownfield, where the HDPF guides development towards brownfield land, and as such it follows that the principle of development on the site is also considered acceptable in this regard. The use and more effective use of previously developed land attracts support in the NPPF, as well as in Policy 2 of the HDPF. This weighs in favour of the proposed development.
- 6.12 While considered to be out of date, the development accords with Policies 2, 3 and 4 of the HDPF which encourage the redevelopment of previously developed land and the expansion of settlements outside of built up area boundaries where the level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type. The development would also accord with Policy 26 in this regard, as the proposal would enable the sustainable development of a rural area.
- 6.13 The NPPF states that isolated homes should be avoided unless the development meets one or more criteria from Paragraph 84. Paragraph 84c is the most relevant to this application, with the development utilising an existing building. The existing building is discreetly located, behind existing soft landscaping and is not clearly visible or prominent from public vantage points. The building has a utilitarian appearance, of a type which is commonly found within rural areas. While the appearance of the building is not a consideration under this PIP application, it is noted that the overall form of the building would be retained as part of the proposals.
- 6.14 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 Rusper. Alternative options such as cycling and walking are available and overall, occupants of the proposed dwelling would have reasonably good access to services. Figure 2 above shows the PROW network which provides direct access from the site into Rusper.
- 6.15 It is noted that there is a very recent example within the Parish of Rusper which permitted the conversion of an existing building to a dwelling under planning reference DC/25/0968 in November 2025. This site was located a similar distance away from the built-up area of Rusper, and from consideration of the delegated report relating to this approval, no concerns were raised with regard to the spatial context, distance to services and the sustainability of the site. Given the similarities between the application site and this example, it is considered that no concerns would be raised in relation to the location of the application site and its suitability for the provision of a dwelling.

- 6.16 In addition, it is noted that there are a number of recent decisions which have granted residential developments outside of the defined built-up areas elsewhere within the District where the context and scenarios were very similar. 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 in April 2024.
- 6.17 The Inspector within the appeal decision in relation to application reference DC/22/0495 states "I have attached limited weight to the conflict with HDPF Policy 26 in respect of development outside of built-up area boundaries. The housing shortfall dictates that those boundaries are out of date. I consider that some weight can still be given to the strategy set out within HDPF Policy 2, in terms of the general locations of new development, but 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 planning permission".
- 6.18 A very recent appeal decision issued in October 2025 under planning reference DC/24/1486 (Appeal Reference APP/Z3825/W/25/3361339), 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.”*

- 6.19 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 housing land supply position as “lamentable”.
- 6.20 As set out within paragraph 6.17 above, 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.
- 6.21 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 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.
- 6.22 Other recent examples of permitted dwellings outside of a defined built-up area can be seen under planning reference DC/24/1887, which granted outline planning consent for 2no detached dwellings in December 2025; reference DC/25/1831, which granted outline planning consent for 1no dwelling in March 2026, and reference DC/25/0895, which granted full planning consent for 1no dwelling at appeal in March 2026 (Appeal Reference APP/Z3825/W/25/3375774).
- 6.23 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, the Inspector’s view in relation to the location of the application site and the above examples, there is an expectation that a consistent approach is applied to decision-making.

- 6.24 It is highlighted that the above examples of permitted dwelling were located outside of settlement boundaries and in some cases, significant distances away from any defined built-up areas. The above examples clearly show, that notwithstanding the distances to the respective settlement boundaries, given the lack of 5-year housing supply, the tilted balance is engaged and the principle of residential development in this location is acceptable.
- 6.25 It must be noted that the development of rural areas is fundamentally different to the development of built-up areas. It is highlighted that people live and work differently in rural areas than they do in towns and cities, and that there is a need and a desire for individuals to live in rural areas.
- 6.26 The site and surrounding area consists of a cluster of existing dwellings, as well as agricultural and equestrian uses. Future residents may wish to live in this location due to proximity to their place of work. The proposals would generate local employment or potentially allow for younger residents already living and working in this location to stay rather than move away. The fact that the site may not be in close proximity to public transport links, for example, should not mean that the development would not result in the sustainable development of this rural location.
- 6.27 The Council is encouraged to consider what sustainability means within a rural context, rather than simply looking at the geographical context of the site. Supporting the rural economy is itself a sustainable aim, with the creation of this dwelling creating local jobs and helping to maintain the viability and vibrancy of the rural location, potentially reducing rural decline. These factors are in line with Policies 4 and 26 of the HDPF.
- 6.28 The housing supply position of the Council is clearly deficient. 1no additional dwelling would contribute towards the much-needed supply of dwellings. Small sites can often be built out relatively quickly. There would be economic benefits arising from construction and spend in the local economy. In the context of the current circumstances, the additional dwelling would be valuable. Recent decisions that have been made by the Council and the Inspectorate confirm small scale developments such as this make a valuable contribution to the Council's housing shortage.

- 6.29 In summary, given the lack of a 5-year housing supply, the fact that the proposals would utilise an existing building on previously developed land, and relevant recent examples of housing developments permitted outside of settlement boundaries, including within the Parish of Rusper as set out at paragraph 6.15 above, the location of the site is considered to be acceptable for housing. Any perceived harm in this regard within this setting is not considered to outweigh the provision of an additional dwelling, given the deficient housing supply of the Council.

The type of land use proposed

- 6.30 As detailed above, the application proposes the use of the site for residential development. The site comprises part of the residential garden of an existing dwelling at Venters. Given that the site is located outside of a defined built-up area, the site represents previously developed land. The site is not isolated, with existing residential development adjoining the site.
- 6.31 The proposed use of the site for residential purposes is therefore acceptable, and given the context, the proposals would utilise an existing building to provide residential development on a site which is already developed.
- 6.32 Policy 3 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states that development will be permitted within towns and villages which have defined built-up areas. Any infilling will be required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale to maintain characteristics and function of the settlement, in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.
- 6.33 The direct surroundings of the site to the north-east, south and east, is characterised primarily by residential development. The site is well contained with extensive foliage to the boundaries. While the proposed dwelling would be predominantly screened from public views from East Street, it is noted that it would be visible from the PROW running through the site. Notwithstanding this, given that the proposals relate to the conversion of an existing building, the fact that the proposed dwelling may be visible would not warrant refusal of this application.
- 6.34 Given the spatial context of the site and surroundings, it is considered that the provision of an additional residential dwelling in this location would be an appropriate use of the site.

- 6.35 The application site lies in close proximity to a built-up area, and there are existing residential properties surrounding the site, with the application seeking to develop an existing building within an existing residential site for additional housing. It is also highlighted that the residential use proposed under the recent approval in Rusper, reference DC/25/0968, for the conversion of an existing building to form a dwelling within a similar context, was deemed to be acceptable within the countryside setting.
- 6.36 Taking the above into account, it is considered that the proposed development / use would be commensurate with the character and uses within the immediate and wider vicinity, and would therefore represent an appropriate form of development.

The amount of development

- 6.37 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.
- 6.38 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.
- 6.39 The indicative application site measures an area of approximately 0.16 hectares. The wider surroundings are generally characterised by a mixture of dwellings set within varying sized plots. The existing building is appropriately separated from neighbouring buildings and its conversion to form a dwelling would reflect the mixture in built form character within the vicinity and plot sizes.
- 6.40 The existing soft landscaping to the boundaries of the site would ensure that the indicative proposals would not appear prominently from public vantage points, particularly when compared to the existing built form within the immediate vicinity. It is noted that there is a PROW running to the west of the site, however any views of the site from this vantage point would not be harmful or unexpected in this context.

- 6.41 The quantum of development would be appropriate, with the proposed dwelling comfortably accommodated within the site area given that the proposals entail the conversion of an existing building. The indicative plans also indicate that sufficient space would be available for an appropriate build pattern, access, and a garden area, with existing landscape features to the boundaries retained. The indicative proposals would also be acceptable in terms of impact on neighbouring amenity.
- 6.42 It is considered that the application site could accommodate 1no dwelling comfortably, with the site capable of providing an appropriate layout and configuration. It is considered that the indicative proposals would not harm the landscape character or visual amenities of the locality.
- 6.43 Notwithstanding the above, given the housing position of the Council, it is viewed that even if some harm is identified in this regard, the adverse impacts of granting permission would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the Framework as a whole.
- 6.44 Overall, the indicative proposals would represent appropriate development within this setting and would be in accordance with Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF.

7. Summary and Conclusion

- 7.1 Overall, given the position of the Council with regard to its 5-year housing land supply, the location of the site, the fact that the proposals would utilise an existing and established building, the uses within the immediate and wider vicinity, the appropriate quantum of development proposed and recent decisions relating to residential development outside of built-up areas, including a very recent decision in the parish of Rusper for the conversion of a rural building to a dwelling under planning reference, DC/25/0968, the proposal represents an appropriate form of development in this location.
- 7.2 It is considered that the application site could comfortably accommodate 1no dwelling. The indicative proposals would be acceptable in terms of impact on the setting, and would not appear prominently within this context given the residential nature of the surroundings, existing screening, the existing built form and spacing to neighbouring properties.

7.3 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 asked to grant PIP accordingly.