

Director of Planning
Arun District Council
Council Offices
Maltravers Road
Littlehampton
West Sussex

24 June 2018

Dear Sir,

**Conversion of farm buildings to form four small new dwellings
Kents Yard, Climping.**

I have pleasure in enclosing my client's application for the above, which comprises an alternative to the approved scheme for two large dwellings.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Lawrence

Elizabeth Lawrence

Chartered Town Planner

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Kents Barns
Design, Planning and Access Statement

Background

Planning permission was granted in 2017 for the conversion of Kent's barns to form two large dwellings and associated gardens. CM/19/17/PL.

Having been advised that there is a far greater demand for smaller dwellings in the locality the applicant has looked to change the scheme to provide 4No. two bedroom units in place of one three and one four bedroom dwellings.

Context

The site is located with a small group of dwellings which occupy countryside location close to:

The strategic road network
Littlehampton built up area
Littlehampton station
Ford, Climping and Yapton
A local school

Proposal

The proposal is for 4No. modest sized two bedroom single storey dwellings and associated parking and garden area.

Planning policies and proposals

The National Planning Policy Framework

The overall planning policies of relevance to this application have been set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The NPPF seeks to achieve sustainable development, which has three dimensions, namely:

- An economic role;
- A social role; and
- An environmental role.

The NPPF introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where a development accords with an up-to-date Local Plan it should be approved. Local Planning Authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area. With this in mind the planning system should provide the supply of housing required to meet the needs of the present and future generations; and protect the natural and built environment. Where the development plan policies are out of date planning permission should be granted unless:

- any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the NPPF as a whole.

The Core principles of the NPPF are to adopt a pro-active approach and in relation to housing to boost significantly the supply of housing.

The NPPF is very clear that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It states that local authorities should identify and update annually, a five years worth supply of deliverable housing land with an additional 5% and ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of development and plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic and market trends. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. This includes policies relating to the countryside, in so far as they seek to restrict new housing.

The NPPF has brought about a significant change in relation to the conversion of farm and other buildings. In particular there is no longer a presumption in favour of commercial conversions over residential conversions. Each are afforded equal weight. Paragraph 55 states that housing can be provided in the rural area where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

In relation to design the NPPF 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, create an appropriate mix of uses and reflect the identity of local surroundings, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. Planning decisions should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative.

The Application scheme accords very closely with the NPPF for the reasons set out in this statement. As stated in paragraph 14 of the NPPF, where development plan policies are out of date planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF.

In accordance with paragraphs 214 and 215 the NPPF due weight should be given to relevant local policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF.

The proposal will make use of a complex of existing buildings located within a cluster of dwellings on the outskirts of

Arun District Local Plan 2003 (Local Plan)

Currently the Local Plan for the area comprises the Arun District Local Plan 2003, which is based upon the formerly adopted West Sussex Structure Plan, The South East Plan policies and various Government Guidance which no longer exists. It is out of date.

Paragraph 214 and 215 the NPPF advises that after April 2013 due weight should be given to relevant policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF.

Within the Local Plan the application site is shown as being located in an area of countryside, but not within any conservations areas, sites of special interest or protected landscapes. It is however located close to a grade II listed building.

Contrary to the NPPF policies GEN2 & GEN3 of the Arun District Local Plan seek to restrict most forms of development outside the defined built up area boundaries. They do not allow for new housing or business development in accordance with the NPPF.

As stated in the NPPF where relevant policies are out of date or there are no relevant policies that deal with a particular type of development permission should be granted unless:

“Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies set out in the NPPF as a whole.”

As stated above, having regard to the fact that Arun District does not have an identified 5 year supply of housing sites, the countryside policies in the Local Plan are not up to date in relation to the provision and siting of new housing.

Policy GEN7 relates to the form of new development, encouraging schemes displaying high quality design and layout. It states that development will be permitted provided it (in brief):

- Makes efficient use of land or buildings;
- Responds positively to the identified characteristics and resources of the site and the area;
- Promotes sustainable development;
- Does not harm the living conditions of existing residents;
- Takes account of any adverse impacts from adjoining land uses;
- Makes a material contribution to the local environment;
- Allows safe movement of pedestrians and vehicles, giving priority to pedestrians; and
- Provides adequate vehicle parking.

It is considered that the Application scheme complies with this policy for the reasons set out in this statement.

Policy DEV2 deals with the residential conversion of buildings in the countryside. Whilst this policy favours commercial conversions, the principle of converting the buildings to residential and the traffic such a use would likely generate has already been accepted by the Council. The group of buildings are structurally sound and are of no historic interest in themselves. However, any conversion should not have an adverse effect on the rural character of the area or the setting of any heritage assets.

Policy AREA 10 deals with strategic gaps, which are a County based policy which is now completely out of date. This policy has been omitted from the more recently adopted Local Plans in the county. This policy seeks to prevent towns from merging and to maintain the landscape within them.

The current proposal accords with the provisions of all of the above policies.

Draft Arun Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (Publication Version)

This Plan is now at an advanced stage and can be given considerable weight. In relation to the conversion of existing buildings policy

SD SP1 – This policy states that the Council will apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF. Applications which will help achieve the Council's central aim of increasing employment density will be supported. Where the Plan has no policies relating to a particular form of development it will be determined in accordance with the NPPF.

LAN DM1 – Development which preserves or enhances the landscape character will be permitted.

DD SP1 – The scheme achieves a high quality in design.

HERSP1 - Deals with the historic environment and encourages the re-use of vacant or redundant buildings of historic merit or interest.

Amount

The proposal is for 4 No. 2 bedroom dwellings with a combined floor area of 460 m².

Design and Appearance

The current proposal includes few changes to the approved scheme in relation to its external appearance. The changes include:

External changes:

2 additional parking spaces and larger bin store

Elevation 1 – No change

Elevation 2 – Two additional openings, although all doors will be more agricultural than those approved.

Elevation 3 – One additional large opening.

Elevation 4 – Same as approved scheme.

Elevation 5 – Unit 1 will utilise an existing door.

Internal changes:

Overall less compartmentalisation.

As with the approved scheme the design of the scheme fully addresses the concerns raised to an earlier scheme submitted in 2015.

In particular:

- The proposed scheme does not include any porches.
- The east facing wall on the western wing is to be retained.
- Only the modern section of the west facing wall on the east wing is to be removed.
- The fenestration reflects typical rural building opening sizes.
- The former proposed new garage has been deleted from the scheme.

For these reasons the current proposal fully addresses the concerns raised to the 2015 scheme. At the same time, the proposed scheme is superior to the approved scheme as there is less internal compartmentalisation and the east wing is extremely sensitively dealt with. It also makes better use of the building and is targeted at small households for which there is a particular housing need.

Garden area

The proposed garden area is exactly as previously approved.

Access & Parking

Access to the site will be off the existing crossover and within the existing yard area. Two parking spaces will be provided for each unit.

Disabled Access

Both pedestrian and vehicular access to and within the site will be suitable for wheelchair use. The ground is level and the proposed dwelling is single storey. There is ample space within the allocated parking spaces for disabled parking.

Security

The site is enclosed and well screened from Crookthorn Lane. The Crookthorn Lane frontage is overlooked by two dwellings and courtyard area is overlooked by the proposed dwellings.

By its very nature most parts of the dwellings are visible to their occupants.

Cycle & refuse/recycling storage

Cycles and refuse storage will be located close to the entrance to the site.

Ecology

A separate bat survey is attached. It is self explanatory.

Flood Risk

The site is not located in an area at risk of flooding. As an existing developed site the scheme will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Evaluation

The above statement addresses all three dimensions of sustainable development. In particular:

Economic

- The proposal will provide employment and income within the building trades and in new technologies during the construction of the development.
- The proposal will make good use of an existing resource, which currently costs a significant amount of financial investment to keep in a good state of repair.

Social

- The proposal will result in the provision of four small dwellings in an area where there is a significant need and demand for new small dwellings.
- Arun is reliant on such sites to meet its housing projections.
- The resultant dwellings will support local services, including the school which is located a short distance to the west.

Environmental

- The scheme will secure the maintenance and retention of this group of former agricultural buildings.

- The scheme will make full and effective use of this existing developed site.
- The scheme will improve the condition and appearance of the site and thus the setting of the adjacent listed building.
- The scheme will not have a material impact on any nature conservation interests.
- The proposed scheme has been designed to a high standard and will make a valuable contribution to the history, character and appearance of the locality.
- The scheme has been designed so as not to result in light pollution.
- The scheme will not increase the risk of flooding either on the site or elsewhere.

Conclusion

The scheme readily meets the three dimensions of sustainable development. It complies with the NPPF, as well as the existing and emerging local plan policies. The benefits of the scheme are not outweighed by significant and demonstrable harm.