

Woodend  
Water lane  
Storrington  
West Sussex

Planning, Design and Access Statement

*Chartered Town Planner*

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## Proposal

The proposal is to convert the existing detached dwelling into a pair of semi-detached dwellings.

## Planning Policy

### National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 (Framework)

The overall planning policies of relevance to this application have been set out in the Framework. The Framework seeks to achieve sustainable development, which has three objectives, namely:

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

The Core principles of the Framework are to adopt a pro-active approach and local authorities should approach applications in a positive and creative way. Decision-makers at all levels should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible and should determine applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise. (Sections 2 and 4).

To support the Governments objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed. Small sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built out quickly. Accordingly, at least 10% of an authorities housing requirement should be met on small sites. Windfall sites should be supported and all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 78 states that local authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years worth of Housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where strategic policies are more than 5 years old. Such figures should include appropriate buffers. Paragraph 11 states:

“For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
  - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
  - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination”.

The new footnote 9 identifies the ‘key policies’ referred to in paragraph 11 d(ii). This includes:

- Chapter 5 (Delivering a sufficient supply of homes):
  - o paragraph 66 (supply of affordable homes) and
  - o paragraph 84 (isolated homes);”

Regarding rural housing paragraph 84 of the Framework allows for the provision of isolated homes in the countryside where:

d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building.

The Framework places increased emphasis on making effective use of land, with section 11 of the Framework being dedicated to this. It states that planning policies and decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.

Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed land.

Concerning design, section 12 of the Framework states that new development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area; establish a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site and reflect the identity of local surroundings, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. Planning decisions should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative.

In relation to transport the Framework states that transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development and in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. The Government realises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.

### **National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)**

Regarding design the PPG refers to paragraph 130 of the Framework and the newly published National Design Guide. The PPG also advocates making effective use of land.

### **National Design Guide 2019**

The NDG encourages looking at the site's context in relation to its surroundings and making efficient use of land.

### **Government New Homes bonus (NHB)**

This bonus secures additional funding for local authorities when granting planning permission for new housing. The additional funds help keep Council tax rates down and help fund local services and facilities for local people. Section 143 of the Localism Act and S.70 of the Town and Country Planning Act state that certain financial contributions, such as NHB are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

### **Horsham District Planning Framework 2011 – 2031**

Policy 3 of the HDPF identifies Storrington as one of the most sustainable settlements in the District.

Policy 15 advises that between 2011 and 2031 a minimum of 16,000 homes should be provided, resulting in an annual target of 800 dwellings per year. The provision of these homes will include 750 windfall sites.

Policy 24 seeks to ensure that new development does not add materially to pollutants. Policies 25 and 26 collectively seek to protect and conserve the landscape character of the countryside, whilst

facilitating sustainable development in rural areas. New development should not materially increase activity levels within the countryside.

Policies 32 and 33 seek to ensure that new development is designed to respect its setting, whilst making efficient use of land.

Notwithstanding the support provided in the Framework there are **no** relevant Development plan policies that deal with the conversion of rural dwellings onto two dwellings.

### **Horsham District Local Plan (Regulation 19) Submission**

Whilst this Plan is at an advanced stage, due to the revised plan making system it is unclear whether it would be adopted before the assumed date of the elections for the proposed Unitary authority.

Nonetheless, it remains a policy consideration which attracts weight due to the stage it has reached.

As with the adopted Local Plan does not include any policies or advice relating the sub-division of existing rural dwellings.

Page 134, Table 9 addresses the needs for different home sizes. In relation to open market housing the identified need is:

1 Bedroom	5%
2 bedrooms	30%
3 bedrooms	40%
4 bedrooms	25%

Chapter 5 deals with Climate Change and encourages energy efficiency, water neutrality, etc.

Chapter 6 seeks to protect the natural environment and Chapter 7 deals with design. Chapter 8 encourages sustainable transport.

### **Storrington, Sullington & Washington Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2031.**

The Neighbourhood Plan's housing objectives include:

- To provide a mixture of housing types and in particular smaller private dwellings that are affordable for younger people or for those wishing to downsize.
- To meet these needs mainly through smaller developments within the Built-Up Area other than where essential for rural workers.

To help meet the Districts housing need identified in HDPF Policy 15 to provide at least 1500 homes through neighbourhood plans in Horsham District as a whole.

At paragraph 2.6 the NP identifies that Storrington has a disproportionately high number of detached houses and bungalows and a disproportionately low proportion of semi-detached houses, when compared to the District as a whole. The figures are:

- 1,461 detached houses/bungalows (45% compared to 39% across the District).
- 675 Semi-detached houses/bungalows (21% compared to 27% across the District).

### **Horsham Annual Monitoring Report 2021 – 2022**

Chapter 3 of this document deals with housing. It advises that at 1 April 2022 the Council had a three year supply of deliverable housing sites. During the previous two years the under- supply delivered amounted to in excess of 400 homes.

In 2022/2023 Horsham delivered 98% of its housing target. In 2023/2024 this fell to 62%.

Horsham recently confirmed that it currently cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. Also, the current Local Plan is out of date.

### **Horsham DC – Facilitating Appropriate Development October 2022**

This document has been proposed as an interim measure to boost the supply of new homes. It does not address rural conversion schemes.

### **Water Neutrality**

Natural England has advised the Sussex North Water Supply Zone includes abstraction which cannot, with certainty, conclude no adverse effect on the integrity on Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, Horsham District Council has advised that no new housing will be approved until a mitigation strategy is introduced, unless the scheme can demonstrate water neutrality. Horsham DC has stated that this means that any new development should not increase the rate of water abstraction from the District’s water supply site at Hardham above existing levels. In this instance a mitigation scheme demonstrates that the proposal will be water neutral.

### **Planning Merits**

#### **Location and Background**

#### **Acceptability of the Proposal in terms of Planning Policy**

The Framework allows for isolated new homes in the countryside where they involve the sub-division of a rural dwelling. The Framework also advocates making full and effective use of all developed sites.

The Local Plan is out of date and so paragraph 11 d) of the Framework applies. This means that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

Footnote 9 confirms that the key policies include:

Chapter 5 (Delivering a sufficient supply of homes):

o paragraph 84 (isolated homes). This includes:

“d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building.”

The HDPF contains no policies and is silent regarding the sub-division of rural dwellings into two dwellings.

The application site is not located in a protected area. It is located on the outskirts of Storrington, within a cluster of 13 dwellings, which includes an infill dwelling built several years ago. There are a further 9 dwellings on the opposite side of Water Lane and planning permission has been granted

for a further 5 dwellings on a former landfill site that had been restored as heathland. 150 metres to the north of the application site permission was recently granted for the sub-division of Sandgate House into two separate dwellings. It comprises a 7 bedroom dwelling and permission was granted for its sub-division into one 3 bedroom and one 4 bedroom dwelling.

In approving the application for the sub-division of Sandgate House the officer report stated:

*“The existing dwelling comprises a substantial 6 / 7-bedroom dwelling with the proposal seeking a conversion to 1x3-bed and 1x4-bed dwelling. It is considered that this subdivision would be supported by the thrust of paragraph 84, (of the Framework), with the level of development such that it would not be expected to result in a significant increase in the level of activity in this countryside location. It is therefore considered that the principle of the development is acceptable subject to other material considerations.”*

Woodend similarly has 7 bedrooms and the proposal is for two 3 bedroom dwellings.

The Framework actively encourages higher densities and making better use of existing developed land and buildings. It seeks to maximise the development potential of sites. (Paragraphs 130 & 135).

For these reasons, in principle the proposal is acceptable.

### Physical Setting

The enclave of dwellings within which the Woodend is located comprises a diverse mix of individually designed, detached and semi-detached bungalows, chalet and two storey dwellings, which occupy varied sized plots. The application site is located to the rear of the frontage dwellings, within a row of four single and two storey dwellings. These dwellings are served by a private drive. The application site abuts the gardens of the dwellings to the west and north and to the rear of the application site is a pony paddock and stables. To the south of the application site is Cemex sand works.

### Accessibility

Water Lane is one of the main routes into and through Storrington and there is a bus stop 70 metres from the application drive. The Warren woodland and Heathland sits on the opposite side of the rear and Sandgate Park entrance is 150 metres to the north. Water Lane Trading Estate and Steyning school are located a short distance to the north and the centre of Storrington is just 1.4 kilometres by road or less through The Warren.

The site is also conveniently located in relation to Washington Road (A283), the South Downs, West Chiltington, etc.

The reality is that it is more accessible to local services and facilities than many parts of the main built up area of Storrington.

### Woodend

Woodend comprises a part single and part two storey dwelling which has been extended over the years. It currently comprises:

#### Ground Floor

Hall, 5 bedrooms, 2 living rooms, 2 kitchens, 2 dining areas, 3 bathrooms, 1 W.C, 1 office and 1 utility room.

#### *First Floor*

Lounge, 2 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms.

Overall, it comprises 2 kitchens, 3 lounges, 7 bedrooms, 5 bath/shower rooms, 1 WC, 1 office, 1 utility room

Externally there is garaging and parking for at least 8 cars and generous sized gardens.

### **The Proposal**

With the proposal the building will comprise the following:

#### Dwelling A

##### *Ground floor*

Two bedrooms  
1 bathroom  
1 Shower room  
1 Open plan Kitchen /living area.  
1 Home office  
1 Utility Room

##### *First Floor*

1 Lounge  
1 bedroom  
1 shower room

#### Dwelling B

##### *Ground floor*

2 bedrooms (or 1 office and 1 bedroom)  
Kitchen diner  
Lounge  
2 bathrooms/shower rooms.

##### *First Floor*

1 bedroom  
1 shower room

### **Visual impact**

The proposal includes **No** extensions or new buildings. The only external alteration is the removal of one half of a pair of glazed doors on the rear elevation.

Internally the dwelling will be split vertically, with minimal work involved. It includes a dividing fire and sound-proofed wall between the two dwellings and the formation of a second staircase within

the living area of dwelling B. Along with the blocking up of one wide doorway and the removal of one internal wall to remove an unnecessary hallway.

Externally, the front and rear gardens will be split in line with the dwelling split. The gardens will be separated from each other by new hedging and fence panels immediately alongside the dwellings.

The new hedging will comprise a mixture of Hawthorn, Escalonia and Portugese Laural.

Overall, the only obvious visual impact will be the new hedging, which will simply blend in with the existing hedging around the property.

### Activity Levels

Currently the dwelling has 7 double bedrooms, three lounges and 2 kitchens. Whilst it has only ever been occupied as a single dwelling, it readily can be used as a 6 bedroom single dwelling and independent one bedroom annex.

With the proposal Dwelling A would have 3 bedrooms and Dwelling B would have 2/3 bedrooms. As such the capacity of the dwellings would be slightly lower than the existing arrangement.

The likely difference in activity levels would be negligible.

### Dwelling sizes

There is an identified need for smaller homes in the District and in Storrington. So many of the dwellings in Storrington have 4 or more bedrooms and are too large and expensive. The proposal will result in the provision of two smaller dwellings.

The proposal will, in a very small way, help address the imbalance between detached and semi-detached dwellings in Storrington and the particular need for 3 bedroom dwellings.

### Transport and Parking

Each of the proposed dwellings will have space for the on-site parking of at least 3 cars. This is clear from the extract from the proposed block Plan below.

West Sussex Highways have been consulted and they have stated:

*“The indicative plans demonstrate the existing access on Water Lane will be utilised, and no changes are proposed to this existing vehicular access arrangement. From inspection of WSCC mapping, there are no apparent visibility concerns with the existing point of access on Water Lane. In addition, the subdivision of a single dwelling into two dwellings is not anticipated to significantly intensify the use of the existing access point.*

*I have inspected collision data provided to WSCC by Sussex Police from a period of the last five years, which reveals no recorded injury accidents attributed to the use of the existing access within the vicinity of the site. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest the existing access has been operating unsafely or that the proposals would exacerbate an existing safety concern.*

*Regarding parking, the existing parking areas will be retained, with a new double-bay garage proposed. From inspection of the plans, there appears to be space for on-site turning to be achievable. Under WSCC Parking Standards, the LHA would expect three car parking spaces to be provided for each of the dwellings, totalling six for the site. From inspection of the plans, there*

*appears to be space within the site for this to be accommodated, although a demonstration of the proposed car parking provision would be requested at full planning stage.”*

### **Ecology**

The proposal does not involve the removal of any planting and so falls outside the scope of BNG. Notwithstanding this additional hedging is proposed, along with new bird boxes. This is shown on the submitted block plan.

### **Drainage**

Currently Woodend is served by an old septic tank, which fills up with rainwater in wet conditions. This will be replaced with a treatment Plant that will serve both dwellings.

The property is already served by a number of soakaways which will all be retained. In addition, it is proposed to install water butts to collect rain water for recycling within the gardens.

### **High Fibre Braodband**

Wooden is already linked up to High Fibre Broadband.

### **Energy conservation**

Both of the properties will be served by air source heat pumps rather than oil or gas.

An electric car charger will be installed on the site .

### **Building works**

- The building works associated with the conversion will be carried out by local builders.
- The building materials will be sourced locally and where possible will involve recycled materials. All timber would be responsibly sourced from local suppliers.

### **Contamination**

N/A. The existing building is modern and other than the installation of services and a treatment Plant no excavations are proposed.

### **Flood Risk Assessment**

The application site is not located in an area that is at risk of flooding and the proposal will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

### **Climate change**

The proposal helps address climate change in the following ways:

- Makes use of an existing developed site, thus helping to reduce the loss of greenfield land.

- Makes use of an existing building, thus reducing the need for building materials.
- Building materials, including recycled materials will be locally sourced.
- The building works will be undertaken by local people.
- The resultant dwellings will be powered by air source heat pumps. It will not have any gas/oil heating.
- The proposal is water neutral.
- The proposed bird boxes and hedging will benefit and help retain birds in the locality.

All of the above will benefit local ecosystems, improve biodiversity and help address climate change. The proposal is for a sustainable development with ecosystem benefits.

### **Consultations**

- West Sussex County Council Highways department have been consulted and have raised no concerns. Their comments will be included with the application documents.
- The owners of the next door dwelling, Brablewood have been consulted and provided with a copy of the proposed drawings. These neighbours own the access lane and a Notice No.1 has been served on them

### **Sustainability Conclusion**

As a result of the above factors the proposal complies with the objectives of sustainable development and addresses climate change. In particular:

#### **Economic**

- The proposal will provide on and off-site employment and income during the conversion stage.
- The occupiers of the resultant dwellings will support the local economy in the following ways:  
New Homes bonus  
Domestic Rates  
Supporting local services and facilities

#### **Social**

- Making a valuable contribution to the supply of homes in the district.
- The occupiers will support local community groups and services.
- Providing two small family homes instead of one large home.

#### **Environmental**

- The provision of a home in an accessible rural location
- Making full use of an existing underused building
- Using locally sourced materials and labour.
- Use of a sustainable energy supply.
- Rainwater harvesting.
- Using porous materials for hard surfaces.
- Provision of bird boxes and hedges.

## Conclusion

Overall, this proposal is sensitively designed and brings about material economic, social and environmental benefits. It readily complies with the relevant sections and policies set out in the Framework and the Development Plan.

## Other matter

In accordance with the Framework and the HDC FAD, the HDPF is out of date and Horsham District cannot currently demonstrate a deliverable supply of housing sites to meet its targets. Accordingly, in relation to the proposal, the presumption in favor of development, as set out in paragraph 11d) of the Framework is invoked and the proposal should be approved unless:

- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
- i the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance<sup>7</sup> provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
  - ii any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

The Policies in the Framework support sustainable forms of development. This includes addressing housing needs; climate change; reducing greenhouse gases; making effective use of existing buildings; increasing biodiversity; designing buildings and landscaping to a high standard; approving small housing sites; providing self-build home plots; building outside flood plains; and the sub-division of rural dwellings.

In this instance the proposal is sustainable. It delivers on the economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development and meets with the policies, aims and objectives set out in chapters 2, 5, 9, 11, 12, 14 and 15 of the Framework.

It meets with the current climate change aspirations and commitments of Horsham District Council. In particular:

- It will be heated by solar panels and air source heat pumps.
- Will be water neutral.
- Will make use of an existing building and associated parking area.
- Will use locally sourced materials.
- Will deliver material biodiversity gains.
- Will include landscape improvements.

## Overall Conclusion

There can be no doubt that any adverse impacts resulting from the scheme would totally fail to significantly outweigh the benefits resulting from the scheme, when assessed against the policies in the framework when taken as a whole.

