

Highbuildings Barn
Balls Cross, Nr Petworth,
West Sussex.

Planning Statement

Chartered Town Planner

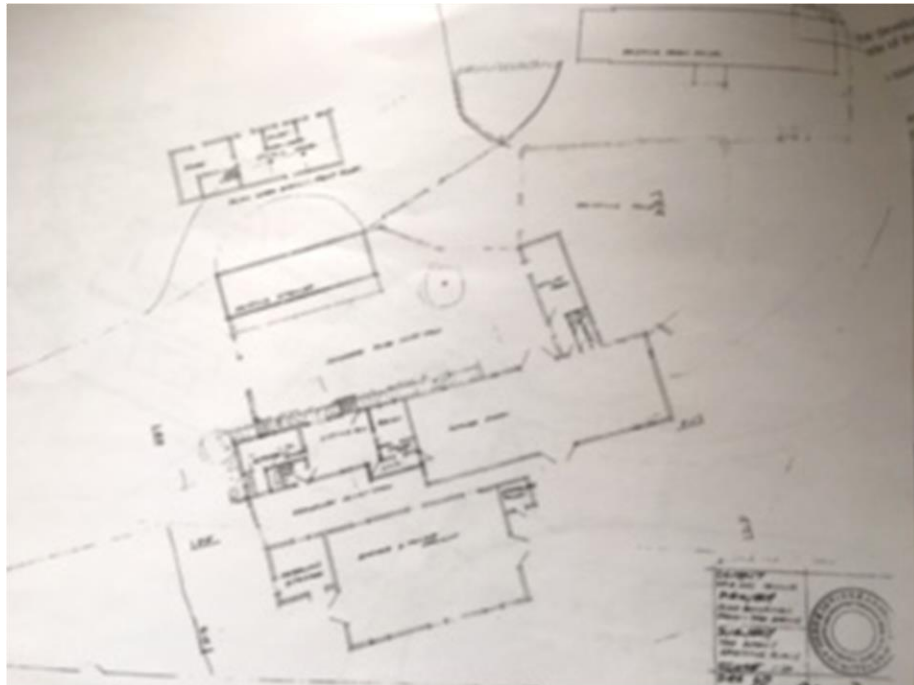
Background/Context

Highbuildings barn comprises a long established residential development located in the countryside, a short distance to the north of Balls Cross.

Originally the property formed part of Highbuildings Farm, with the main farmhouse which is grade II listed being located just to the south of the application site.

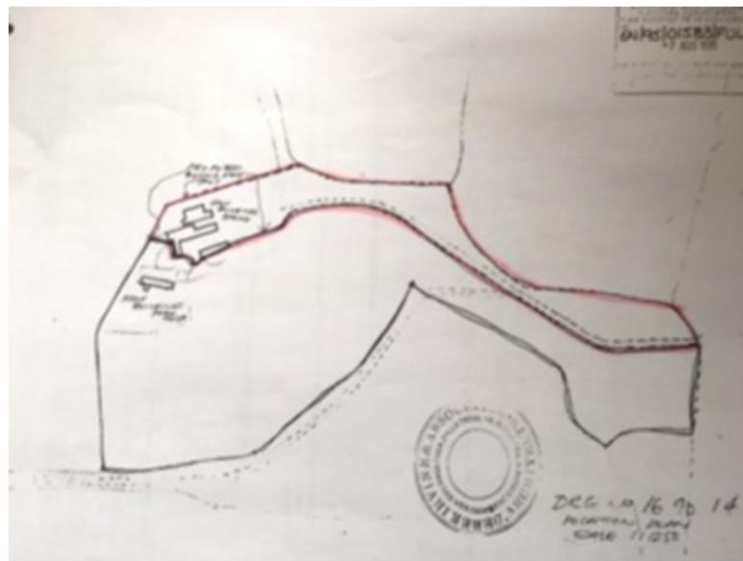
The main barn and attached buildings on the application site were well established by the 1870's and were arranged around a central yard area. In 1956 the existing cow shed building was constructed to the north of the main barn. It is not known at this stage when the agricultural uses ceased, however by 1995 the use of the buildings for Class B1 business and holiday lets was well established.

In 1995 planning permission was granted for the change of use of the buildings to form a single dwelling and associated ancillary domestic accommodation. In particular the main barn was to be used for a games room and a link was approved between the main barn and the sitting room of the main dwelling part to the east. The attached building to the south of the barn was approved for use as a utility room and shower room. The cow shed was to be used for garaging and a private workshop.

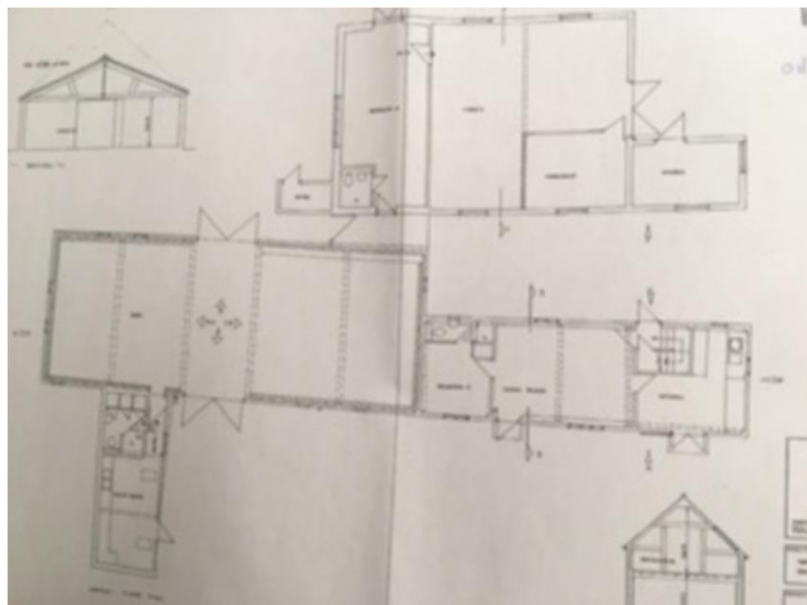


The permission was implemented although the link between the sitting room and the main barn was not constructed.

The domestic curtilage to the dwelling was established at that time and is shown below.



In 2001 a planning application was submitted to increase the height of the cowshed and to link the barn to the cowshed via a large pitched roof extension. Concerns were raised regarding the proposal and the application was withdrawn and the owner decided to sell the site. Of relevance was the existing floor plan which showed that the full residential permission had been implemented and the cow shed was being used as an integral part of the dwelling.



The applicants purchased Highbuildings barn at this time and have lived there ever since. As the main accommodation was quite small they have continued to use the cow shed as part of the dwelling and not as a garage or workshop. Due to lack of funds, to date, the applicants have not constructed the approved link between the main barn and the accommodation to the east. Instead, they have to go outside to gain access to the three elements of the dwelling.

The overall dwelling is now in need of considerable investment and the applicants are looking at how this can be achieved in a way that meets their need for a smaller dwelling and improves the setting of the older buildings on the site.

The Proposal

The proposal includes:

- The restoration of the existing timber framed barn and attached older buildings, which are heritage assets.
- Demolition of the existing cow shed, replacing it with a smaller residential building located slightly further to the east.

In looking to fully design the scheme we are looking at a landscape led approach that focuses on the historic and visual landscape, ecology, energy efficiency and retaining the homes on the site.

South Downs National Park

SDNP Purposes and duty

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.
- To seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities within the National Park.

SDNP Vision for 2050

- The iconic lowland landscapes and heritage will have been conserved and greatly enhanced. These inspirational places where people work, live, farm and relax, are adapting well to climate change and other pressures.
- People will understand, value and look after the vital natural services that the National Park provides
- Opportunities will exist for everyone to discover, enjoy, understand and value the National Park and its special qualities.
- Its spatial qualities will underpin the economic and social well-being of local communities in and around it.
- Successful farming, forestry, tourism and other business activities within the National Park will actively contribute to and derive economic benefit from its unique identity and special qualities.

SDNP Objectives

- To conserve the landscape and biodiversity assets of the SDNP.
- Educate people to understand and appreciate the assets of the Park.
- Provide opportunities for everyone to access, enjoy, understand and value the assets of the Park and thus use its resources more responsibly.
- To develop thriving communities.
- To foster successful farming, forestry, tourism and other businesses to contribute to the identity and special qualities of the SDNP.
- enable people to experience, understand, enjoy and respect the SDNP with everyone working together to benefit the SDNP.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (Framework)

For planning purposes, the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 clearly defined the following terms.

Sustainable – ensuring that better lives for ourselves doesn't mean worse lives for future generations.

Sustainable Development – is about change for the better, and not only in our built environment. (It is about the natural environment, the historic environment and higher standards of design).

Sustainable development – is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations.

The 2019 Framework seeks to achieve sustainable development, which has three objectives, namely:

- An economic objective;
- A social objective; and
- An environmental objective

The Framework 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.

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

In relation to rural housing, decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. To promote sustainable development in rural areas housing should be located where it will maintain or enhance the vitality of rural communities. Housing policies should take account of the fact that development in one smaller settlement may support services in a nearby village.

Isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless:

- b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets.
- c) the development would re-use redundant or dis-used buildings and enhance their setting;
- d) the development would involve the sub-division of an existing residential dwelling.

The Framework advises that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks.

At the same time the Framework states that policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Policies and decisions should encourage multiple benefits from rural land, including through mixed use schemes. Policies and decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.

The Framework states that when considering the impact of a development on the significance of a designated heritage asset great weight should be given to its conservation. Any harm requires clear and convincing justification. Where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Concerning design, the Framework states that new development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area 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 transport the Framework states that transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development and in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. The Government realises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.

South Downs National Park Local Plan 2019 (Local Plan)

Policy SD1 promotes sustainable forms of development. Policy SD2 states that development will be allowed where it has an overall positive impact on the ability of the natural environment to contribute goods and services, through delivering good design and delivering eco-system opportunities.

Policy SD12 seeks to conserve and enhance heritage assets. The supporting text to this policy reflects the requirements set out in the Framework relating to the significance of heritage assets. Policy SD13 deals specifically with listed buildings and has the same objectives as policy SD12.

Policies SD4, SD5 & SD6 deal with landscape character and design. They require new development to be designed to a high standard and to preserve or enhance the landscape quality of the SDNP. Policies SD7 and SD8 deal with tranquility and dark skies.

Policy SD27 deals with the mix of homes and identifies a need for 2 and 3 bedroom market houses.

Policy SD30 allows for replacement dwellings. It states that the replacement of one dwelling with two or more dwellings will be permitted where the replacement dwellings are small and that there is sufficient scope within the curtilage of the dwelling to provide adequate garden space, parking and landscaping.

Existing dwellings are defined as the residential unit that existed in 2002. Any replacement dwellings should not be larger than the dwelling they replace. Also, it will be appropriate to maintain existing gaps between dwellings to ensure that the existing rural character is not prejudiced. Where a replacement dwelling is sited in a new position it must be demonstrated that there would be no harmful impact on the landscape of the National Park.

Amount

With the proposal the footprint of the buildings on the site will be reduced.

Siting

The main domestic buildings within the property are clustered together and the older buildings are arranged around a courtyard to the south. Conversely, the modern cow shed building is situated a short distance to the north of the group. The relationship between the older heritage buildings and the cow shed is cramped and enclosed, detracting from the setting of both.

The application buildings are screened from Pipers Lane and the land to the south by woodland. They are however visible from the footpath within the open countryside to the north/northeast of the site. From here the cow shed obscures views of the main barn and the smaller timber framed building to the east of the main barn.

With the proposal views of the heritage buildings will be opened up and the north and northeast elevations of the main barn and attached wing to the side will be visible from the path. The proposed replacement building will also be visible. It will be located in the approximate position of the former heritage barn and will be visually separate from and subservient to the main buildings.

Design and appearance

The detailed design of the restoration works and replacement building have not been worked up yet. However, the restoration work will be sensitive and subject to detailed discussions with conservation advisers. The replacement building will be modest in form, size and appearance and at this stage it is considered that a plain contemporary approach would be appropriate. Again, this is a matter for discussion.

See separate Design and Access Statement by Uberraum Architects.

Also see Heritage Statement by the Architectural History Practice

Landscaping

The intention is to create and maintain open views of the barn and associated heritage buildings. The main garden to the dwelling will be within the southern courtyard area.

Planting will however be introduced to the north of the replacement building to provide filtered views only. The actual planting scheme will be informed by discussions with the appointed landscape architect.

It should be noted that with the proposal no trees or hedges will be removed.

Ecology

Prior to submitting a formal planning application, a bat survey will be carried out, along with an ecology walk over survey of the vegetable garden.

The proposal itself offers plenty of opportunities to materially enhance local eco-systems and this will be an integral part of any formal planning application.

Dark Skies

The replacement dwelling will be designed to have no roof-lights, or roof-lights with fitted blackout blinds.

Energy efficiency

The proposed dwelling will be designed to be highly sustainable, both in relation to water consumption and energy. Details will be provided at the application stage.

Flood Risk

The site is not located in an area at risk of flooding. With a reduction in built footprint the scheme will not increase the risk of flooding either on the site or elsewhere.

Sustainability conclusion

Economic – The proposal will provide local employment and will support the local economy during the construction phase.

Social – The proposal will meet the current and future needs of the family. It will enable them to remain in their home in the long term.
The proposal will make full and appropriate use of an existing residential site.

The proposal will enhance the setting of a group of rural heritage assets.

Environmental – The proposed replacement building will be energy efficient.
The restored heritage assets will be made more energy efficient.
The future of this group of heritage assets will be secured.
Local traditional materials and recycled materials will be used in its construction.
The proposal will include water recycling facilities.
The Proposal will enhance the setting and significance of the heritage assets.

Ecosystem Services Statement Highbuildings Barn

Introduction

The proposal is for the restoration of the heritage assets on the site and the replacement of an existing utilitarian residential building with a smaller dwelling.

This statement demonstrates that the proposal complies with policy SD2 of the South Downs Local Plan 2019

Policy SD2

Policy SD2 explains that Ecosystem Services are the benefits that people and society get from the natural environment. It goes on to identify four aspects of ecoservices in the SDNP. They include:

- Supporting Services offered by flora, fauna and micro-organisms.
- Provisioning services which relate to the products and productivity of the natural environment.
- Regulating services are the controls from the natural environment.
- Cultural services relate to people's enjoyment of the National Park and its special qualities.

All of these services can be utilised and enhanced.

With this in mind policy SD2 seeks to ensure that all proposals have an overall positive impact on the ability of the natural environment to contribute goods and services.

The property and the proposal

To complete at application stage

Ecosystem Services Mapping

To complete at application stage

Landscape Context Maps

To complete at application stage

Positive impacts

The proposal complies with policy SD2 of the SDLP in the following ways:

- Sustainable management of land and water
- Protect and provide more, better and joined up natural habitats.
- Conserve water resources
- Manage and reduce the risk of flooding
- Increase the ability to store carbon through planting.
- Support sustainable production.
- Reduce levels of pollution
- Improve opportunities for people's health and wellbeing.

This will be achieved in the following ways:

- The property benefits from numerous mature trees and shrubs within the grounds to the property. The proposal will not involve the removal of or result in harm to any trees or shrubs. This is because the proposed replacement building will be built on the site of a former building and within the vegetable garden.
- The proposal will use locally sourced timber and secondhand plain clay tiles (as many recycled from the existing cow shed as possible) and the guttering and downpipes will be made from recycled aluminium. The building itself will be constructed by a local builder and the hardcore from the existing cow shed will be recycled for the footings of the proposed building.
- The new building will have water butts to collect rainwater, which will be used in the gardens of the property. This will provide sustainable management, conserve water resources and reduce the risk of flooding.
- The new building will include two bat boxes, which will protect and benefit habitats.
- A new hedge will be planted to benefit local wildlife habitats, increase the ability of the site to store carbon and reduce pollution.
- The existing buildings are not energy efficient. Conversely, the proposed replacement and restored buildings will be energy efficient and will comply with current Building Control energy efficiency standards.
- The new building will enable the applicants to remain in their long term family home. The restored buildings will provide a family home for other members of the family or a local family.
- The proposal will radically improve the condition, appearance and setting of a small cluster of heritage assets and views of them from the surrounding landscape.

Negative impacts

The buildings works associated with the proposal will result in a modest level of activity and traffic.

Conclusion

In this instance the positive benefits materially outweigh the negative impacts and the proposal complies with policy SD2 of the Local Plan.

