



Asher Planning Ltd

Change of use of annex to holiday let and ancillary residential accommodation

56 Crossways, Wick Street, Firle, BN8 6LG



Design & Access and Heritage Statement

Asher Planning Ltd, January 2024

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement accompanies the planning application for a change of use of annex to holiday let and ancillary residential accommodation, at 56 Crossways, Wick Street, Firle.
- 1.2 In this statement we discuss the site, surroundings and planning history. We then provide details of the proposal, set out how it complies with planning policy and discuss heritage impact.

2.0 Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is situated in the South Downs National Park in a countryside location on the west side of Firle Bostal, just north of the junction with Wick Street and a short distance south of the junction with the A27 trunk road. The site is within Firle Conservation Area and the main building is Grade II Listed. There is a single-storey residential annex towards the rear of the site, which was granted planning permission and listed building consent in 2022 (SDNP/21/04418/HOUS and SDNP/21/04419/LIS).
- 2.2 The site is in an accessible location, being next to the Firle Park Gates bus stop and around 200m from the bus stops on the A27. Glynde train station is around 1km away to the north-west (around a 20 minute walk). There is a cycle path along the A27 and along Crossways/Wick Street and Crossways is on the Firle footpath (Firle 9). The site is around 500m from Firle village where there is a local shop and pub.
- 2.3 The site is in flood zone 1, with a low risk of flooding.

Figure 1 – Location Plan



2.4 The building is timber-clad and a tiled, pitched roof. Windows are aluminium-clad timber frames and doors are timber.

2.5 The ground floor comprises a living area, kitchenette and bathroom. There is a mezzanine floor with a bedroom. There is a wooden deck to the rear.

Figures 2 and 3 – Internal layout



3.0 Proposal

3.3 It is proposed to change the use of the annex to holiday let and ancillary residential accommodation. There is a double bed upstairs and a sofa bed downstairs, so the building can sleep up to four people.

3.4 There is a parking area for two cars just inside the main gate of the property; it is proposed that guests can use this, with the car parking on the main drive to be for the main house.

4.0 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

4.1 Para. 81 states that:

“Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.”

4.2 Para. 84 specifically supports the rural economy, stating that planning policies and decisions should enable:

“a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;

c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside...”

4.3 Para. 130. states that planning decisions should ensure that developments meet certain requirements, including that they will function well, be visually attractive, provide a high standard of accommodation and protect neighbour amenity.

4.4 Section 16 of the NPPF gives regard to conserving the historic environment and seeks the provision of a desk-based assessment for any proposal that includes heritage assets.

4.5 Para. 201 states that proposals which would cause substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset should be refused. Para. 202 states that:

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the

public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”

South Downs Local Plan (2019)

- 4.6 Policy SD5 states that all proposals should take account of the local character and appearance and should protect neighbour amenity.
- 4.7 Policy SD19 states that new development should be located and designed to minimise the need to travel and promote the use of sustainable modes of transport. Policy SD22 requires sufficient parking provision.

- 4.8 Policy SD23 states that:

“1. Development proposals for visitor accommodation, visitor attractions and recreation facilities will be permitted where it is demonstrated that:

a) The proposals will provide opportunities for visitors to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities;

b) The design and location of the development minimises the need for travel by private car and encourages access and/or subsequent travel by sustainable means, including public transport, walking, cycling or horse riding;

c) Development proposals will not detract from the experience of visitors or adversely affect the character, historical significance, appearance or amenity of the area;

d) Development proposals make use of existing buildings, and, if no suitable existing buildings are available, the design of any new buildings are sensitive to the character and setting;

e) Ancillary facilities are not disproportionately large in relation to the rest of the visitor facilities;

f) Any proposal does not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of town or village centres or assets of community value; and

g) Where proposals are located outside settlement policy boundaries as defined on the Policies Map, they:

i. Positively contribute to the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and

ii. Are closely associated with other attractions/established tourism uses, including the public rights of way network...”

4.9 Policy SD34 states that proposals that foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park will be permitted provided that they meet one or more criteria, including:

“a) Promote and protect businesses linked to the National Park’s key sectors of farming, forestry and tourism.”

4.10 Policy SD13 seeks to protect the significance of listed buildings.

5.0 Planning assessment

Tourism use

5.1 National and local planning policy is supportive of tourism use. The main local policy for assessing tourism developments is Policy SD23. The proposal appears to meet the requirements of this policy as follows:

a) The proposals will provide opportunities for visitors to appreciate the national park;

b) The site is accessible by public transport, with bus stops near by and a train station (Glynde) within 20 minutes walk. It is on a cycle path and is also close to several footpaths including the Firle 9 footpath and the South Downs Way;

c) The development proposal will re-use an existing building so there will be no adverse impacts on the character of the area;

d) The proposal will make use of an existing building;

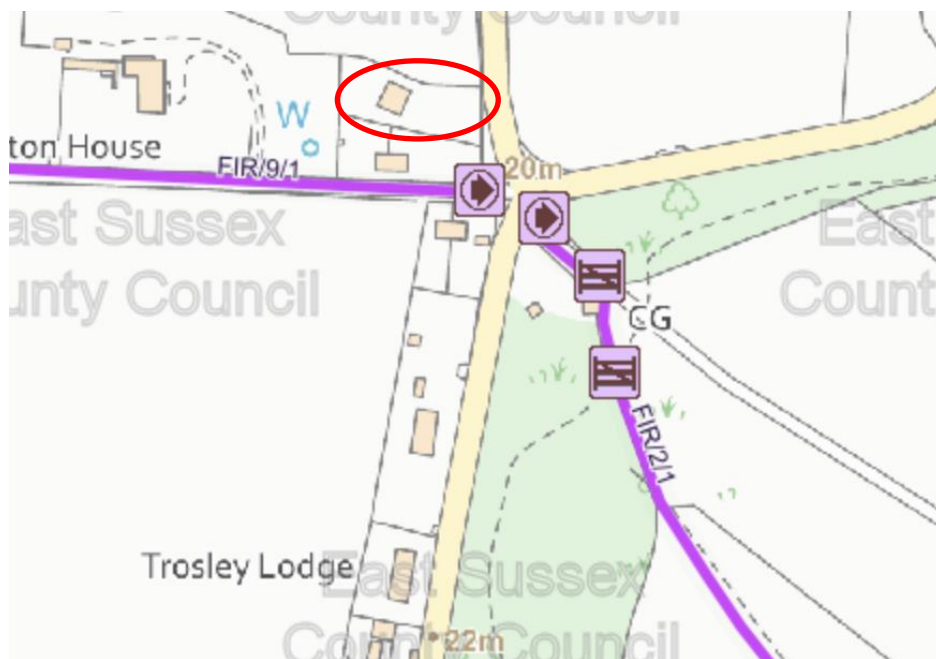
e) No new ancillary facilities are proposed;

f) The proposal will support the existing shop and pub in the village;

g) The site is outside the settlement boundary and so is required to be associated with other attractions or tourism uses and the rights of way network. There are several other tourism uses nearby including Firle Camp, Firle Place, Glynde Place, Glyndebourne, Middle farm, Charleston, the Ram Inn, Firle Beacon and Fly Sussex Paragliding. It is associated with the rights of way network, being close to several footpaths including the Firle 9 footpath (which runs along Crossways/Wick Street) and the South Downs Way to the south.

- 5.2 Tourism use is therefore appropriate on the site and the change of use is acceptable in principle.

Figure 4 – Firle 9 footpath 9 (shown in purple, with the site circled in red)



Character and appearance

- 5.3 No changes are proposed to the design of the building, which is of a very high quality. The building is in keeping with the main house and the surrounding rural area, built using natural materials. It is also sustainable with solar panels on the roof.

Access / parking

- 5.4 The site is in an accessible location, close to bus stops, a train station, cycle paths footpaths. No changes are proposed to access. There are two parking spaces just inside the gate of the property, which can be allocated to visitors.

Neighbour amenity

- 5.5 There will be no adverse impacts on neighbours. The building is on the opposite side of the site from the closest neighbours (54 and 55 Wick Street) and is well screened.

5.0 Comparable development

5.1 Below are examples of recent approved applications relating to the conversion of existing outbuildings to holiday let use.

- SDNP/23/02919/FUL | Installation of a single shepherd's hut to provide holiday letting accommodation together with car parking facility | Calcetto Cottage Crossbush Lane Crossbush Arundel West Sussex BN18 9PQ
- SDNP/23/02403/FUL | Change of use of redundant agricultural barn to 1 no. 3 bed holiday let. | Littlewoods Farm London Road Northchapel West Sussex GU28 9EQ
- SDNP/22/04732/FUL | Change of use of ancillary residential accommodation to self-contained holiday let including alterations to fenestration and replacement windows. | Hatchets Byworth Road Byworth Petworth West Sussex GU28 0HJ
- SDNP/22/02939/FUL | Change of use of annex to holiday let and ancillary residential accommodation | South Lodge, Annex Park Lane Swanmore SO32 2QQ

6.0 Heritage assessment

6.1 Following guidance set out in para. 194. of the NPPF, a heritage assessment is set out below.

6.2 To assess significance, the guidance provided in Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning 2 (Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment) and 3 (The Setting of Heritage Assets) has been followed.

56 Crossways

6.3 The list entry (1275320) states as follows:

“Early C18. Two storeys and attic. Two windows. One hipped dormer. Faced with flints with red brick dressings and quoins. Tiled roof. Casement windows with diamond-shaped panes. Modern red brick porch.”

6.4 A Heritage Statement was submitted in 2019¹ to accompany the original application for the annex. This found as follows:

¹ By Stephen Langer Architects

“The village is very much an estate village, with many houses bearing the distinctive Gage crest and built to house estate workers and staff.

What is now known as 56, Crossways was built as a pair of cottages. The cottages were probably built to house agricultural or other workers on the Firle Place Estate...

It is not always easy to date vernacular buildings like this, especially when they have been altered over many years. It has the general appearance of being early C19th, especially with its cast iron windows that were popular in the early to mid part of that century. The Listing Description, however, has this as early C18th. This is probably derived from the evidence on estate maps and records, so is likely to be reliable.”

- 6.5 The significance of the building therefore seems to lie in its architecture and details, and its history as a workers’ cottage in Firle village.
- 6.6 The previous Heritage Statement points out that extensive works were carried out to the property in the 1970s, leaving very little of the original fabric intact.

Impact of the proposal on significance

- 6.7 It is considered that the proposal will not have any impact on the significance of the listed building. The annex is already in-situ and no alterations are proposed to it. The holiday let use will be small-scale and will not have any adverse effects on the listed building.

7.0 Summary

- 7.1 The application site is situated in the South Downs National Park in a countryside location on the west side of Firle Bostal. The proposal is to change the use of the annex to holiday let and ancillary residential accommodation.
- 7.2 Tourism use is supported by national and local policy. The site is in an accessible location close to a village and transport links. The holiday let will enable visitors to appreciate the national park and will support local tourist attractions and the village.
- 7.3 The proposal does not include any internal or external changes to the building, therefore there will no impact on local character. There will be no impacts on neighbours because the building is sited away from the property boundaries and is screened.
- 7.4 Several comparable holiday lets have been recently permitted. The proposal comprises sustainable development.

7.5 In addition, there will be no impact on the significance of the heritage asset (listed building).