



PLANNING DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Use of property as dwellinghouse
(independent from Rooks Hill). Including
reinstatement of an internal wall.

51 & 52 Lavant West Sussex PO18 0BQ

March 2024





This statement accompanies a full planning application for the use of 51 & 52 Lavant, West Sussex, PO18 0BQ as a dwellinghouse (independent from Rooks Hill). including the reinstatement of an internal wall separating the application building from the adjoining Rooks Hill. This application has been prepared with due regard to the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area, its relationship with existing neighbouring properties and relevant planning policy.

THE SITE & SURROUNDINGS

51 & 52 Lavant are located to the west side of the A286 within the designated Settlement Boundary Area of Lavant. 51 and 52 adjoins a Grade II listed property known as Rooks Hill and are currently used as a family dwellinghouse with ancillary holiday accommodation.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1, identified as being at the lowest risk from flooding. The site lies within the South Downs National Park, and within the Mid and East Lavant Conservation Area. The site is located outside the catchment areas for nitrate neutrality and recreational disturbance. The site area is illustrated at Figure. 1.

This application is submitted in order to use the property as a dwellinghouse independent of Rooks Hill. No additional floorspace is proposed, however, the proposal does include the blocking up of a doorway between Rooks Hill and nos. 51 and 52 Lavant.

Background

In 2007 the use of the properties known as Rooks Hill, 51 & 52 was changed from a family house (Rooks Hill) and two residential flats (51 and 52) to a guest house, which included first floor owners' accommodation approved under LA Ref: LV/06/05477/COU. The guest house accommodation comprised 6 no. en-suite guest bedrooms, guest lounge and dining room.

The guest house operated until the winter of 2017 when the property was advertised for sale. The Applicant purchased the property in June 2018, since this time the applicant has used Rooks Hill and nos. 51 and 52 Lavant as their family home, letting out nos. 51 & 52 as holiday accommodation on occasion.



Figure 1. Location Plan



Heritage Statement

Nos. 51 and 52 are attached to Rooks Hill which is a Grade II listed building, listed on the 28 January 1986. The listing describes the property as: ***'C18 or earlier house, restored. Two storeys. Five windows. Red brick with some flints. Eaves cornice. Hipped tiled roof. Modern casement windows'.***

This application relates to the use of nos. 51 & 52 as a dwellinghouse independent of Rooks Hill. No external alterations are proposed and as such the development would have no wider impact on the setting of the listed building or Lavant Conservation Area. Internally, a doorway would be blocked up at ground floor level between Rooks Hill and nos. 51 & 52. This alteration would revert to the original building layout and would be carried out in sympathetic materials to match existing, with care and attention taken to preserving the original features and fabric of the listed property.



RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework was updated in July 2021 and sets out the most up to date planning guidance for the proposed development.

On design, paragraph 135 the NPPF require decision to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime;
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- establish a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Section 12 concerns design and states that achieving well-designed places is one of the key components of achieving sustainable development. Paragraph 134 states that: *Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.* Section 12 requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that development is designed to function well and add to the overall quality of the area for the lifetime of the development, including quality of architecture, layout, and effective landscaping, a sympathetic to local character and history. The section also supports innovation and change and encourages that design should achieve a strong sense of place through an appropriate amount and mix of development through arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials. Design should also achieve places that are accessible, and which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users are also encouraged.



Paragraphs 212 and 2013 relate to Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites. Para. 2012 states: Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

Paragraph 213 states; Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 207 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 208, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

South Downs National Park Local Plan 2014-2033

The South Downs National Park Local Plan was adopted in July 2019 and forms the Development Plan for the SDNPA for the plan period 2014-33. The policies within the Local Plan relevant to this case comprise SD1 Sustainable Development, SD5 Design, Policy SD23 Sustainable Tourism, SD12 Historic Environment; and Development Management Policies SD13 Listed Buildings and Policy SD15 Conservation Areas.

Core Policy SD1 establishes four criteria for achieving sustainable development in the park and requires a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It will work with applicants to find solutions to ensure that those development proposals can be approved without delay, unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. When determining any planning application, the Authority will consider the cumulative impacts of development.

The purpose of the national park is defined here as:

- i. to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area; and
- ii. to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public. Where it appears that there is a conflict between the National Park purposes, greater weight will be attached to the first of those purposes. In pursuit of the purposes, the National Park Authority will pay due regard to its duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities within the National Park.

Policy SD1 also set out that planning permission will be refused where development proposals fail to conserve the landscape, natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park unless, exceptionally:

- a) The benefits of the proposals demonstrably outweigh the great weight to be attached to those interests; and



- b) There is substantial compliance with other relevant policies in the development plan.

Strategic Policy SD5 sets out the design principals for the SDNP and requires that:

Development proposals will only be permitted where they adopt a landscape-led approach and respect the local character, through sensitive and high quality design that makes a positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the area. The following design principles should be adopted as appropriate:

- a) Integrate with, respect and sympathetically complement the landscape character by ensuring development proposals are demonstrably informed by an assessment of the landscape context;
- b) Achieve effective and high quality routes for people and wildlife, taking opportunities to connect GI;
- c) Contribute to local distinctiveness and sense of place through its relationship to adjoining buildings, spaces and landscape features, including historic settlement pattern;
- d) Create high-quality, clearly defined public and private spaces within the public realm;
- e) Incorporate hard and soft landscape treatment which takes opportunities to connect to the wider landscape, enhances GI, and is consistent with local character;
- f) Utilise architectural design which is appropriate and sympathetic to its setting in terms of height, massing, density, roof form, materials, night and day visibility, elevational and, where relevant, vernacular detailing;
- g) Provide high quality, secure, accessible, and where possible, integrated storage for general and recycling waste, heating fuel, and transport related equipment;
- h) Provide high quality outdoor amenity space appropriate to the needs of its occupiers or users;
- i) Ensure development proposals are durable, sustainable and adaptable over time, and provide sufficient internal space to meet the needs of a range of users;
- j) Give regard to improving safety and perceptions of safety, and be inclusive and accessible for all; and
- k) Have regard to avoiding harmful impact upon, or from, any surrounding uses and amenities.



Policy SD12 is relevant to the application site and requires that:

1. Development proposals will only be permitted where they conserve and enhance the historic environment, including through the safeguarding of heritage assets and their setting.
2. Applicants will be required to provide a Heritage Statement sufficient to allow an informed assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage asset(s).
3. Development proposals which affect heritage assets (whether designated or non-designated) or their setting will be determined with regard to the significance of the asset, including the long-term conservation and enhancement of that asset.
4. Development proposals will be permitted where they enhance or better reveal the significance of heritage assets, particularly where they are considered to be at risk of irreversible harm or loss.
5. Development proposals which appropriately re-use redundant or under-used heritage assets with the optimal viable use, which secures their long-term conservation and enhancement, including of their setting, will be supported.
6. Development proposals for enabling development that would otherwise conflict with other planning policies, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset will be permitted provided:
 - a) The proposals will not materially harm the heritage values of the asset or its setting;
 - b) It can be demonstrated that alternative solutions have failed;
 - c) The proposed development is the minimum necessary to protect the significance of the heritage asset;
 - d) It meets the tests and criteria set out in Historic England guidance Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places;
 - e) It is subject to a legal agreement to secure the restoration of the asset; and
 - f) It enables public appreciation of the saved heritage asset.

Policy SD13 states: Development proposals which affect a listed building, or its setting will only be permitted, and listed building consent granted where:

- a) They preserve and enhance the significance of the listed building and its setting by demonstrating that loss of historic fabric and detail of significance, including internal features, floor plans and the integrity of the rooms, is avoided; or



- b) Harm to the significance of the listed building or its setting is considered to be outweighed by public benefits by the Authority, when appropriate mitigation measures will be expected, including archaeological investigation (including a written report) or recording.

Development proposals will be refused planning permission and/or listed building consent where they cause substantial harm to a listed building or its setting.

The application site is located within the Mid and East Lavant Conservation Area and therefore policy SD15: Conservation Areas is relevant. This requires that:

1. Development proposals within a conservation area, or within its setting, will only be permitted where they preserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest, character, or appearance of the conservation area. Sufficient information to support an informed assessment should be provided on the following matters:
 - a) The relevant conservation area appraisal and management plan;
 - b) Overall settlement layout and relationship to established landscape setting;
 - c) Historic pattern of thoroughfares, roads, paths and open spaces, where these provide evidence of the historic evolution of the settlement, and the historic street scene;
 - d) Distinctive character zones within the settlement;
 - e) Mix of building types and uses, if significant to the historic evolution of the settlement;
 - f) Use of locally distinctive building materials, styles or techniques;
 - g) Historic elevation features including fenestration, or shop fronts, where applicable;
 - h) Significant trees, landscape features, boundary treatments, open space, and focal points; and
 - i) Existing views and vistas through the settlement, views of the skyline and views into and out of the conservation area.
2. Within a conservation area, development proposals which involve the total or substantial demolition of buildings or structures will only be permitted where it is sufficiently demonstrated that:
 - a) The current buildings or structures make no positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest, character or appearance of the conservation area; and
 - b) The replacement would make an equal or greater contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



Overall, the policy requires development to be sustainable across all three tiers of modern sustainable development objectives. To ensure that the natural beauty of the SDNP and its unique landscape are conserved and enhanced by development proposals. The historic and natural environment is also given significance through national and local policies.

Policy SD23 refers to sustainable tourism and sets out proposals for visitor accommodation, visitor attractions and recreation facilities will be permitted where it is demonstrated that:

- The proposals will provide opportunities for visitors to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities;
- 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;
- Development proposals will not detract from the experience of visitors or adversely affect the character, historical significance, appearance or amenity of the area;
- 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;
- Ancillary facilities are not disproportionately large in relation to the rest of the visitor facilities;
- Any proposal does not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of town or village centres or assets of community value; and
- 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; or
 - iii. Are part of farm diversification schemes or endorsed Whole Estate Plans.

Development proposals that would result in the loss of visitor accommodation, visitor attractions and recreation facilities will not be permitted unless:

- a) Evidence is provided that the current use is financially unviable and a robust marketing campaign of at least 12 months has been carried out that clearly demonstrates there is no market demand for the existing use or an equivalent tourism use; or



- b) The current use or related development harms the special qualities.
- c) The Authority will support a year-round visitor economy, while ensuring the facility remains for visitor use only.
- d) Development proposals, on their own or cumulatively with other development uses, must not prejudice or disadvantage people's enjoyment of other existing and appropriate tourism and recreation activities. Development proposals that generate significant additional pressure upon the surrounding rights of way network will be required to mitigate these impacts

In this specific case the application building was once two properties 51 and 52 Lavant which were then used with Rooks Hill as part of a guest house with owners' accommodation, and now the property is part of Rooks Hill being used as a dwellinghouse since 2018 by the applicant and their four children with an ancillary element of holiday accommodation. The conversion of this dwelling into two properties (net gain of one) would therefore have limited impact on the provision of tourist accommodation locally. The property's contribution to the tourist economy is considered to be de minimis.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

This application is for the use of nos.51 and 52 as a dwelling separately from Rooks Hill. This would involve the blocking up of a doorway between nos. 51 & 52 and Rooks Hill at ground floor level. As has been discussed previously in this statement Rooks Hill and nos. 51 and 52 have historically be used as one dwellinghouse and this application would result in the conversion of a single dwelling into two dwellings with no additional floorspace being created. The site is located within a sustainable location, the settlement boundary area of Lavant, where the principle of dwellings is supported within the Development Plan.

Design and Appearance

This application is submitted in order to use the property as a dwelling independent of Rooks Hill. No additional floorspace is proposed, however, the proposal does include the blocking up of a doorway between Rooks Hill and nos. 51 and 52 Lavant. No external alterations are necessary as part of this planning application.

Use and Activity

The application property was formerly in use as 2 no. flats within the village of Lavant. In 2007 the flats were converted to form part of the guest house accommodation in connection with Rooks Hill. As a consequence of the change of ownership in 2018 that saw Rooks Hill return to a family home, the accommodation within nos. 51 & 52 has been incorporated into part of the dwelling at Rooks Hill that was occasionally used for self-catering holiday accommodation.

Since 2018 the property has been used, on occasion, for holiday lets but primarily as a family dwelling as part of Rooks Hill. The Officer delegated report in connection with application LA Ref: SDNP/23/02898/FUL clarifies that: A change of use of a building from a mixed use as a dwelling/guest accommodation to a single dwelling would be immune from enforcement action after 4 years, which is a material consideration in this case. The properties contribution to the tourist economy is therefore considered to be de minimis.

The tourist accommodation market has changed significantly with the rise of the internet, Airbnb and as part of the fallout from the COVID pandemic which has impacted upon an uplift in people running small ancillary business from home, especially in this area which affords convenient countryside connections to the SDNP; Goodwood events; local pubs and close connection to the Sub Regional and historic city centre of Chichester. Provided the primary use remains as a dwellinghouse the fallback position is that properties can offer an element of ancillary tourist accommodation. This would be equal to how the property is currently used as a dwellinghouse, and on occasion as tourist accommodation. Therefore, in this case, the proposal would not result in a harmful loss in the amount of tourist accommodation in the locality. The location being one that is considered sustainable where the principle of housing development is considered suitable.

Further, the proposal offers a dwelling that would support the contribution towards housing provision with a national and local housing shortage being hot topic on the governments and LPA's agenda.



Overall, the property has been used as a dwelling as part of Rooks Hill for some time with limited contribution to the provision of tourist accommodation for the area. A dwelling independent to Rooks Hill would allow for a home to support the housing stock for the community and support the local economy, in a sustainable location.

Access & Parking

The property affords existing parking and space for onsite turning, this arrangement would remain.

Ecosystems Services Statement

SDNP Policy SD2: Ecosystem Services is not relevant to this development. No external alterations are proposed, and the use of the premises would not impact upon ecosystems.

Landscape Appraisal

SDNP Policy SD4: Landscape Character is not relevant to this development. No external alterations are proposed, and the use of the premises would not impact upon the character of the landscape.

Noise Assessment

The existing and proposed uses are relatively equal in terms of their nature and activity and would generate similar noise levels.

CONCLUSION

The application would result in nos. 51 & 52 creating a separate dwellinghouse within a sustainable location. The proposed internal alteration would be carried out in a sympathetic manner to the host and adjoining listed property. The proposal is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Development Plan. Therefore, permission should be granted at the earliest opportunity.