

Planning Statement

**Siting of lodge style building for site office/security (in place of
portable cabin approved under application LU/141/16)**

Castleview Nursery

Old Mead Road

Littlehampton

On behalf of Mr M Amirpashaie

December 2017

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of my client Mr Amirpashaie to accompany this planning application for the siting of a lodge style building for use as a site office and for security. The building will be in place of the Portakabin which was granted as part of planning application LU/141/16 but has yet to be sited. The building proposed under this application will be on the same site as that previously approved and will therefore preclude the erection of the previously approved structure.
- 1.2 The planning permission for the Portakabin was granted in connection with the caravan storage taking place on the land. Up to 91 caravans can be stored on the land having been granted permission under applications LU/105/15, LU/141/16 and most recently LU/231/17.
- 1.3 Planning permission has also been granted on the site for the erection of an agricultural storage building and propagation unit in connection with the existing glasshouse which the applicant is hoping will be occupied by a new tenant.

2. The Site and Its Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is part of Castlevew Nursery which is situated at the western end of Old Mead Road. The land in the applicant's ownership comprises a glasshouse approximately 20 metres by 30 metres in extent located close to the eastern boundary with unused land to the north where the two agricultural buildings have planning permission. The caravan/motor home storage for which planning permission has been granted under a series of planning permissions takes place on land along the southern, western and northern boundaries. A small area in use for scaffolding storage is located in the north-west corner of the land and there are a small number of containers used for self-storage.
- 2.2 To the south-west and west of the nursery site is located a solar park and to the east is Glenvilla Nursery separated from the applicant's land by means of a pollarded row of fir trees adjacent to the application site and a trellis style fence beyond. Further to the east is a residential property known as The Bungalow sitting in a large plot on which there are two current planning applications for residential development and the siting of residential mobile homes. The boundary of these planning applications is contiguous with the northern part of the applicant's land. It is understood that there has been a positive pre-application response to the use of land for residential purposes and, if granted, will result in a more built up character to the western end of Old Mead Road.

- 2.3 The southern and western boundaries of the applicant's land are defined by wire fencing and a row of Leylandii trees which provide an effective screen. The northern boundary and part of the eastern boundary has been fenced with trellis style fencing and planting has taken place on the outside to form a soft edge to the countryside beyond.
- 2.4 Access to the site is via Old Mead Road, a private lane which serves the existing properties and former horticultural nurseries. The access to the site itself is from the south-east corner of the land.

3. The Application Proposal

- 3.1 The application proposes the siting of a lodge style building in place of the previously approved Portakabin on the land. In seeking planning permission for the Portakabin under application LY/141/16, it was explained that it was essential to provide an office for a warden during the day and a handler with guard dog at night to achieve accreditation through CaSSOA (the Caravan Storage and Site Owners Association) not only to secure an appropriate level of insurance but to attract business and compete with similar sites which are accredited.
- 3.2 However, it has become clear in discussions with potential staff that the accommodation provided by the previously approved a Portakabin would not be sufficient to meet the dual role of site office and facilities for a night security guard and guard dog. In this respect, a security guard would expect separate rest and toilet facilities and somewhere to prepare food throughout their shift. The applicant considers that the accommodation proposed is the absolute minimum that would be feasible to maintain appropriately motivating staff to perform the job throughout the night. Of course, since planning permission was granted for the Portakabin, planning permission has also been granted for around an additional 30 caravans to be stored resulting in an even greater value of property on site.
- 3.3 It is therefore proposed to construct a timber effect building on the land which will provide for a site office, staffroom, security office and toilet facilities. It will have a gross internal floor area of approximately 60sqm and at its highest point will be approximately 4 metres with a mono pitch roof. It will be clad in wood effect UPVC boarding.

4. Planning Policy

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Paragraph 28 deals with supporting a prosperous rural economy and states that to promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should, amongst other matters, promote

the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses. This reflects the Government's intention to achieve sustainable development which includes the three dimensions of economic, social and environmental roles. Paragraph 8 acknowledges that these roles should not be undertaken in isolation because they are mutually dependent. Economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards. It is submitted that this proposal can be seen as meeting this objective provided there is no harm to the character of the area.

- 4.2 Local Development Plan policies are contained within the Arun District Local Plan 2003. Saved policy GEN2 deals with built-up area boundaries and states that outside such areas development will not be permitted unless it is consistent with other local plan policies. Policy GEN 3 sets out the criteria against which new development in the countryside will be assessed and confirms that development will not be permitted unless it complies with one of the five criteria specified. Criterion (iii) relates to diversification of the rural economy which confirms that development which supports existing rural businesses can be acceptable in countryside locations.
- 4.3 On the proposals map the site is located within Area 3: the Setting of Arundel and Area 10: Strategic Gaps. With regard to the setting up of Arundel, policy Area 3 does not permit development which would adversely affect the views of Arundel or its special setting. In particular, development will not be permitted which would adversely affect the long-distance views of Arundel Castle or Arundel cathedral. The site itself is located close to the eastern edge of Area 3 well related to existing development in and around Old Mead Road. Furthermore, the proposed development will be located close to the eastern edge within the site where it will not be seen in the wider context as it will be surrounded by existing development and screening; the glasshouse to the north, caravan storage and Leylandii screen to the south and west and a Leylandii screen to the east. It will not therefore be viewed in the context of the setting of Arundel and will not therefore conflict with the aims of policy Area 3.
- 4.4 With regard to Strategic Gaps, policy Area 10 seeks to prevent coalescence and retain the separate identity and amenity of settlements. It requires development to be consistent with other policies of the development plan, to maintain the objectives and fundamental integrity of the Strategic Gap and have regard to the long-term enhancement of the landscape, amenity and conservation value within the gap. It is submitted therefore that the gap policy does not preclude development provided it is compliant with other policies and does not undermine the purpose of the gap. It has been demonstrated that the proposal is compliant with other policies as it supports an existing business that has been permitted as a diversification of the rural economy. Furthermore, there is no conflict with the purpose of the gap as the

building will be sited within the existing development and will not be visible in the wider context.

- 4.5 The emerging policies of the Arun District Local Plan 2011-2031 are similar to the current saved policies insofar as the application falls within an area designated for the setting of Arundel and the Arundel to Littlehampton Gap which is no longer referred to as a strategic gap.
- 4.6 The Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan 2014, in policy 1, sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and states that development will be approved where the plan is silent unless the policies of the Arun Local Plan indicate otherwise, or the adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits when assessed against the NPPF.

5. Planning Considerations

- 5.1 The site in the applicant's ownership has planning permission for the storage of up to 91 caravans/motor homes, as well as self-storage containers and storage of scaffolding equipment. There is also an extant planning permission for the siting of a Portakabin to provide office facilities, a customer reception area and for the employment of a security guard in connection with the permitted caravan storage. It is therefore submitted that the principle of a structure for office/security facilities has been accepted and therefore the main issue is whether the building now proposed would have any greater impact on the surrounding landscape or general character of the locality.
- 5.2 In terms of landscape impact, the siting of the building would not have any greater impact on the visual amenities of the locality. It would be located in a similar position to that previously approved in the south-eastern part of the site where it would be visually contained by the established Leylandii hedging on the southern, western and eastern boundaries of the site. Within the site there is also the large glasshouse to the north of the proposed siting as well as the caravans and motor homes stored within the boundaries. These act as visual barriers to the proposed development which at its highest point will be only 4m high and therefore not prominent in the context of existing development. The building will therefore be well related to existing structures and buildings at the western end of Old Mead Road. Whilst outside the built-up area in policy terms, in landscape terms, the north side of the lane has a more 'built up' feel, and the site relates better to the built development to the east than the countryside to the west. The built up nature of Old Mead Road will increase further if the land at 'The Bungalow' is approved as suggested by the pre-application response.
- 5.3 Whilst the building is larger than that previously approved, it intended to have a more 'rural' appearance with wood effect UPVC cladding. It will also provide office and staff

facilities more commensurate with scale of the business and seeks to promote a professional image to existing and potential customers. This will enable the applicant to attract and retain staff and assist in the economic sustainability of the business which is encouraged by Central Government guidance. In the absence of any identified environmental harm and the social benefits arising from providing employment, it is submitted that the proposal represents sustainable development and is compliant with development plan policy.

6. Local Validation Requirements

Foul & Surface Water Drainage

- 6.1 The proposed building will include wc facilities and will connect to a cesspit. Surface water will discharge to ground which is surfaced with porous scalplings.

Contamination

- 6.2 The proposed building will be timber framed with no foundations required. In considering the previous application for the Portakabin the Environmental Health Officer suggested an 'unsuspected contamination' condition which would be acceptable to the applicant in this case.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 It is therefore concluded that the principle of a site/security office has been accepted on this site under the previous application LU/141/16. The building now proposed is intended to be in place of that but of a more appropriate design and scale to suit its location and purpose. It will not have any impact on the character of the area, residential amenities or highway matters.
- 7.2 The proposal complies with paragraph 28 of the NPPF in that it assists in supporting a prosperous rural economy by promoting the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses. Furthermore, no conflict with any policies of the Local Plan has been identified.
- 7.3 In all the circumstances it is therefore considered that this application is development plan compliant and having regard to the planning history represents an acceptable form of development.