

LOCK HOUSE, LOCK LANE, PARTRIDGE GREEN, RH13 8EG

PLANNING AND LISTED BUILDING APPLICATION FOR CONVERSION OF THE LISTED BUILDING TO 3 NO. HOUSES AND CONVERSION OF THE GARAGE AND EXISTING FLAT TO 1 NO. COTTAGE

Introduction

This planning statement has been prepared by Nicholas Sutton on behalf of the owner of Lock House to accompany a detailed planning and listed building application for the conversion and development of Lock House. The application seeks approval for the conversion of Lock House, a Grade II listed building, from a single-family dwelling to a total of 3 residential units, plus the conversion of the existing garage and flat into a separate cottage.

Lock House was originally purchased by the applicant in 2003 and has since been used as a private residence, following its conversion from the Convent of the Visitation. The proposed development aims to sensitively adapt and restore the property, ensuring the long-term preservation of this important heritage asset while providing much-needed housing in the area. The proposal also brings substantial heritage benefits by safeguarding the future of this historic structure.

Site and Surroundings

The site, approximately 2.95 hectares in size, is located to the west of Partridge Green. It comprises Lock House as the main feature, together with various more recent buildings. The Grade II listed house, that is Lock House, is set within expansive, parkland-style grounds with roaming deer, mature oak, cedar, Scots pine, and lime trees, contributing to its rural and tranquil character. The property faces southeast, overlooking its private parkland grounds and offering views toward the South Downs.

Access to Lock House is via Lock Lane, a private road which joins the public highway at Bines Road. The property benefits from two gated access points off Lock Lane, enhancing its privacy and security.

Existing Buildings

The main structure, Lock House, extends to 19,673 square feet (1,828 sqm) and is considered the primary heritage asset on the site. Additional buildings on the property include a garden store (135 sqm), garages and a guest cottage (150 sqm), a tennis pavilion and additional garages (100 sqm), and a summer house (60 sqm).

Historical Development of Lock House

Lock House was originally constructed around 1909, following the clearance of Grants Copse. The initial design featured a main house connected to a smaller block. It remains unclear whether the original owner, who passed away in 1914, ever resided in the property. Subsequently, the house changed hands between two landowners, as the estate at that time encompassed over 1,000 acres of land.

In 1937, the estate was purchased via John D. Wood estate agents by Mr. Andrew Harvey, a cotton spinner and merchant associated with the East India Company.

The original plans, held in the West Sussex Records Office, show that in 1940 Lock House underwent a major reconstruction programme. The architect on the plans are listed as being Maple & Co, well-known London furniture company that likely also managed the reconstruction.

The 1940 Reconstruction

The 1940 renovation significantly altered both the interior and exterior of Lock House. The most notable external change was the addition of a new entrance gable to accommodate an enhanced entrance hall and staircase. The link between the original two blocks was extended, incorporating a mahogany-panelled Dining Room on the ground floor, a new Guest Bedroom on the first floor, a loft extension, and a modified roofline. A ballroom was added to the eastern end of the house, while the western wing saw further expansion with additional staff bedrooms. Various other elevational alterations included the creation of a new bay for the Morning Room and the addition of the loggia.

Notably, these plans clearly show the extent of the internal fit out during this period, with all significant features – many of which are highlighted in the building’s current listing – originating from the 1940s reconstruction. These features, including much of the joinery, were crafted by Maple & Co.

Mr. Harvey died in 1957 at his home in London, and his wife remained living at Lock House until her death in 1971. The estate was then broken up and sold at auction in 26 separate lots, leaving Lock House with approximately 5 hectares of garden. The farmland and all separate staff cottages, houses and auxiliary buildings were all sold to individual purchasers. Lock House itself was bought by the Church and became the Convent of the Visitation.

Convent of the Visitation Period

During its use as a convent, various extensions were added to Lock House, altering its architectural balance detrimentally. Most notably, a two-bay extension was built to the east of the ballroom, resulting in windows that were formerly on the end elevation being repositioned to face both north and south. Above the former ballroom, now repurposed as a chapel, a first-floor extension with a flat roof was constructed, leaving the property with an unbalanced and somewhat institutional appearance.

Recent Ownership and Alterations

The applicant acquired Lock House in 2003 from a property trader, who had previously purchased it after the Convent relocated to Albourne. In 2002, the trader had sold off the two gatehouses, redirected the entrance driveway, and obtained planning consent for the conversion of Lock House into six dwellings, despite this permission not being entirely sympathetic with the heritage of the building. The sale to the applicant was agreed subject to planning permission for the house to become a single dwelling.

Upon taking ownership, the applicant undertook significant refurbishment of the entire property. This included completely re-wiring and re-plumbing the property (with the exception of the original Art Deco bathrooms), converting the chapel into a family kitchen, and removing demountable partitions installed by the Convent to restore the original rooms to their former glory. They also secured planning permission for the construction of an indoor swimming pool, a large garden store, and a garage with a flat above. Additionally, the applicant purchased much of the surrounding land to enhance the privacy of the property and to restore part of the original estate, reconnecting it with the house.

The applicant moved out of Lock House in December 2011. In the year leading up to their departure, they appointed estate agents Knight Frank and Hamptons to sell the property. Both agents advised that the house was in excellent condition and that, while furnished and with

the applicant in residence, it should sell swiftly. Following this advice, the property was marketed for £5.75 million, a figure deemed appropriate for the market at the time. Comprehensive marketing efforts were undertaken, including adverts in *Country Life* and strong PR campaigns. Despite these efforts, no offers were received. At this time, Lock House had 9 hectares of land, though it did not include the field located immediately to the north, adjacent to the garage and flat.

Following this unsuccessful sales period, the applicant rented the property to the singer Adele under a six-month contract. Unfortunately, during an interview on CBS, Adele remarked that she believed the house to be haunted. This comment negatively impacted future marketing efforts and continues to affect the property's reputation to this day.

After Adele vacated the property, Lock House was re-listed for sale through Savills during 2012-2013. Despite renewed marketing efforts, no offers were received. The property was then rented again through Hamptons to a tenant who sought permission to run a bespoke dressmaking business from the premises. This request was granted under the general right to operate a business from the property. However, it was later discovered that the tenant had misrepresented her intentions and was, in fact, running a residential retreat with 11 guest bedrooms and a fitness boot camp. Upon learning of this unauthorised use from disgruntled neighbours, the applicant took immediate action to stop the tenant's activities. The tenant vacated the property six months into the tenancy, in early 2014.

In 2014-2015, the property was marketed again, this time by Strutt and Parker, with updated brochures and strong PR efforts, including a feature on the front page of the *Sunday Times* Homes Supplement on 30 March 2014. Despite these efforts, there was very little interest and no offers were received. The property was subsequently rented through Savills to a tenant who had been credit-checked as a high-net-worth individual from Monaco, and a two-year tenancy agreement was signed. However, the tenant paid only the first quarter's rent, and it took three years for the applicant to regain possession after the tenant sought postponements due to undergoing gender reassignment surgery. Once the applicant finally regained vacant possession, the property was re-marketed by Strutt and Parker at a lower price, reflecting the poor condition the house had been left in by the evicted tenant. Unfortunately, once again, no offers were forthcoming.

In response, the applicant lightly refurbished Lock House, installing a new kitchen, new carpets, and redecorating throughout. Despite this, efforts to sell the property through Savills and Knight Frank in 2020 for £5.75 million did not lead to any offers. With further marketing efforts proving unsuccessful, the applicant reluctantly decided to fully refurbish the house again, move back into the house and present it as a loved family home. Even after this attempt, and despite marketing at £500,000 less than the most recent Red Book valuation of £6.75 million (as of October 2022), there has been only one viewing in nine months and no offers.

Heritage of Lock House

Lock House is a Grade II listed property, with its official listing entry recorded as follows:

Listing Reference: 965/0/10047

Date of Listing: 06-DEC-2001

Location: West Grinstead, Partridge Green

Property Name: Lock House (formerly Convent of the Visitation)

Large house. Circa 1900, first shown on the 1911 Ordnance Survey map, in Vernacular Revival style with extensions and alterations of the 1930s for the Harvey family comprising ballroom, loggia, extension to service wing and refitting in matching style.

EXTERIOR: Built of red brick in English bond with hipped tiled roof with eight clustered brick chimneystacks. Two storeys and attics. Irregular fenestration, mainly casement windows with leaded lights.

North west or entrance front comprises central projecting gable and projecting end wings. Central gable has carved bargeboards with oriel to attic and three windows below. Four-centred arched oak door with plain spandrels. In front of this is a timber framed three bay porte-cochere and behind a four centred arched doorcase with floral spandrels. On either side are set back portions of two bays. The left side projecting wing has a three-light dormer and to the extreme left is a two bay one storey 1930s ballroom, with round-headed windows and keystones, extended by a further two bays in matching style and with a further floor added above c1970 to provide a chapel and accommodation for a convent. The right-hand projection has a square bell turret, timber framed on a tiled base with ogee top. South east side has four casement windows and a further 1930s four window extension with tiled porch in matching style. The south west or garden front was originally of 12 bays but a three bay extension was added in the 1930s to the left and a loggia of three bays and a two bay ballroom extension added to the right. There is a projecting tiled gable with bellcast followed by a recessed part with five windows to the first floor and central five-light mullioned and transomed casement to ground floor flanked by two carved oak four-centred arched entrances and half-glazed doors. The centre has three projecting tiled gables, the end ones with two storey seven-light canted bays, the central bay three-light casements. To the extreme right of the original building is a three-light dormer and three windows to the first floor, including a canted bay with a ground floor three bay brick loggia with wooden double doors at ground floor level. To the extreme right is the 1930s ballroom with round-headed windows extended by two bays c1970 and a further storey with three casement windows.

INTERIOR: Staircase Hall has stone fireplace with strapwork frieze and foliate spandrels, cornice with frieze of beasts and ribbed ceiling. Jacobean style carved wooden well staircase with carved balusters and newel posts with strapwork panels and elaborate finials. Drawing Room has marble fireplace and four alcoves. Morning Room has a baronial fireplace with a Coat of Arms, panelled doors with four-centred arches and dado linenfold-type panelling. Former Ballroom has panelled walls. Former Music Room has a built-in china cabinet. Former Bar has wooden fireplace with surround with shell decoration and strapwork pilasters. Dining Room is panelled throughout in maple in an early C18 style and has a green marble bolection-moulded fireplace and coved cornice.

The service end is completely of c1937 including tiled kitchen and scullery with original cupboards, strongroom for silver and Housekeeper's Parlour with bolection-moulded fireplace with tiled surround. Subsidiary staircase with moulded balusters and service staircase with stick balusters and square newel posts. First floor retains a few c1900 fireplaces to servants rooms but was mainly refitted in the 1930s. There are guest rooms with panelling and fireplaces including wooden Adam style surround with marble insert and Gibbs surround with marble insert. Master's bedroom has built-in cupboards, marble washbasin and marble bolection-moulded fireplace. Mistress' Bedroom has built-in cupboards, marble fireplace and four floral paintings over the doors. The Dressing Room has walnut built-in wardrobes with interior fittings and fireplace with carved brackets and foliate motifs. Bedrooms to the Harveys daughters Pat and Daphne also have built-in cupboards and wardrobes. There are three Vitrolite lined bathrooms with original fittings, heated towel rails

and some original 1930s light fittings. Part of the attic was used as a playroom and has oak panelling.

HISTORY: The Harvey family are reputed to have owned Claridges Hotel. Their daughter Daphne was the first wife of Donald Campbell, holder of the world record for waterspeed.

Optimum Viable Use

In order to preserve the heritage and character of Lock House, a range of alternative uses have been carefully considered to determine the optimum viable use for the property. The goal is to identify a sustainable use that both respects the historic significance of the Grade II listed building and ensures its long-term preservation. The following options have been evaluated:

Alternative use	Heritage comments	Planning comments	Commercial comments
Hotel	<p>In order to be functionally used as a hotel, various changes to the site and its listed buildings would be required which would likely result in significant detrimental effects on the heritage assets. These changes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further sub-division of rooms on the 1st floor because of expectation that each room has an ensuite bathroom. - Increased level of services through the historic elements of the heritage asset to accommodate air conditioning, fire alarms, plumbing services and feature lighting. - Need for a commercial kitchen within the building with its requirement for large ductwork. - Increased level of car parking over other uses - Significant need for built form of the heritage asset to be expanded for spa and leisure facilities, further guest rooms and back of house space. 	<p>Hotel use falls within the definition of ‘Main Town Centre Use’ for the purposes of the NPPF.</p> <p>Para 87 of the NPPF requires a sequential test so it is Town Centre, then edge of centre then only if these options are not available should an out of town location be considered.</p> <p>The development would not meet the small scale rural development exemption of para 89.</p> <p>Increased level of traffic generation. Whilst the hotel option offers limited guest rooms, the restaurant, bar and leisure facilities would be open for the public to use generating significant vehicle movements.</p>	<p>Whilst the building is characterful in a rural location to become a viable hotel it would need significant extension for spa/leisure facilities and further guest rooms.</p> <p>The viability of any hotel business is driven by the number of guest bedrooms. A country house hotel with high levels of customer service befitting of the heritage asset needs significant numbers of guest rooms to achieve viability.</p> <p>The local area is also well served by first class country house hotels with South Lodge with extensive spa facilities, 2 restaurants and 90 guest rooms and Ockenden Manor with again extensive spa facilities and 28 bedrooms. Lock House with 11</p>

			<p>bedrooms could just not operate viably and compete with these 2 hotels.</p> <p>Hotel use is therefore unlikely to be viable.</p>
Care Home	<p>Similar to the hotel use in order to be functionally used as a care home significantly detrimental changes would be required to the heritage asset which would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sub-division required to rooms on the 1st floor because of expectation each would have an ensuite bathroom. - Increased level of services through historic elements of the property including Fire alarm, call alarms, higher levels of lighting, ventilation and further plumbing services. - Need for a commercial kitchen including ductwork - Increased levels of activity and equipment damaging the historic fabric. - Requirement for a large lift for access. - Requirement for ramps in corridors with the different levels. - Requirement to strengthen ceilings for hoists in rooms. 	<p>Additional servicing of a care home would generate significant increase in the levels of traffic generated.</p> <p>Not suited to a rural environment not served by public transport.</p>	<p>A typical commercially viable new build care homes has 70+ bedrooms.</p> <p>With the additional costs of converting a heritage asset compared to new build a greater number of rooms would be required.</p> <p>Lock House cannot accommodate sufficient guest rooms to be commercially viable.</p>
Offices	<p>Various changes to the heritage asset would be required to meet modern day office standards which would have a significantly determinantal effect including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The requirement for comfort cooling/ air conditioning effecting the fabric of the building 	<p>Even with a very low employee ratio of 1:15sqm the site could potentially accommodate 120 employees with significant traffic generation.</p> <p>Similar to a hotel, office use is a town</p>	<p>The building would have a very inefficient net to gross floor ratio.</p> <p>With higher costs of creating the offices than new build equivalents and with a poor net to gross ratio and rents considerably less than town centre levels the office</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The requirement for raised floors for data cabling and power - The requirement for a higher level of car parking - The requirement for open plan office space removing historic fabric - The requirement for new WC facilities - The requirement for a commercial kitchen and ducting - The requirement for floor strengthening to accommodate office floor loadings. 	centre use under the sequential test.	<p>development would not be viable.</p> <p>The demand for all office accommodation is declining post pandemic and the demand for this type of office space has considerably diminished over the last 30 years.</p>
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Residential as Optimum Viable Use

The detailed analysis has concluded that the only viable use for Lock House is as a residential property. This use aligns with both the preservation of the building's historical integrity and the practical requirements for its long-term sustainability. Several forms of residential use have been considered, each offering different potential benefits for the property:

1. The Heritage Asset as a Single Dwelling

The existing use of Lock House as a single-family dwelling, alongside its outbuildings, was consented in 2003 under planning reference WG/26/03. Subsequent consents were granted for the construction of a triple garage and workshop (WG/81/03) in 2004, a garden store (DC/05/2317) in 2006, and an indoor swimming pool (DC/07/0543) in 2007, all of which have been implemented. In 2003, Lock House underwent extensive internal refurbishment, including re-wiring, the installation of a new hot and cold water system, new kitchen, and new bathrooms. The demountable partitions installed by the convent were removed, and the property underwent plaster repair and full redecoration. Additional refurbishments were carried out in 2018 and 2021.

Over the years, several Red Book valuations have been conducted to assess the market value of the property:

- **18 January 2010 (Knight Frank):** Valued at £4.5 million, based on the market value as defined in the RICS Valuation Standards (6th Edition). The valuation report states that the residential market in the South East peaked in Spring 2008. With the financial crisis there were significant reductions in value in 2008 and 2009. Then with record low interest rates the market started to re-emerge but at the date of the valuation in early 2010 the UK economy was slowly lifting out of recession with significant concerns over private and public debt levels with many commentators forecasting a dip in prices in 2010. Accordingly at the date of this valuation house prices were at a low point. In general remarks the valuer comments “this property is a very large country house, positioned close to its northern boundary. The house has been modernised within the constraints of its Listed Building status however retains a

somewhat institutional appearance. Many buyers would find it too large as a manageable family home and uneconomic to maintain. The sale of the property therefore would be a relatively restricted market, although subject to planning, could have alternative uses.”

- **18 September 2015 (Strutt and Parker):** Valued at £7 million, based on the market value as defined in the RICS Valuation Standards (9th Edition). The property was occupied by a Tenant at this time, but the valuer provided a vacant possession valuation. The valuation took into account the 34.3 hectares (85 acres) of land attached to the estate, including the additional 60 acres of land purchased for £443,200 in 2015.
- **29 July 2020 (Scrivener Tibbatts Chartered Surveyors):** Valued the property at £6.5 million. The valuation was provided directly to the Lender but the finance broker confirmed the valuation was based on market value.
- **24 September 2021 (Aitchison Raffety):** Valued at £5.75 million based on market value and in accordance with RICS Global standards. The valuer highlighted what they felt adversely affected the saleability of the property, commenting that “as the house is 20,000 sqft and the land is nearing 85 acres, both will have significant maintenance and running costs, which may put off purchasers and certainly limit the market for the property. Furthermore, the large size of the house would also mean the costs to refurbish the property to individual taste would be substantial and time consuming, which may again hinder saleability. We have considered these factors within our valuation.”
- **18 October 2022 (Strutt and Parker):** Valued at £6.75 million based on market value.

The applicant has actively tried to sell the property for about 14 years. Despite the property being consistently marketed by top agents – including Hamptons, Knight Frank, Savills, Strutt and Parker, HJ Burt, and Homes Estate Agency – no offers have been forthcoming. Full marketing efforts were made, including brochures, professional photography, advertising in *Country Life*, national PR campaigns, and exposure on all major property portals. The only offer received over the years was in August 2020, but the prospective buyer withdrew after learning about the property's supposed haunted status, which was publicly mentioned by Adele during her tenancy.

The property has been extensively market-tested for over a decade, yet it has consistently failed to attract buyers. The feedback from valuers and agents supports the conclusion that Lock House, in its current form, is simply too large, costly, and impractical as a single-family residence. It retains an institutional appearance and requires substantial ongoing maintenance and refurbishment, which limits its appeal in the residential market.

In accordance with Paragraph 17 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 2019, Historic Environment, the property has been marketed extensively as a single dwelling, yet no viable offers have been made and no potential purchasers have been found. Furthermore, Paragraph 15 of the PPG 2019 stresses the importance of ensuring that any use is viable. The lack of demand over many years demonstrates that continuing its use as a single-family home is not a sustainable option. Should a buyer eventually come forward, it is likely that upon the end of their tenure, the property would once again face the same issues, leading to another failed venture and possibly harmful alterations to the heritage asset.

The optimum viable use of Lock House may not necessarily align with its original use, as indicated by Paragraph 15 of the PPG 2019. The extensive marketing efforts clearly show that the property's use as a single-family dwelling is no longer viable, and the asset is effectively redundant in this capacity. Accordingly a single dwelling is proved NOT VIABLE.

2. Conversion of the Heritage Asset into Apartments

The potential for converting Lock House into commercially sized apartments has been carefully considered. In rural locations, typical apartment sizes are approximately 60 sqm for a one-bedroom unit, 80 sqm for a two-bedroom unit, and 100 sqm for a three-bedroom unit. To minimise the subdivision of existing rooms and limit the addition of new bathrooms and kitchens – each requiring servicing – the most sympathetic approach would involve splitting Lock House into 12 units.

The proposed unit sizes would significantly exceed standard market housing dimensions, with one-bedroom apartments averaging 100 sqm, two-bedroom units around 150 sqm, and three-bedroom units approximately 200 sqm. These dimensions are considerably larger than typical market housing, which would result in a lower sales price per square foot compared to similar properties. This conversion scheme was developed in consultation with local estate agents Marcus Grimes of Henfield and Mishon Mackay, resulting in a projected Gross Development Value (GDV) of £7.7 million, which is at the upper end of their estimates. However, the agents caveat that the sales period for such units is expected to be lengthy.

From a heritage perspective, the conversion would incur significant harm to the asset. Key concerns include the removal of the internal east end staircase, subdivision of the main entrance hall, and the addition of 16 new bathrooms and 12 kitchens. These alterations would necessitate extensive modifications to both the internal and external fabric of the building to accommodate ventilation, soil pipes, hot and cold water services, electrical installations, and fire alarms.

Furthermore, implementing a horizontal split between apartments would pose challenges regarding fire regulations. This would require the installation of lobby staircases and one-hour fire separation between floors, complicating the preservation of historic decorative ceilings on the ground floor and timber floors above.

In planning terms, while creating more units aligns with housing needs, it would also lead to increased traffic generation from the property, raising further considerations for the local infrastructure and community.

3. Conversion of the Heritage Asset into Houses

A proposal to convert Lock House into six separate houses was approved on 21 May 2002 under reference WG/20/02. This scheme involved creating new openings in the north elevation for houses 2, 4, and 5, as well as additional openings in the south elevation for houses 3, 5, and 6. It also included the installation of new staircases in units 1 and 4, long party wall partitions between units 1 and 2 in the former ballroom, subdivision of the music room/small dining room in unit 2, and a standalone kitchen in the linen-fold panelled drawing room. However, no landscaping plan was submitted for the treatment of the grounds. Planning and listed building policies have not changed since this consent to any material

degree which would stop this previous consent forming a precedent for separation as multiple units.

The applicant, mindful of the property's heritage features and following advice from marketing agents, has explored various options for the vertical subdivision of the property so as to preserve the heritage asset as much as possible.

- **Unit 1** is a 2,750 square foot 3 bedroom house. This is the 1970s extension built for the Convent of the Visitation. Parking for this unit is conveniently provided in the existing hardstanding area, accessible from the main driveway. Access into the house is through the existing doorway. It spans three floors, with the principal accommodation being an impressive kitchen and living room that opens through new French doors in the flank elevation onto the garden at ground level. The existing internal wall built in 1970s between what is now the kitchen and larder is removed. This three bedroom unit will have approximately 0.3 acres of private garden space, providing valuable residential amenity. It comprises three bedrooms. The clear understanding of the former use of this wing is the 1970s extensions by the Convent.
- **Unit 2** is a 12,250 square foot 8 bedroom house. This contains ALL the Maple&co interiors from the re-construction of the house in 1940. It also amounts to all the 1910 fabric. It is exclusively accessed through the existing porte-cochère and main entrance and represents the original formal section of the house together with the service elements of the house surviving being the kitchen, pantry and silver safe, without any change or development. It comprises an 8 bedroom house over ground, first and second floors. Parking will be positioned to the left of the porte-cochère, set back from the house to create a new rose bed that softens the landscape and reduces hardstanding. This unit benefits from a private terrace and all the parkland gardens. The formal character of this central wing is retained, and the appreciation of this use remains clearly legible from entering into the impressive hall, leading into the original Drawing Room and Morning Room, as well as the mahogany-panelled Dining Room but maintaining the surviving service elements of the house from the 1940 reconstruction enabling an appreciation of the historic but limited use of the house when the class system existed.
- **Unit 3** is accessed through a new front door in lieu of a window off its own private courtyard/ garden. This entrance hall leads into the converted swimming pool which becomes an enormous sitting room and kitchen directly opening out onto the existing large terrace. The existing 1940s wing which is just basic fabric with no historic features will be partitioned as 2 ground floor bedrooms and as before as 2 bedrooms on 1st floor. The existing smaller room to the south once a sitting room will become a snug sitting room. The central room will become a study. Upstairs in this section the 2 existing bedrooms remain.
- **Unit 6** comprises the existing garage block with a flat above, which was approved under WG/81/03. The workshop area above has been converted into a residential unit and has been used as such for over a decade. It has been assessed for council tax purposes as the Garage Flat since 13 March 2013, and the garages will be incorporated to create a small cottage with 3 bedrooms.

Pre-Application Advice

On 23 January 2024, Senior Planning Officer Tamara Dale and Conservation Officer Sean Rix from Horsham District Council visited Lock House to provide pre-application planning

advice. Following this visit, the Council issued a formal letter on 30 January 2024, and further clarification was provided by Sean Rix during a telephone consultation on 31 January 2024.

The key points from this consultation are as follows:

1. **Residential Conversion Support**

The Council indicated that a residential conversion of Lock House would be supported, provided the scheme is developed in consultation with a Heritage Consultant. This ensures that the different sections of the heritage asset remain clearly legible in terms of both form and function, respecting the property's historical significance.

2. **Enabling Development Guidelines**

Any enabling development would need to be designed as ancillary accommodation, maintaining a visual connection with the historic estate. Specifically, the development should take the form of a coach house near the tennis court, replacing the existing building in that location. Additionally, the current garage and flat would need to be replaced with an estate cottage to complement the overall setting.

3. **Estate Cohesion and Landscaping**

The entire estate must be perceived as a unified whole. Careful landscaping will be required to visually integrate all elements, ensuring that the development does not resemble a modern housing estate but instead retains its historic and cohesive character.

Future of Heritage Asset

The proposed conversion of Lock House to its optimum viable use is designed to cause minimal harm to the heritage asset. Careful planning ensures that the development will not adversely affect the setting of Lock House, preserving its historical and architectural significance while providing a sustainable future for the property.

Water Neutrality

The existing property currently uses 2,147 litres of water per day. Under the proposed scheme, this will be reduced to 939.08 litres per day through the implementation of water efficiency measures. This reduction aligns with a target of limiting water usage to 84.45 litres per person per day, as detailed in the water neutrality statement. As a result, the proposed development achieves water neutrality, ensuring it does not increase the demand for water in the local area.

Flood Risk

Lock House is located in Flood Risk Zone 1, meaning it faces a none to low risk of flooding from all potential sources. However, access to the property is via Lock Lane, a private road owned by the local landowner that serves all properties on the Lock Estate. This road crosses a tributary of the River Adur and floods approximately eight times per year, typically for around 24 hours on each occasion. When flooding occurs, the lane remains accessible to 4x4 vehicles or vans, with water reaching a maximum of 40 cm above the road surface, which

would still allow the passage of emergency vehicles such as fire engines, ambulances, or 4x4 police vehicles.

Residents of the Lock Estate also benefit from an informal arrangement allowing rear access via Grinders Lane, near Bucks Barn nursery, when the river floods. Lock House, having formerly owned the surrounding land, retains legal access rights to Grinders Lane, ensuring continued connectivity even during flooding events.

Traffic Impact Assessment

The proposed development is projected to reduce vehicle movements during peak hours, contributing to a positive traffic impact. Specifically, AM peak car movements will be reduced by 6, PM peak movements by 6, and total daily movements will decrease by 28. This reduction in traffic volume ensures that the development does not introduce any new highway safety concerns and is expected to improve overall traffic conditions in the area.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The development has a minimal impact on the site's natural habitats. With less than 25 square metres of habitat and 5 metres of linear habitat affected, the project falls below the threshold for mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements. As a result, while the environmental impact is minimal, the proposal remains fully compliant with biodiversity regulations and poses no significant risk to local ecosystems.

Planning History

The most relevant planning and listed building applications for Lock House are as follows:

- **WG/20/02:**
Granted on 20 May 2002, this planning and listed building consent allowed for the conversion of the former Convent of the Visitation into 6 houses. This consent has not been implemented. However, since this consent was given, little has changed in Planning law and policy that would mean this application would fail today.
- **WG/26/03 and WG/27/03:**
On 10 June 2003, planning and listed building consent was granted for the conversion of the former convent into a single dwelling. This consent has been implemented and remains the current use of the property.
- **WG/81/03 and WG/82/03:**
Granted on 20 February 2004, this consent allowed for the construction of a triple garage with a workshop above. This has been fully implemented, and the workshop has been used as a flat for over 10 years. It is also recognised for Council Tax purposes as the 'Garage Flat.'
- **DC/06/1537, DC/06/1539, DC/07/0544, and DC/07/0543:**
These consents, granted on 28 September 2006 and amended on 16 May 2007, allowed for the extension of the listed building to include an indoor swimming pool. Both the original and the amended consents have been implemented.

- **DC/17/1968 and DC/17/1973:**
Planning and listed building consent was granted on 10 November 2017 for a pitched roof extension to the east end of the building. However, this consent has not yet been implemented.
- **DC/24/1667 and DC/24/1668** – Planning and listed building consent for the conversion of Lock House to 5 units with the conversion of the existing flat and garage to a further unit was rejected on the basis:
 - Conservation officer objection on the basis dilution of the hierarchy of the building’s insight into the rigid class system because proposed scheme did not allow the ability to move through the building to contrast the experience between polite rooms and service rooms. Further objection on the basis that the conversion to 5 units resulted in an intensification of use which would not be conducive to the nature and character of the building.
 - Planning officer objection on the basis insufficient information has been provided to establish the existing baseline water consumption for the water neutrality statement.

Detailed analysis of the Conservation Officer’s objection to DC/24/1667 and DC 24/1668

The conservation officers objections are highlighted in yellow

Lock House is a grade 2 listed building, the main portion of which was constructed circa 1900 with further additions in the 1930’s and then 1970’s

Per the Design and Access statement with Heritage document submitted with the planning application the drawings from West Sussex Records Office show the significant reconstruction of Lock House in 1940 with Maple & Co as architects. To summarise this document these works included the entrance hall and stair, the west elevation, the link between wings with the new dining room, the ballroom and the loggia. Internally this included the Jacobean style stair, the drawing room alcoves, the morning room panelling and fireplace, the ballroom, the mahogany panelled dining room, the vitrolite art deco bathrooms, the built in wardrobes, the kitchen and the pantry including silver safe, servants bells, art deco style yellow tiling and wooden cupboards.

The house has been marketed by different agents over some years and rented out

In accordance with this Planning Statement, The applicant has actively tried to sell the property for about 14 years. Despite the property being consistently marketed by top agents – including Hamptons, Knight Frank, Savills, Strutt and Parker, HJ Burt, and Homes Estate Agency – no offers have been forthcoming. Full marketing efforts were made, including brochures, professional photography, advertising in *Country Life*, national PR campaigns, and exposure on all major property portals. The only offer received over the years was in August 2020, but the prospective buyer withdrew after learning about the property's supposed haunted status, which was publicly mentioned by Adele during her tenancy.

The property has been extensively market-tested for over a decade, yet it has consistently failed to attract buyers. The feedback from valuers and agents supports the conclusion that Lock House, in its current form, is simply too large, costly, and impractical as a single-family residence. It retains an institutional appearance and requires substantial ongoing maintenance and refurbishment, which limits its appeal in the residential market.

When rented out this has been unsuccessful on all 3 occasions. The first Tenant Adele stayed for 6 months and blighted the property saying it is haunted. The second tenant did not use it as a single dwelling and tried to operate a hotel and fitness retreat at the property and was evicted. The third and final tenant was finally evicted 3 years after moving in having only paid one quarters rent.

This marketing evidence demonstrates NON VIABILITY as a single dwelling.

The property was built and designed as such, and the function and layout of its rooms supports its character as a large mansion house.

The property was built in 1940 as the principal residence of an estate with many cottages and a working farm of 1,000 acres. Apart from times changing post World War 2 which has seen a vast number of Country House subdivided because of changes in the class system, the purpose of the property completely changed in 1971 when the estate was broken up with all 26 cottages sold including the gate houses, the chauffeurs cottage, the stables and the farm buildings, the land sold and the property becoming a convent.

Optimum viable use as single dwelling

13 years of marketing demonstrates a single dwelling is NOT viable.

In accordance with Paragraph 17 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 2019, Historic Environment, the property has been marketed extensively as a single dwelling for 13 years, yet no proceedable offers have been made and no potential purchasers have been found. Furthermore, Paragraph 15 of the PPG 2019 stresses the importance of ensuring that any use is viable. The lack of demand over many years demonstrates that continuing its use as a single-family home is not a sustainable option. In the unlikely event a buyer should eventually come forward, it is likely that upon the end of their tenure, the property would once again face the same issues, leading to another failed venture and possibly harmful alterations to the heritage asset.

The optimum viable use of Lock House may not necessarily align with its original use, as indicated by Paragraph 15 of the PPG 2019. The extensive marketing efforts clearly show that the property's use as a single-family dwelling is no longer viable, and the asset is effectively redundant in this capacity.

By subdividing the property into 5 units an appreciation of the hierarchy of spaces would be reduced because the ability to move through the building would be lost. This would prevent an opportunity to experience the contrast between polite rooms and service spaces

"The proposed subdivision of Lock House will have a physical effect on the floor plan,, and it will change some aspects of circulation and hierarchy. However, it should be noted that the current (2024) users of the building do not arrange their lives around this "upstairs downstairs" principle. They live in the house as a whole. This is because the social system has changed dramatically in the past century, meaning that any hierarchical distinctions are already embedded or fossilised in the fabric to be "read" or not as the observer chooses. To that extent, the hierarchical functions have long since fallen into disuse." Para 4.3 Heritage Impact Assessment.

However, this application addresses the concern of the Conservation officer by including the surviving 1940s kitchen, pantry and silver safe being the only remaining internal elements of the former service areas of the house into the central house 2 which encompasses all the original 1940's Maple & Co reconstructed interiors and is the original 1910 fabric.

In Architectural, Artistic and Historic terms on the basis the Maple & Co interiors represent the heritage value of the asset these elements NOW all remain within House 2 allowing to whatever extent it may still exist for the appreciation of the hierarchy of spaces to remain unchanged.

Consideration needs to be given to the impact on the appreciation of the property and primarily its architectural, artistic and historic significance

This was dealt with comprehensively in 3.11 of the Heritage Impact Assessment as follows:

Architectural interest: The pre-1938 phases all appear to have been constructed by builders rather than architects. While there was a vernacular revival theme running through the early 20th century work, it would not be true to say that Lock House is a particularly notable example of its type in illustrative terms, or that it has any particular architectural associations. The highest point seems to have been reached in the period 1938-1940, when Maple & Co were involved. Their contribution is best seen in the architecture of some of the interiors, but it would be fair to describe the company as "high end quality" and "traditional" rather than particularly innovative or ground breaking in terms of design. The exterior reworking of 1938-1940 is architecturally pedestrian

Historic Interest: Maple & Co is the main historic connection, followed by the relatively brief use as the Convent of the Visitation. The occupants of the building in the 20th century (Ezra, Harvey) were relatively local and obscure

Artistic Interest: The main artistic interest is in the Maple & Co interiors as illustrated in figures 11 to 18 (all to be found within house 2 save the one photo of the original kitchen tiling)

All areas of Artistic, Historic and Architectural interest now remain within House 2.

The associated domestic paraphernalia of five units and the differing desires, and independence of the occupiers would blur an appreciation of the building as a pre war county house

As has been documented Lock House is not a pre-war country house.

The setting all remains vested in House 2 as analysed in the landscape appraisal. House 1 has its own private garden formed by existing screening of mature trees and hedging as well as the screening from the existing octagonal summer house. House 3 has its own private garden formed by the natural screening of the mature existing topiary and hedging with its own existing private terrace at the west end of the building.

All residential paraphernalia is dealt with in the Landscape Assessment and design and access statement. In particular car parking is incorporated on existing hardstanding areas in close proximity to each units front door. Communal bike and bin stores are provided again without impacting on the listed buildings setting. Fences/ Trampolines/ climbing frames/ washing lines all would be prohibited by the long leases under which units would be sold off if sold off. The private terrace areas of each unit maybe used for sitting outside, enjoying a BBQ or dining in exactly the same way as they are now and such use does not negatively impact on the setting or appreciation of the listed country house.

Setting: Lock House is set within a rural area, and it has rather enclosed, secluded surroundings on the north-west side. It is more open on the south-east side, where the land is terraced down the slope. The grounds are landscaped to a degree, but there is no particular evidence of the intervention of any notable 20th century landscape designers. The setting is not unimportant, but it is not a major contributor to the heritage significance of the building. Para 3.11 of Heritage Impact Assessment

It would be considered that a lessening of the number and possibly the retention of part of the building such as the pool as a shared facility would provide a balance between the creation of separate units whilst enabling an appreciation of the building as a cohesive whole

The proposal reduces the number of units from that refused of 5 within the listed building to 3 in this proposal. A significant 40% reduction. No suggestion can be made that this represents over-development of a building approaching 20,000 square feet where the smallest of the 3 units created is 2,750 square feet.

The sharing of the indoor swimming pool which is enormously expensive to run, utilises a great deal of water and energy as a communal facility with the upkeep costs recovered through service charge would make the units undesirable. This would be coupled with noise from users of the pool effecting the immediately adjacent unit. Instead, the indoor pool which is a modern addition is converted to the large open kitchen and sitting room of house 3.

As it stands it would be suggested that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the building

This is disputed by our heritage expert who concludes:

The proposed subdivision of Lock House will break up the redundant social hierarchical circulation of the listed building to an extent, but the principal Maple & Co interiors of c.1938 (i.e. the chief features that contribute to special interest) will be preserved. Minor changes to the floor plan will not reduce the significance of the building. Only very minor external changes are proposed, which will not give rise to harm to heritage significance. The conversion of the garage and the separation of the various new curtilages will not impact on the setting of the listed building in such a way as to harm its significance. In summary, there will be no loss of heritage significance and paragraphs 207 and 208 of the NPPF will not be engaged. The effect will fall off the bottom of the scale in Appendix 1. There will be no conflict with local heritage policy. There will be preservation for the purposes of the council's duty under section 66(1) of the Act. Heritage Impact Assessment paragraph 4.9

However, now with the incorporation of the service elements that remain of the building in the kitchen and pantry within house 2 this achieves complete transparency within the same unit of the social hierarchy with House 2 now including all the fine Maple & Co interiors from Staircase, room panels, fitted wardrobes, fireplaces, art deco bathrooms together with the remaining service elements being the 1940s tiled kitchen and Pantry with Silver safe and servants bells.

Planning Policy Framework

Relevant Planning Policy Documents

In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning applications should be determined in line with the development plan unless other material considerations suggest otherwise. The statutory development plan for the site includes the Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding the South Downs National Park, adopted November 2015).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) plays a key role in decision-making. Paragraph 7 encourages local planning authorities to take a positive and creative approach in decision-making, aiming to approve applications for sustainable development whenever possible.

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF is particularly relevant to this application, stating that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more specific circumstances apply:

- a) There is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of farm businesses, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
- 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 disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
- d) The development would involve the sub-division of an existing residential building; or
- e) The design is of exceptional quality, in that it is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

The Framework does not define the word ‘isolated’, but in *Braintree District Council v SSCLG & Ors* [2017] EWHC 2743 (Admin), the judge found ‘isolated’ should be given its ordinary objective meaning of ‘far away from other places, buildings or people; remote’. That judgement was subsequently upheld at the Court of Appeal, *Braintree DC v SSCLG, Greyread Ltd & Granville Developments Ltd* [2017] EWHC 2743 (Admin); [2018] EWCA Civ 610. The Court of Appeal’s judgment in *Bramshill v SSHCLG* [2021] EWCA Civ 320 however went on to affirm that the essential conclusion in *Braintree* was that in determining whether a particular proposal is for “isolated homes in the countryside”, the decision-maker must consider “whether it would be physically isolated, in the sense of being isolated from a settlement”.

What is a “settlement” and whether the development would be “isolated” from a settlement are both matters of planning judgment for the decision-maker on the facts of the particular case. At paragraphs 33 and 34 of the judgement the Court held that to adopt remoteness from other dwellings, instead of remoteness from a settlement, as the test for “isolated homes in the countryside” would seem inconsistent with the Government’s evident intention in producing the policy in paragraph 79. Stating: It would mean that the policy would not apply to a development of housing in the countryside – large or small – on land next to an individual dwelling remote from the nearest settlement, because although the new homes might be “isolated” from the settlement, they would not be “isolated” from existing development. It would prevent the policy from applying to the development of additional dwellings, one or two at a time, on sites next to other sporadic rural housing, again on the basis that they would not then be “isolated”. It might even prevent the policy from applying to a proposal for two or more dwellings on a single, undeveloped site in the countryside, because none of them would itself be “isolated” from another dwelling, and the development as a whole would therefore not be “isolated”.

If this were so, only the development of a single dwelling, on its own, separate from any other dwelling already built or proposed nearby, would engage the policy. This would be hard to reconcile with the Government’s aim, as policy-maker, to “promote sustainable development in rural areas. It is clear therefore that the *Bramshill* judgement confirms the following in relation to isolated homes in the countryside: that the correct interpretation of “isolated homes in the countryside” requires the decision maker to consider whether the development would be physically isolated, in the sense of being isolated from “a settlement” rather than being isolated from “other dwellings”, and that the question of what is a “settlement” and whether the development would be “isolated” from a settlement, are both matters of planning judgment for the decision-maker on the facts of the particular case.

Taking into account the Bramshill judgement the site at Lock House is clearly an isolated home in the countryside given it is not located in close proximity to an existing settlement. It is clear that the location would result in isolated homes in the countryside and therefore Paragraph 84 of the NPPF should be triggered. The proposal for Lock House meets various criteria in paragraph 84:

- b. The development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset;
- c. The development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting – Much of the space comprising the proposed house 3 is redundant and unused and not heated.
- d. The development would involve the sub-division of an existing residential building

Precedent Case: The appeal decision at Lock Farm, Partridge Green (APP/Z3825/W/18/3203048), a site in close proximity to Lock House, concluded in para 17 that “given the distance to Partridge Green and separation from other residential development, the appeal site is in an isolated position.” The proposal is therefore consistent with Paragraph 84 of the NPPF

Sustainable Development: The planning system’s purpose is to promote sustainable development, as outlined in Paragraph 8 of the NPPF, which covers the economic, social, and environmental roles of development. These roles involve contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, and protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment

Housing Supply: Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is triggered where a local authority cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. Horsham District Council currently falls short, with a supply of only 2.9 years. This makes the need for new development, particularly smaller and medium-sized housing schemes, even more pressing, as recognised in Paragraph 69 of the NPPF.

Horsham District Planning Framework 2015

The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), adopted in September 2015, provides the primary planning policy framework for development in the Horsham District area.

Housing Land Supply and District Performance: The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) 2022/23 evaluated Horsham District’s delivery of housing and performance against its target housing requirement, with figures assessed as of 31 March 2023. The report includes the latest housing trajectory and the five-year housing land supply calculation. Following updates to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2023, the housing target set by the government for the district increased to 911 dwellings per annum. However, Horsham District Council can only demonstrate 59% of its required five-year housing land supply, equating to just 2.9 years, significantly below the government target. For the 2022/23 monitoring year, only 396 net dwellings were completed, which falls substantially short of the 911 dwellings per annum target set by the government. This shortfall emphasises the pressing need for new housing development to address the district’s deficit in housing provision, especially smaller-scale, high-quality housing that contributes to the overall supply. The proposed development at Lock House, which includes heritage-sensitive residential units, will contribute positively to the district’s housing needs.

Policy 34: In this policy, the Council acknowledges that Heritage Assets are an irreplaceable resource, and it commits to sustaining and enhancing the historic environment through positive management of development affecting such assets. Lock House, as a designated heritage asset, has been proven through an extensive period of marketing to be functionally redundant in its current use as a single dwelling. To ensure its preservation, it must be adapted for a sustainable purpose. Therefore, the Council's proactive management of the proposed development is essential to safeguard the future of this heritage asset. Policy 34 further stipulates that any application will be required to:

1. Make reference to the significance of the Asset. The significance is explained in this planning statement and the Heritage Impact Assessment together with Historic England's listing for the asset and a review of all historical records including at the West Sussex Records Office.
2. Reflect the current best practice guidance produced by Historic England. This is done in this statement and the Heritage report.
3. Reinforce the special character of the districts historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form and design and the use of traditional materials and techniques. The design has evolved as explained in the Heritage Impact Assessment to ensure this objective is met.
4. Preserve, and ensure clear legibility of locally distinctive vernacular forms and their settings, features, fabric and materials. The application is one that is necessary to see the preservation of the heritage asset ensuring long term preservation.
5. Secure the viable and sustainable future of heritage assets through continued preservation by uses that are consistent with the significance of the heritage asset. This application is one based upon the optimum viable use for the heritage asset remaining in residential use.
6. Retain and improve the setting of heritage assets. The setting of the heritage asset is not harmed by the proposed development as analysed in the heritage impact assessment and landscape impact assessment. The achievement of a viable future for the heritage asset without segmentation of its parkland setting will enable the long-term preservation and improvement of the setting.

Lock House, a heritage asset, has been extensively marketed, and evidence has demonstrated that its current use as a single dwelling is no longer viable. Therefore, in line with Policy 34, the conversion of Lock House to a sustainable and appropriate residential use will safeguard the future of the asset, ensuring its preservation for generations to come. The proposed scheme for Lock House fully adheres to the principles outlined in Policy 34, aiming to safeguard the building's historical significance while providing a viable and sustainable use that enhances its value within the district. By converting the property to 3 residential units, the development offers an optimal solution that secures the ongoing preservation of Lock House, contributing to both the housing supply and the heritage landscape of the district.

Conclusion

The proposed conversion of Lock House from a single residential unit into 3 distinct homes represents the culmination of over 13 years of market testing, which has conclusively demonstrated the lack of demand for the property in its current form. Through close consultation with planning officers, conservation officers, architects, heritage consultants,

cost consultants, and estate agents, a carefully considered scheme has evolved to ensure the preservation of the property's heritage value while securing its future.

This development respects the architectural integrity and historical significance of Lock House, ensuring that each of its distinctive sections remain recognisable and comprehensible, preserving the way the house was once experienced and enjoyed within house 2. The careful subdivision into 3 units maintains the legibility of these spaces, avoiding any confusion of their original functions.

In addition to safeguarding the heritage asset, this proposal aligns with national and local planning policy, addressing the urgent housing needs of Horsham District by contributing to the under-delivered housing supply. Furthermore, the scheme ensures that the development is sustainable, water-neutral, and flood-resilient, with a reduced traffic impact and no significant biodiversity loss.

In conclusion, this proposal provides the optimum viable use of Lock House, preserving its historical significance while delivering much-needed housing. It offers a balanced, sensitive, and sustainable solution that aligns with both heritage protection and housing policies, ensuring the long-term preservation and vitality of this important historical asset.