

Belmont Lodge, Belmont Street, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO21 1LE
Planning, Design and Access Statement
March 2026

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr S Khan of Envision Contracting Ltd to support a retrospective application for a single storey office building at Belmont Lodge, Belmont Street, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO21 1LE.

2.0 Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The site consists of a main two storey residential building, a single storey residential building to the north of the car park and a single storey office building on the western side of the car park (the subject of this application). The site is positioned to the north of Belmont Street and adjoins business premises to the west (former Business centre), a dentist to the east and the rear of business premises at the High Street to the north. Boundary treatments include a flint wall at the frontage with Belmont Street, a brick wall to the west and fences and walls to the north.
- 2.2 The surrounding area is mixed use comprising business and residential properties. The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and adjacent to the designated Bognor Regis Town Centre. The Grade II Listed Town Hall building is located to the south east of the site.

3.0 Planning history and background

- 3.1 The planning history of the site is as follows:

Reference	Description	Decision/Date
BR/58/60/B	Proposed bay windows	Approved 15 June 1962
BR/58/60	Six storey flats	Refused 13 April 1960
BR/312/77	Change of use from residential to solicitors office	Approved 13 July 1977
BR/358/08/	Outline application for redevelopment of existing office accommodation & parking area with 22 no. 2 bed flats & 2 no. 3 bed flats together with undercroft parking & new vehicular access from Belmont Street	Withdrawn 11 March 2009
BR/164/10/	Outline planning application for redevelopment of existing office accommodation and parking area by means of 13 no. 2 bed flats with parking.	Approved 14 July 2011
BR/149/14/OUT	Application for outline planning permission with some matters reserved for redevelopment of existing office accommodation and parking area by means of 13 No. 2 bed flats with parking	Approved 22 January 2015
BR/74/16/PD	Prior notification under Class O for change of use from Use Class B1(a) offices to Use Class C3 dwellinghouses	Approved 17 May 2016

ENF/220/25	Enforcement investigation relating to the office building and single storey residential building.	Pending consideration
BR/172/25/PL	Alterations to roof of existing single storey building comprising 3 x flats including the formation of dormers to create additional ancillary accommodation.	Pending consideration

- 3.2 The main building and the single storey outbuilding to the north of the car park were previously in use as office space. Following the grant of prior approval: BR/74/16/PD these buildings were converted to residential.
- 3.3 The car park area was originally retained to provide parking for residents. Following occupation of the residential units it became apparent that the car park was underused and that storage space was required. The applicant therefore erected a small storage building in the south western corner of the car park and reconfigured the parking layout accordingly.
- 3.4 In 2021, the applicant identified a need for a regional office for their property management and construction contracting businesses. The site at Belmont Lodge provides a suitable location for an office as it is well placed to serve the applicant's properties located in and around Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Chichester. As the car park layout had already been reconfigured, the area along the western side of the car park was not in use for parking and was surplus to requirements. The applicant therefore utilised this area and replaced the original single storey storage building with a larger single storey building to provide both office and storage space.
- 3.5 In December 2025, the applicant was contacted by the Planning Enforcement Team (REF: ENF/220/25) at Arun District Council (the Council) regarding the single storey building and alterations to the single storey residential building. The applicant has therefore submitted 2 x applications in order to regularise the situation. This application deals with the single storey office building. The alterations to the single storey residential building are being dealt with under planning application reference: BR/172/25/PL.

4.0 Planning policy and guidance

National Planning Guidance

- 4.1 National guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the supporting Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The NPPF is a material consideration when determining planning applications.
- 4.2 The following paragraphs of the NPPF are considered to be of particular relevance:
- **Paragraph 8** defines sustainable development as having an economic, social and environmental objectives. The economic objective aims to build a strong economy by providing the right development in the right locations, together with the necessary infrastructure.
 - **Paragraph 39** deals with decision making, and requires Councils to approach decisions *“in a positive and creative way”* and to *“work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area”*,

- **Paragraphs 85-87** aim to support economic growth, create conditions for businesses to invest, expand and adapt, place significant weight on development that meets business needs and wider economic opportunities and for Local Planning Authorities (LPA) to develop economic strategies that, amongst other requirements, identify suitable locations for investment.
- **Paragraphs 90-92** offers support for the role of town centres, for LPA to define a hierarchy of centres, to define the extent of town centres whilst allowing for growth and their ability to adapt and meeting need. The guidance then goes on to set the requirement for a sequential test for main town centre uses in out of centre locations, setting a priority for accessible sites which are well connected to town centres.
- **Paragraphs 115-117** aim to encourage development in sustainable locations and promotes the use of non car modes of transport, whilst creating safe and suitable access.
- **Paragraphs 124-125** generally aims to encourage the effective use of land and, amongst other aims, supports mixed use schemes (providing multiple benefits from sites), the use of underused buildings and brownfield land.
- **Paragraph 131** encourages good design and aims for schemes to create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places.
- **Paragraph 135**, amongst other aims, encourages new developments to function well, to be attractive, to be sympathetic to local character and history, maintain a sense of place, accommodate an appropriate amount of development and create safe and inclusive environments.

Development Plan

- 4.3 The Development Plan for Arun comprises the Arun Local Plan 2011-2031, the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan 2018 and the West Sussex Waste Local Plan 2014. For Bognor Regis, the Development Plan also includes the Bognor Regis Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030. These documents are supported by a number of supplementary planning documents (SPD). The documents and policies of most relevance are listed below.

Arun Local Plan 2011-2031 (ALP)

- 4.4 The ALP policies of most relevance are considered to be the following:
- Policy SD SP1 Sustainable Development
 - Policy SD SP1a Strategic Approach
 - Policy SD SP2 Built-up Area Boundary
 - Policy EMP SP1 Strategic Economic Growth
 - Policy EMP DM1 Employment Land: Development Management
 - Policy D DM1 Aspects of Form and design quality
 - Policy D DM4 Extensions and alterations to existing buildings (residential and non-residential)
 - Policy T DM1 Sustainable Travel and Public Rights of Way
 - Policy QE DM1 Noise Pollution

Bognor Regis Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030 (NDP)

- 4.5 The NDP is focused primarily on the preservation of heritage assets and the towns character as a traditional seaside town. The NDP policies are aimed as major development rather than small scale proposals such as that at Belmont Lodge. The policies of most relevance are considered to be Policy 2 (Promoting The Seaside identity), Policy 4 (Reducing Underuse of Property in The Town Centre), Policy 6 (Key Gateways and Promotion of Sustainable Travel) and Policy 8a (Design Excellence). Whilst these are aimed at major developments, they give an indication regarding the communities expectation that schemes improve the character and appearance of the area, are of high quality design and that they maintain existing pedestrian and other routes whilst avoiding highway impacts.
- 4.6 In addition to the above, the following guidance documents and SPDs are considered to be relevant to the proposal:
- Arun District Design Guide SPD (updated 2024), and
 - Arun Parking Standards SPD (updated 2022).

The above documents are discussed below together with the relevant national guidance and local planning policies.

5.0 Planning Considerations

- 5.1 The proposal is for a single storey office building within the car park area of an existing residential building. Having regard to the type of development and the site layout, it is therefore considered that the following matters are of key importance:
- Principle
 - Character and appearance
 - Neighbouring amenity
 - Highways and refuse storage
- 5.2 The discussion below covers the above matters under separate headings and also includes a section covering “Other matters”.

Principle

- 5.3 With regard to the principle of office development, the NPPF aims to encourage economic growth by creating the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt (paragraphs 8 and 85). Paragraph 86 goes on to state that LPA should prepare clear economic strategies “*which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth*”. The NPPF also encourages development that supports the role and function of town centres and sets a requirement for a sequential test for main town centre uses in edge and out of centre locations (paragraphs 90-92).
- 5.4 Within the above context, the ALP includes Policy SD SP1a, which aims to support the coastal towns of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton as the main centres for service, employment, retail and social centres. Policy EMP SP1 continues by prioritising the sustainable growth of the District’s economy, with a focus on regenerating Bognor Regis and Littlehampton for retail, office and leisure development. Policy EMP DM1 also aims for office development to be located in the town centres.

- 5.5 The proposal is for office development adjacent to the designated Bognor Regis Town Centre. The site adjoins other business type activities and is located in a mixed use area. The proposal will generate employment for local people and will bring additional activity to the area during normal working hours. It is therefore well placed to contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre and accords with the main aims of paragraphs 8, 85, 86 and 90 of the NPPF and policies SD SP1a, EMP SP1 and DM1 of the ALP.
- 5.6 With regard to the sequential test (NPPF, paragraph 90-92), it should first be noted that Belmont Lodge was historically in office use, prior to its conversion to residential accommodation under permitted development (BR/74/16/PD). The proposal therefore reintroduces an element of employment use within the site in a manner that reflects its historic function while remaining compatible with the surrounding mixed-use character of the area. The applicant is not aware of any other sites within the defined town centre that are both available and suitable for a development of this limited scale, particularly given the modest footprint and site-specific nature of the proposal. The application site itself is located immediately adjacent to the town centre boundary and functions effectively as part of the town centre, thereby aligning with the sequential preference set out in national guidance (paragraph 92, NPPF). The proposal therefore supports the consolidation of employment uses in close proximity to the town centre.
- 5.7 The proposal has been designed with appropriate flexibility in accordance with paragraph 90 of the NPPF. It reflects a scale and form that responds directly to the constraints and opportunities of the site, utilising an underused car parking area within the existing curtilage of Belmont Lodge. The development does not require a larger alternative site and is tailored to meet local demand for small-scale office accommodation. Its size and scale ensure that it would not compete with or displace opportunities within primary town centre locations. The scheme will generate a greater level of footfall in the locality which will compliment existing neighbouring uses and contribute to the role and function of the Town Centre.
- 5.8 The development is situated entirely within the established curtilage of Belmont Lodge on land that is already in use as a car park, and therefore constitutes previously developed land. The proposal represents an efficient use of this land by intensifying its function in a sustainable location. It also reinstates an employment-generating use on a site that historically accommodated office use, thereby making effective use of existing infrastructure and contributing positively to the local economy in accordance with national guidance and local policies. Having regard to these benefits, the size and scale of the proposal and the unique set of circumstances, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in respect of the Sequential Test.
- 5.9 In summary, having regard to the site's planning history, its sustainable town centre location, and the size and scale of the proposal, it is considered that the proposed office building represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs 8, 85, 86, 90, 91 and 92 of the NPPF and policies SD SP1a, EMP SP1 and DM1 of the ALP. Subject to other planning considerations (discussed below) the principle of office development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Character and appearance

- 5.10 The proposed development has been carefully designed to ensure that it integrates appropriately with the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The scale, siting

and external materials of the proposed building have been selected to respond positively to the existing built form within Belmont Street and the wider town centre context.

- 5.11 The proposed building replaces an existing smaller outbuilding within the site and has been positioned within an area of existing hardstanding currently used for parking. The proposal therefore represents a logical redevelopment of an already developed part of the site, making more effective use of previously developed land in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs 124-125 of the NPPF, policies SD SP1a, D SP1 and D DM1 of the ALP and the broad aims of Policy 4 of the NDP.
- 5.12 In terms of scale, the building has been designed as a single storey structure below the height of the adjoining boundary wall to the west. This existing boundary wall provides an effective visual screen when viewed from neighbouring land and ensures that the new building remains visually discreet within the site. The existing Belmont Lodge building also screens the office building when viewed from the east. This combined with the distance to the Grade II Listed Town Hall building, ensures that the proposal will not impact on the setting of this heritage asset. The office building has been positioned alongside the single storey residential building located to the north, which creates a courtyard-style arrangement between the buildings. This layout reflects a pattern of development commonly found within town centre sites where smaller ancillary buildings are arranged around shared spaces. The proposal therefore remains proportionate and compatible with the host site and surrounding context in accordance with the requirements of policies D DM1 and D DM4 of the ALP, the aims of the Arun District Design Guide SPD (A.02) and the broad thrust of policies 2 and 8a of the NDP.
- 5.13 The external appearance of the building has been carefully considered to reflect the established architectural characteristics of Belmont Street and the surrounding area. The proposed structure will be finished in render with a grey tiled roof, materials which are consistent with those found on nearby buildings, including the main building at Belmont Lodge, which is also finished in render. The use of these materials ensures that the new building integrates well with the surrounding built environment and does not appear visually incongruous. This approach is consistent with Policy D DM1 of the ALP and paragraphs 131 and 135 of the NPPF, which require development to respond positively to local character, scale and form whilst achieving a high standard of design, function well and maintain a strong sense of place.
- 5.14 In summary, the proposed development represents a well-designed and proportionate form of development that responds positively to the character of Belmont Street and its town centre setting. By redeveloping an existing area of hardstanding and replacing a smaller outbuilding, the proposal makes efficient use of previously developed land in accordance with national guidance. The building's modest scale, discreet siting and courtyard-style arrangement ensure it integrates appropriately within the site, while the use of render and a grey tiled roof reflects the surrounding architectural context. It is therefore considered that the scheme will preserve the character and appearance of the area in accordance with the requirements of national guidance, relevant ALP policies and the broad aims of the Arun District Design Guide SPD and NDP.

Neighbouring amenity

- 5.15 The proposed development has been carefully designed and positioned to ensure that it does not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers or

those within the site. The scale, siting and orientation of the proposed building have been informed by the surrounding built form and the relationship with adjacent properties to ensure that appropriate levels of daylight, outlook and privacy are maintained.

- 5.16 The proposed office building is single storey and incorporates a monopitch roof form, with the roof slope pitching away from the main residential building at Belmont Lodge. This design approach ensures that the building remains visually subordinate within the site and reduces any potential for the development to appear dominant or overbearing when viewed from the existing residential properties at Belmont Lodge. The proposed building also maintains a suitable separation distance from the side of Belmont Lodge, ensuring that there is not any harmful loss of light, outlook or privacy to the occupiers of the main residential building within the site.
- 5.17 With regard to the single storey residential building located to the north, the proposed office building is positioned at right angles in relation to this building. This arrangement, combined with the scale of the proposed office building, ensures that there is no direct overlooking relationship between the two structures and avoids the creation of an overbearing or enclosing form of development.
- 5.18 To the west, the building will be lower than the height of the existing boundary wall, which provides a substantial degree of screening between the application site and the neighbouring premises formerly known as the Bognor Business Centre. As a result, the proposed structure will have very limited visibility from this direction and will not result in any material impact in terms of outlook or enclosure.
- 5.19 The building is set back from the northern boundary with the neighbouring commercial premises located on The High Street, maintaining an appropriate spatial relationship with adjoining land. The single storey height and separation distance ensure that the development will not result in any unacceptable loss of daylight, overshadowing, or visual dominance when viewed from this direction.
- 5.20 With regard to noise and general disturbance, the scheme is for office development in a mixed use area comprising a range of business and residential activities. Given this and the size and scale of the office building, it is considered that any activity is likely to be consistent with that which prevails in the area at the present time.
- 5.21 It is therefore considered that the scheme will not result in adverse impacts on its surroundings in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs 131 and 135 of the NPPF, policies D DM1, D DM4 and QE DM1 of the ALP and the broad aims of the Arun District Design Guide SPD, which aim to encourage development that functions well and respects the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Highways and refuse storage

- 5.22 The proposed development will utilise the existing vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements serving Belmont Lodge, which are taken directly from Belmont Street. No alterations to the existing access point are proposed as part of the development and the proposal therefore does not introduce any new access arrangements or changes that would give rise to highway safety concerns. This is in accordance with the requirements of Policy T DM1 of the ALP and the aims of Policy 6 of the NDP.

- 5.23 The proposed office building is small scale and is expected to generate a limited number of vehicle movements, comparable to or lower than those associated with the former office use of the property or post conversion to residential. As such, the development is not expected to have a material impact on the operation of the local highway network.
- 5.24 The site is located on the edge of Bognor Regis Town Centre which is a highly accessible and sustainable location. A wide range of shops, services, employment opportunities and community facilities are located within convenient walking distance of the site. In addition, the site benefits from good access to public transport services, enabling journeys to be made by sustainable modes of transport. This is in accordance with paragraphs 115–117 of the NPPF and Policy T DM1 of the ALP which seek to promote sustainable transport choices and encourage development in locations where opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport are maximised.
- 5.25 In terms of servicing and waste management, a refuse storage area is proposed within the south-western corner at the front of the site. This location has been chosen to ensure that refuse collection can occur conveniently from Belmont Street and that the carry and drag distances comply with the requirements set out within the Building Regulations and associated guidance. The refuse storage area will be screened from public view by the existing front boundary flint wall, ensuring that it does not detract from the character or appearance of the site or the surrounding street scene.
- 5.26 In summary, the development represents an appropriate form of development in transport and servicing terms. Existing access arrangements will remain unchanged, the scheme is for small scale office development within an existing under used car park area, and the site is located within a highly accessible town centre location which provides opportunities for travel by sustainable modes. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in transport terms and in accordance with the requirements of national guidance and local planning policies.

Other matters

- 5.27 In addition to the matters discussed above, the following are of relevance to this proposal:
- **Flood Risk** – The application site is located within Flood Zone 1, which is identified as having the lowest probability of flooding. The proposed office building has been constructed on existing hardstanding within the car park, meaning the development does not increase the extent of impermeable surfaces or alter existing drainage characteristics. As such, the proposal will not result in any increase in surface water run-off or flood risk on site or elsewhere, in accordance with paragraph 170 of the NPPF.
 - **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)** – The proposal is considered exempt from the statutory BNG requirement. The development was completed before April 2024 when the BNG requirement was introduced. In addition, it also involves the redevelopment of existing built form and hardstanding only, with no loss of habitat. As such, it falls within the de minimis exemption set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 74-003-20240214), which confirms that development impacting less than 25sqm of onsite habitat does not trigger the requirement to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 In conclusion, the proposed development represents a sustainable, well-designed and policy-compliant form of development that makes efficient use of previously developed land within a highly accessible town centre location. The principle of office use is supported by national guidance and local planning policy, and the proposal will contribute positively to the local economy and the vitality and viability of Bognor Regis Town Centre.
- 6.2 The scheme has been carefully designed to respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with its scale, siting and materials ensuring a discreet and contextually appropriate addition to the site. Furthermore, the development will not give rise to any unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenity, highway safety or servicing arrangements.
- 6.3 Other material considerations, including flood risk and biodiversity, have also been appropriately addressed and do not present any constraints to development.
- 6.4 It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with the requirements of national planning guidance and local planning policies, and that it should be looked upon favourably.