

Re: Agricultural Yard and Grain Stores
Lidsey Farm, Sack Lane, Lidsey,
West Sussex, PO22 9PE



Planning Design and Access Statement

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Context

The site, which extends to some 0.93 hectares is located on the north side of Sack Lane, a short distance to the east of the A29 and the main settlement of Lidsey. The building complex is sited immediately to the north and east of a cluster of dwellings and along a stretch of Sack Lane. These dwellings immediately adjoin the application site and are sited a short distance to the south and southwest. Further to the south are the new A259 by-pass and the large new massive Rolls Royce factory beyond. To the north and east is open arable land. A short distance to the west and north the land is allocated as a strategic development site for some 4,000 homes, schools and various community facilities.

The site has been used for a central farm grain store for grain grown at Lidsey and at other local farms owned by the applicant. The applicant has now changed working practices and wants to store all grain in a single location. If it was stored at Sack lane it would significantly increase traffic and activity, which would affect the living conditions of existing residents, due to traffic and activity noise. Hence an alternative grain store site is to be used, leaving the application site vacant and redundant.

Whilst in theory the buildings could be used for an industrial or large storage use such uses would be inappropriate in this location. This is due to the proximity of existing dwellings and the modest width and quiet domestic nature of Sack Lane. In addition, the buildings and yard are unsightly and materially detract from the setting of the adjacent dwellings and the surrounding landscape.



None-the-less the farm enterprise would like the site to be used and to generate an income to supplement that of the farm enterprise. Currently the applicant's family owns a number of dwellings along Sack Lane, which are rented out to local families. They provide local rural homes, whilst the income received supports the farming enterprise.

The Proposal

The proposal is to demolish all the modern buildings and fixed plant, remove the concrete yard areas and to replace them with eight modest sized dwellings, a paddock, landscape/ecology areas and associated gardens, access and parking. The dwellings are designed to have the overall form and appearance of a traditional agricultural yard. Approximately half of the existing yard will be turned from buildings/ hard-standing to grassed and soft landscaped areas.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (Framework)

The Core principles of the Framework are to adopt a pro-active approach and local authorities should approach applications in a positive and creative way. Decisions-makers at all levels should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible and should determine applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise. (Sections 2 and 4).

To support the Governments objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed. Small sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built out quickly. Accordingly, at least 10% of an authorities housing requirement should be met on small sites. Windfall sites should be supported and all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. (Section 5)

The Framework states that strategic policies relating to housing need should be informed by local housing need assessments. Paragraph 73 states that local authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where strategic policies are more than 5 years old. Such figures should include appropriate buffers.

Paragraph 11 of the Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It states that proposals which accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay. However, where development plan policies, which are most important to determining applications are out of date proposals should be approved unless:

"i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear 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 in the Framework as a whole."

Footnote 7 to paragraph 11 explains that development plan policies are considered out of date where local planning authorities are unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates the delivery of houses was substantially below 75% over the previous three years.

Paragraph 73 of the Framework explains that local planning authorities should maintain a five year supply of deliverable housing sites against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies. However, where those policies are more than five years old the supply should be set against their local housing need.

The Framework places increased emphasis on making effective use of land, with section 11 of the Framework being dedicated to this. It states that planning policies and decisions should encourage multiple benefits from using both urban and rural land, taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains, such as developments that would enable new habitat creation. The development of underutilized land and buildings should be promoted, especially where it would help meet identified housing need.

In relation to density, the Framework states that where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use for the potential of each site. Plans should include the use of minimum density standards and proposals that fail to make efficient use of the land should be refused.

Concerning climate change the Framework encourages the use of renewable and low carbon developments and the minimization of energy consumption.

Section 15 of the Framework deals with the natural environment. The intrinsic beauty and character and beauty of the countryside should be recognized and maintained and biodiversity enhancements encouraged.

Concerning design, section 12 of the Framework states that new development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area; establish a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site and reflect the identity of local surroundings, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. Planning decisions should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative.

In relation to flooding section 14 of the Framework states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Strategic policies should be

informed by a strategic flood risk assessment and the cumulative impacts in, or affecting local areas susceptible to flooding and advice from the Environment Agency and other flood risk management authorities.

The proposed scheme accords very closely with the Framework for the reasons set out in this statement. As such there is a presumption in favor of granting planning permission.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPG)

Regarding design the NPG refers to paragraph 130 of the Framework and the newly published National Design Guide.

The NPG advocates making effective use of land and advises that densities can be measure in terms of dwellings per hectare and bed-spaces per hectare. It advises that all developments should maintain acceptable living standards in relation to daylight and sunlight. Paragraph 005 Reference: ID : 66-005-20190722).

The NPG advises on how to undertake objectively assessed housing needs and on how to apply paragraph 11 of the Framework.

In relation to flood risk paragraph 048 Reference ID: 7-048-20140306 of the NPG advises that a change in use may involve an increase in flood risk if the vulnerability classification of the development is changed. In such cases the applicant will need to show in their Flood Risk Assessment that future users of the development will not be placed in danger from flood risk throughout its lifetime. Mitigation measures may be necessary and it is for the applicant to show that the change of use meets the objectives of the Framework's policy on flood risk.

National Design Guide 2019

The NDG encourages looking at a site's context in relation to its surroundings and making efficient use of land. Well-designed neighbourhood's provide a variety and choice of homes to suit all needs and ages and which are well integrated. Homes should provide good internal living spaces with access to private gardens and public spaces.

Government New Homes bonus (NHB)

This bonus secures additional funding for local authorities when granting planning permission for new housing. The additional funds help keep Council tax rates down and help fund local services and facilities for local people. Section 143 of the Localism Act and S.70 of the Town and Country Planning Act state that certain financial contributions, such as NHB are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Housing Delivery Tests 2018, 2019 and 2020

The Housing Delivery Test 2018 identified Arun as requiring an action plan to address its under-provision of housing over the past three years. It had

provided 91% of its target. By 2019 this deficit had dropped to 68% despite the publication and implementation of the required Action Plan. It then required Arun to include a 20% housing buffer. In 2020 the delivery of homes dropped further to just 61%. This means that the Presumption in favour of housing scheme in accordance with paragraph 11 d) applies.

Arun District Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (LP)

Within the LP the application site is shown as outside the defined built-up area and a short distance to the Barnham/Eastergate and Westergate (BEW) strategic housing site.

and Chichester.

Policy SD SP1 advocates a presumption in favour of sustainable development and Policy SD SP1a allows for sustainable growth to meet the needs of the District. Policy SD SP2 explains that development should be focused within the built up area boundary and Policy C SP1 restricts development in the countryside. It does allow for rural diversification and proposals that comply with other specific policies in the Local Plan..

Regarding housing the LP explains that the final policy target takes account of the objectively assessed housing need (OAN). It sets a target of 20,000 homes by 2031.

Policy H SP1 advises that the phased housing is for some 1,120 dwellings per annum between 2016 and 2021, which this figure rises to 1310 dwellings per annum.

Policies W SP1 and W DM2 deal with flood risk and Policy W DM3 deals with sustainable drainage systems.

Housing Delivery Test – Action Plan June 2019

In accordance with the Housing Delivery Test 2018 the Council published an action plan to address the housing shortage within the district. It advised that Arun currently has a 4.7 year supply of deliverable housing sites and that housing delivery has underperformed over the first five years of LP period.

Some of the actions included in the document are:

- To apply paragraph 11d of the Framework until the 5 year supply of housing land is re-established.
- Invite applications from land owners and developers to submit applications for “deliverable” HELAA sites to re-establish the 5 year HLS.
- Seek the allocation of a range of smaller sites to foster the small build sector and diversify the developer/provider base through the Development Plan.

In the Housing Delivery Test 2019 Arun’s under performance increased from 91% to 68%. This underperformance increased further in 2020 and now stands at 61%. Arun’s housing monitoring report 1st April 2019 – 31 March 2020, published in December 2020 also shows that Arun’s supply of deliverable housing sites has dropped to 3.3 years.

As a consequence of the above Arun now has the added burden of providing a housing buffer and of applying the presumption in favour of development set out in paragraph 11d) of the framework to all housing proposals.

Principle

As stated above, Policy SD SP2 states that development should be focused within the built up area boundary and Policy C SP1 restricts development in the countryside.

The proposal involves the construction of eight dwellings in the rural area, which would normally be in conflict with this policy.

However, the proposed dwellings are part of a farm diversification scheme. The proposed houses will be retained and rented out, thus supplementing the farm income.

The Local Plan does not define what can be included as a farm diversification scheme and does not include any policies that relate to farm diversification scheme.

At the same time, the site is not isolated, it is within a cluster of modern and older houses and other buildings and just a short distance from a strategic development site.

In conclusion, on the face of it the proposal conflicts with policies SD SP2 and C SP1 of the Local Plan. However, as a farm diversification scheme the proposal complies with both policies.

In conclusion, in this instance it is not a matter of fact that the proposal conflicts with policies SD SP2 and C SP1 of the Local Plan, although such conflict exists if it is demonstrated that the proposal does not amount to a farm diversification scheme.

Affordable Housing Statement

With eight dwellings the proposal falls below the threshold for affordable housing provision.

Drainage and Flood Risk

Flood Risk Assessment

See separate Flood risk assessment, which confirms that the sequential and exception tests are not applicable to the proposal.

Sustainable Drainage

This is set out in section 5.1/5.2 of the Flood Risk Assessment.

Foul Water Drainage

This is set out in section 5.3 of the Flood Risk Assessment.

Farm Diversification

The benefits for the farm that will result from the scheme should not be underestimated. The real need to supplement the farm's income is set out in the submitted Agricultural report and there is no need to expand on it. As concluded in the agricultural report reliance on income generated from other sources is increasingly important to maintain and enhance the sustainability of the farming enterprise.

Character and appearance

Amount

The site currently comprises at least 7300 m² of concrete and hard surfaced yards. It also includes buildings and plant with a combined floor area of 3642m². The volume of the buildings and plant is some 10,335m³.

The proposal is for 2 No. 4 bedroom, 2 No. 3 bedroom and 4 No. 2 bedroom dwellings with a combined footprint of 710m². They will have a combined floor area of some 1200m² and a volume of approximately 2670m³.

Externally, some 5500m² will comprise domestic rear gardens and grassed/landscaped areas.

Overall, the amount of hard surfacing will be reduced by over 2000 m² and the footprint of buildings on the site will be reduced by some 2932m². The volume of buildings on the site will be reduced by approximately 9385m³ or 74%.





Design and appearance

The existing yard areas, accesses and grain storage and processing plant are expansive and extend to some 7300m³. They comprise an uncompromising modern and utilitarian agri-industrial complex that is totally out of keeping with its traditional rural setting.





The noise, traffic, dust and activity associated with the use of a yard and building complex of this size has the potential further detract from the setting of this cluster of traditional dwellings and the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside.

The proposed dwellings follow a traditional farmyard horseshoe layout. The dwellings are accommodated in three small terraces that respect and reflect the form of the adjacent dwellings and converted former agricultural buildings. They are traditionally designed, picking up on the design details of the adjacent dwellings and will be constructed from traditional local materials. The heights of the buildings are varied to reflect that of a traditional barn complex. It includes

a central two story barn with Lower single storey wings, which will include accommodation in this roof-space.

It should be noted that whilst the form and design of the buildings reflects and respects the form and appearance of a traditional farm building complex, it does not try to mimic one. They include dormer and velux windows and fenestration, flues and gardens that are reflective of rural farmworker cottages.

Externally their parking and turning area will be contained within the centre of the horseshoe, where they will be fully screened from the surrounding countryside. The dwellings will all have soft landscaped rear gardens, enclosed by traditional rural hedgerows. Beyond the gardens to the north and east will be a landscape/ecology bely and to the west would be grassed areas. To the south will be a combination of soft landscaping and an ecology belt.

The proposed access will run through the existing yard area to the west, to the north of the existing dwellings and adjacent to the existing yard access to the west of the existing dwellings. Whilst, not necessary, this access is moved further away from the dwelling known as Lidsey Barn, to enhance the setting of that dwelling and to improve the living conditions of the occupiers of that dwelling. The existing access to the yard located to the east of the dwelling known as The Barn will be closed and soft landscaped. This will reduce traffic in the vicinity of the adjacent bend in Sack Lane.

Materials schedule

Walls – Wienerberger Terca Kassandra Multi's, Flint (with brick dressings)

Roofs – Plain clay tiles – Lifestyles restoration colour

Landscaping

The proposed landscaping has been designed to respect and blend in with the nearby cottages and the surrounding open countryside, whilst enriching wildlife habitats.

A wildlife landscape strip has been formed between the rear gardens to the cottages and the rife and the field to the north. The hedging around the rear gardens will supplement the wildlife areas. The open grassed areas to the west of the proposed dwellings will provide a verdant and open setting to the existing dwellings to the west.

Planting schedule

The areas of soft planting are shown on drawing 2020/10/15. Details on the precise nature of the planting is set out in the Landscape plan prepared by Lizard Landscape and Ecology.

It is clear from this information that the proposed landscaping will radically enhance the character and appearance of the site, its immediate and wider setting.

Ecology

The existing site is hard surfaced or contains large agri-industrial buildings. It has little if any ecology value.

The proposal includes the following ecology benefits, which should be read in conjunction with drawing No. 2020/10/15. The proposed ecology enhancements include the removal of all existing hard surfacing and buildings and their replacement with dwellings, gardens, hedges, grassed areas and soft landscaping. In particular:

A – An open grassed area of some 1680m² will be created in the northwest section of the site.

B – A 10 metre deep landscape/ecology belt will be formed along the northern boundary of the site.

C – The above belt will be linked to a 10 metre ecology belt along the eastern side of the site, between 20 metre deep rear gardens and the existing ditch.

D – The existing wide concrete access in the southern end of the site will be taken out and replaced with soft landscaping.

E – The removal of the southern access will reduce vehicular traffic around the adjacent junction area and ditch.

F – Bird and bat boxes will be fixed to the proposed dwellings.

H – Traditional field hedges will be planted along the rear and side boundaries of the proposed dwellings.

Lighting Assessment

Externally – lamp capacity will not exceed 150 watts per light fitting and will be fitted to a PIR system.

Lighting will be restricted to the internal courtyard area.

Bin Storage and Collection Provision

The site layout plan shows where bin and refuse storage will be stored.

Transport Statement

The site is located a short distance to the east of the A29, which is part of the strategic road network. Access to the application site is via Sack Lane which is a narrow rural road that serves more than 20 dwellings, a nursery and Lidsey Farm.

The applicant's family has farmed the land for in excess of 80 years. Originally it was designed and used for a dairy farm. It is now mainly vegetables and wheat and the application site has been used for a farm centre, machinery and grain store. The grain storage infrastructure is also used by other farms within the farms overall holding. These other farms are located further to the west in both West Sussex and Hampshire. The farm is looking to move the grain storage to a

more central location, where it is both more convenient and there is less congestion on the surrounding road network.

The traffic generated over the years by the farms activities has fluctuated in terms of nature and volume, depending on the farm use at any one time. Since 2013, when the dairy closed, such activities have typically generated an average of 200 vehicle movements a day. However, during peak times, such as harvesting grain and maize there are up to 40 grain/crop trailer/tractor/HGV trips an hour coming in and out of Sack Lane.

Even based on 8 vehicle movements per day per a dwelling, which is excessive and will more than cater for residents movements and their visitors/deliveries, the number of vehicle movements generated per day would be 64. This will be significantly less than that generated by the farming activities. It will also primarily comprise domestic cars rather than large farm machinery, tractors and HGVs.

Accordingly, it will result in less traffic, possible congestion along Sack Lane and will improve highway safety.

There are a number of public footpaths and a cycle paths in the area, which is due to increase with the development of the Strategic development site to the west. The A29 trunk road is due to be diverted and upgraded and a host of community facilities are planned. They will be within walking and cycling distance of the application site. Thus, within a short period of time the accessibility of the site will be materially improved. Notwithstanding this, the site is already located in a convenient location for access to the large retail parks to the south, the strategic road network and a host of local community facilities.

Parking/cycle storage Provision

The current WSCC parking standards include:

Parking spaces

2 bed dwellings – 1.7 spaces

3 bed dwellings – 2.1 spaces

4 Bed dwellings – 2.7 spaces

Cycle storage

2 bed dwellings – 1 space

3/4 bed dwellings – 2 spaces

In relation to the proposal this equates to a need for 16.4 parking spaces

The proposal includes 18 car parking spaces, of which two are disabled spaces. In addition, there will be three electric car charging points.

In relation to the proposal the scheme should make provision for the storage of 16 cycles.

The proposal includes covered storage for 36 cycles

Overall, it is considered that the proposed parking provision and cycle storage is suitable and appropriate.

In conclusion, the site is accessible, the proposal will result in highway safety gains and will reduce congestion along Sack Lane. The proposal will also provide an appropriate level of on site parking and cycle storage.

Living conditions

Living conditions of existing residents

With the proposal the industrial style farming activities will cease, traffic will decrease, the large agricultural buildings will be demolished, the yard area will be removed and large areas of planting will be introduced. The proposed dwellings are located and orientated so as not to be visually overbearing or to result in any loss of daylight or sunlight. Indeed, the levels of sunlight and daylight will be increased with the demolition of the large agricultural buildings.

For these reasons the proposal will significantly improve the living conditions of the occupiers of the adjacent dwellings in relation to outlook, noise, disturbance, daylight, sunlight and privacy.

Living conditions of Proposed residents

The proposal complies with the National Internal Space Standards.

The proposal would be suitable for disabled persons.

The proposal provides private gardens, on-site parking, refuse and cycle storage.

The dwellings all have dual aspects.

The dwellings will be close to the strategic road network. Public footpaths and cycle way and close to the BEW strategic development site which include pedestrian and cycle links to a host of community facilities, including Barnham Station and schools. It is also a very short drive from the large retail parks in Bognor Regis.

For these reasons the proposal will provide extremely good living conditions for the occupiers of the proposed dwellings.

Sustainability conclusion

Economic

The proposal will make full use of an intensely developed site and will provide local employment during its conversion.

The proposal will financially support the farming enterprise.

The occupiers of the proposed dwellings will support local community and other services and facilities.

Social

The proposal will provide eight family dwellings in an attractive environment.

The proposal will make a modest, yet important contribution to the supply of homes in the district.

The occupiers of the proposed dwellings will support local community facilities.

Environmental

The scheme will make full use of an existing developed site.

The proposal includes material ecosystem benefits.

The proposal will significantly improve the character and appearance of the site, its immediate and wider settings.

The scheme includes three electric car charging points.

The buildings will be sustainably constructed.

The site is located a short distance from various modes of public transport, a range of community and other services and facilities and close to a network of existing and proposed footpaths and cycleways.

Policy conclusion

The proposal fully complies with the environmental, economic, social, drainage and transport policies set out in the Local Plan, NP and the Framework. Its only conflict with policy is its location outside the defined built-up area.

Tilted Balance and overall conclusion

Arun District currently does not have a 5 year deliverable supply of housing sites. The 2018 and 2019 Housing Delivery Tests show that between 2015 and 2019 Arun failed to deliver the number of homes required and as required Arun produced an action plan in 2019 to demonstrate how it will address the shortfall, include a housing buffer. However, the 2020 Housing Delivery Test results highlight that delivery has slipped even further and that, in relation to all housing proposals the presumption in favour of housing proposals, as set out in paragraph 11 d) of the Framework has to be applied.

The Council's most recent annual monitoring report confirms that as at March 2020 Arun had a 3.3 year supply of deliverable housing sites.

As such, in accordance with paragraph 11 d) of the Framework, permission should be granted unless:

"i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear 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 in the Framework as a whole."

On the face of it the proposal conflicts with policies SD SP2 and C SP1 of the Local Plan, which seek to restrict new housing development outside the defined built-up areas. However, as a farm diversification scheme the proposal complies with both policies. Irrespective of this, as stated above, these policies are out of date in-so-far as they prevent housing developments outside the defined built-up-area. As the site does not adversely affect any areas or assets of particular importance any decision needs to be based on whether there would be any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.

The proposed scheme will provide eight modest sized family homes and will make a modest, yet important, contribution to meeting this need and in meeting the need for more homes in the District.

The New Homes Bonus funds the Council will receive from the proposal will enable them to invest in local services and facilities for the community.

The construction of the development will provide employment and the occupiers of the proposed dwellings will support local services and facilities.

The proposal will make effective use of a redundant and intensively developed site.

The proposal will dramatically improve the character and appearance of the site. And its setting.

The proposal will benefit local ecosystems.

The proposal will enhance the living conditions of existing residents.

These benefits give significant positive weight to the planning balance. For these reasons the tilted balance weighs heavily in favour of the proposal and very clearly outweigh any policy conflict or other harm that could result from the proposal.