



## Planning Statement

Change of use of part of residential dwelling to  
accupuncture clinic

**New April Cottage, Furzeview, Slinfold**

Prepared by

**WPS Planning**

Planning Statement  
New April Cottage



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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies a full planning application for the change of use of part of the residential curtilage and the conversion of part of New April Cottage, Furzeview, Slinfold to create a small, self-contained acupuncture treatment studio operated by the applicant.
- 1.2 The proposal is intentionally modest in scale and is designed to function as a low-impact, appointment-only healthcare service that remains clearly ancillary to, and compatible with, the continued primary residential use of the dwelling. The application seeks to secure a clear planning framework for the use, ensuring that the operation remains appropriate for its residential setting, protects neighbouring amenity, avoids highway impacts, and sits comfortably within the policy approach that supports sustainable small businesses and home working in rural areas.
- 1.3 The principal matters for consideration are the acceptability of the use in principle, the likely effects on residential amenity, the suitability of access/parking and the local highway network, and the effect of the physical alterations on the character and appearance of the dwelling and its surroundings.

## **2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA**

- 2.1 The application site comprises a detached residential dwelling, located within the settlement pattern and rural context associated with Slinfold. The site includes a domestic garage within the residential curtilage. The dwelling is served by a generous private driveway, providing a level of on-site parking that is typical of larger rural residential plots and materially in excess of what would usually be available in tighter urban locations.
- 2.2 The surrounding area is characterised by residential properties set within a village and rural-edge context. There is an established expectation that day-to-day residential activity will occur, including domestic comings and goings, deliveries, visitors, and household-related vehicle movements. The proposal

sits within this baseline context and, critically, is designed so that any additional activity arising from the clinic remains modest, controlled, and dispersed.

### **3.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1 The site has the following planning history:

- DC/21/1087 - Erection of a detached garden outbuilding (Lawful Development Certificate - Proposed) - Application Permitted
- DC/21/1868 - Installation of 2no new rooflights to the rear (Lawful Development Certificate - Proposed) - Application Permitted

### **4.0 THE PROPOSAL**

4.1 The proposal comprises the conversion of bedroom 2 within the existing dwelling into a dedicated acupuncture treatment studio that is self-contained and physically and functionally separate from the main living accommodation. The studio will provide a professional yet discreet treatment environment while maintaining the overall residential character and primary use of the property.

4.2 The conversion works are confined to the existing building footprint, meaning the proposal represents an efficient re-use of existing built form rather than outward expansion into the plot. The operational model is central to the planning case, because it provides a clear mechanism to ensure the use remains low impact and compatible with the surrounding residential context.

4.3 The studio will be arranged as a calm, appointment-only treatment space, with internal provision for a private WC to serve clients and support appropriate operational requirements. The layout is designed so that client activity is contained within the bedroom conversion area and does not spill into the dwelling's private domestic spaces, supporting privacy for the household and clear functional separation between the residential and clinic elements.

- 4.4 A dedicated client entrance is proposed through the replacement of the existing front window with French doors. This alteration is modest in scale and domestic in appearance, and it serves a practical purpose by providing a clear and direct means of access to the studio without requiring clients to enter via the main dwelling. This is an important design and amenity consideration because it reduces the potential for confusion, limits interaction with private residential areas, and provides an orderly arrival/departure arrangement.

#### **Proposed Maximum Operating Hours**

- 4.5 The applicant has set out a maximum operating window that is intentionally overstated to provide flexibility and ensure that any future adjustments remain within approved limits. The proposed maximum hours are Monday to Friday 07:00–20:30 and Saturday 09:00–13:00. There would be no operation on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- 4.6 These hours are not intended to indicate continuous daily use. The applicant anticipates that actual working patterns will be significantly shorter and will vary, potentially involving earlier starts with earlier finishes, occasional split shifts, and some later starts that extend into the early evening. The stated maximum window is offered transparently as a “worst-case” envelope within which the Council can assess potential effects.

#### **Client Flow and Appointment Structure**

- 4.7 Appointments will be scheduled for 45 minutes to one hour, with a minimum 15-minute gap between clients to allow for preparation, cleaning, and transition. This appointment structure is a key mitigation measure as it prevents overlap, avoids waiting-room type congregation, and ensures calm, spaced-out movements.
- 4.8 Even if the maximum operating window were utilised, the maximum number of clients per day would be 10. This upper limit indicates a low-intensity use. In practical terms, it means vehicle movements would be modest, spread through

the day, and comparable in scale to normal domestic visitor activity, particularly for a rural dwelling with ample driveway capacity.

### **Parking and Access**

- 4.9 The property benefits from a large private driveway capable of accommodating approximately five to six vehicles comfortably. This materially reduces any potential reliance on on-street parking and provides a robust basis to conclude that all client parking can be accommodated within the site. Given the appointment-only nature of the use, the absence of client overlap, and the daily cap on client numbers, vehicle movements will be limited and staggered rather than concentrated.

## **5.0 PLANNING POLICY**

### **National Planning Policy**

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that this should run through both plan-making and decision-taking. In terms of the determination of planning applications this should mean the approval of developments that accord with the development plan without delay, and that where the development plan is silent or relevant policies are out of date, that permission be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or policies of the NPPF indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 Sustainable development is seen within the NPPF as having three roles, namely an economic, social and environmental role which should be a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking.
- 5.3 The following sections within the NPPF are important factors in the assessment of the proposal:
- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
  - Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy

- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 11 – Making effective use of land
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places

### **Local Plan**

5.4 In terms of the local planning policy context for the Application Site, the adopted Development Plan for the Horsham District is composed of the following relevant documents:

- Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) – Adopted November 2015.
  - Policy 1 - Sustainable Development
  - Policy 10 – Rural Economic Development
  - Policy 32 – The Quality of New Development
  - Policy 33 – Development Principles
  - Policy 40 – Sustainable Transport
  - Policy 41 - Parking
- Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19)
  - Policy 1 - Sustainable Development
  - Policy 19 - Development Quality
  - Policy 20 – Development Principle
  - Policy 24 – Sustainable Transport
  - Policy 25 - Parking

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- Policy 31 – Rural Economic Development
- Slinfold Neighbourhood Plan (2014-2031)
  - Policy 5 – Development Principles
  - Policy 12 – Economy and Enterprise

## 6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

### Principle of Development and Rural/Home Enterprise

- 6.1 The proposal is, in substance, a small-scale home-based healthcare service within part of existing dwelling. It is not the introduction of a high-intensity commercial use and it does not involve new standalone commercial floorspace beyond what already exists within the residential curtilage. The key test is therefore whether the use, by virtue of its scale and intensity, would remain compatible with a residential environment and whether it aligns with the policy support for sustainable rural enterprise and home working.
- 6.2 HDPF Policy 10 supports rural economic development where it is appropriately located, consistent with countryside character, and capable of being accommodated without harm. The proposal responds directly to these principles because it re-uses an existing building, retains the overall residential character of the site, and provides a low-impact service that can be accommodated on the plot without the operational characteristics typically associated with wider commercial premises.
- 6.3 The Slinfold Neighbourhood Plan supports small-scale enterprise and home working where impacts are controlled, particularly where activity can be contained within existing buildings and where local roads and residential amenity are respected. The proposal aligns strongly with this approach. The clinic is contained within the existing dwelling, the client journey is carefully managed through appointment-only booking, and the operational intensity is capped and structured to avoid peak-time surges or congregation.
- 6.4 In national terms, the NPPF supports a prosperous rural economy and encourages the sustainable growth of rural businesses, including through the re-use and adaptation of existing buildings. It also recognises that some rural services will not be located in the most accessible locations in transport terms, and that the acceptability of such development turns on whether it is sensitively located and whether highway impacts are acceptable. The proposal satisfies

this test because traffic generation is modest, movements are staggered, and on-site parking provision is substantial.

- 6.5 Taken together, the Development Plan and national policy provide a clear policy basis for supporting low-impact home-working proposals of this kind where they are controlled and compatible with their surroundings. This is precisely what is proposed.

### **Scale, Intensity and the “Residential Character” Test**

- 6.6 A critical planning judgement for home-based businesses is whether the proposal would materially change the character of the dwelling as a private residence or the character of the area as a residential environment. The proposal is designed to ensure that the answer is no.
- 6.7 The maximum operating window is intentionally broad to give flexibility, but the operational model ensures that activity remains low intensity. Appointments of 45–60 minutes with at least 15 minutes between clients inherently limit throughput and prevent overlap. A maximum of 10 clients per day is a clear indicator of the modest nature of the use. In practice, this level of activity is comparable to normal domestic patterns of visitors, particularly at a larger rural dwelling where a range of day-to-day trips and visits are common.
- 6.8 The design of the internal layout, including the self-contained arrangement and dedicated WC, further reduces the likelihood of the clinic affecting the domestic use of the house or creating an outward perception of commercial intensification. Clients will arrive, park, attend a private treatment, and leave, with no associated retail, no external storage, and no group activities. The proposal therefore sits comfortably within the spectrum of home-working uses that the planning system is generally able to support, particularly where appropriate parking exists and where neighbouring amenity is protected.

### **Residential Amenity**

- 6.9 HDPF Policy 33 requires development to safeguard residential amenity, including preventing unacceptable impacts from noise, disturbance, activity levels, and general intensification. The proposal has been structured to satisfy this policy requirement.
- 6.10 Acupuncture is inherently a quiet activity. There is no expectation of loud machinery, amplified sound, or externally audible processes. The appointment-only approach prevents multiple arrivals at once and ensures the site does not operate like a “drop-in” clinic. The gaps between appointments ensure there is time for calm transitions, preparation and cleaning, which also reduces the likelihood of activity spilling outside.
- 6.11 The stated maximum hours provide an upper envelope, but they do not imply continuous operation. In considering amenity, the relevant point is whether the use could reasonably be expected to generate unacceptable disturbance, and the operational parameters indicate it would not. The most sensitive early morning and evening periods are, in any event, managed by the low throughput and by the absence of client overlap, meaning arrivals and departures remain occasional rather than frequent.
- 6.12 Privacy considerations are also addressed. The studio is self-contained and accessed independently through the proposed French doors, which reduces the chance of clients approaching private residential entrances or windows. The separation between clinic and living areas helps protect the household’s privacy and ensures a professional and orderly use arrangement.
- 6.13 On this basis, the proposal is compliant with HDPF Policy 33 and the NPPF objective of creating places that maintain a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

### **Highways and Parking**

- 6.14 HDPF Policy 41 requires development to provide adequate parking and to avoid highway danger or unacceptable highway impact. The proposal performs strongly against this policy test.
- 6.15 The site has a large driveway that can accommodate approximately five to six vehicles. This provides a robust and practical solution that enables client parking to take place wholly within the curtilage. The appointment structure prevents overlap and limits the likelihood of more than one client being present at any given time, which materially reduces parking demand at peak moments. The maximum of 10 clients per day, spread through the day, further indicates a low level of vehicle movements.
- 6.16 From a highway perspective, the key question is whether the additional vehicle movements would be material and harmful. With staggered appointments, low daily throughput and on-site parking, the additional movements would be limited, dispersed and unlikely to give rise to congestion, obstruction or highway safety issues. This is consistent with the NPPF approach that focuses on whether impacts would be unacceptable in highway terms. The proposal is also consistent with HDPF Policy 10's expectation that rural enterprise proposals demonstrate that their parking and access needs can be accommodated without harm.
- 6.17 Accordingly, the proposal accords with HDPF Policy 41 and national policy.

### **Design, Character and Appearance**

- 6.18 HDPF Policy 32 requires high quality design that responds to local character and context. Policy 33 similarly expects development to be sympathetic to its setting. The physical works associated with the proposal are modest and domestic in nature.
- 6.19 The conversion takes place within an existing bedroom, with no material expansion of built form. The primary external change is the replacement of an

existing window with French doors to provide a dedicated entrance. This is a common residential design feature and will read as a domestic alteration rather than a commercial frontage. It also provides a functional benefit that supports the planning case, as it reduces any need for clients to access the main dwelling and helps keep activity contained and orderly.

- 6.20 Because the proposal does not introduce new prominent structures and because the alterations are domestic in appearance, it will preserve the residential character of the dwelling and the wider area. It therefore complies with HDPF Policies 32 and 33 and with the NPPF's design objectives.

### **Overall Planning Balance**

- 6.21 When considered in the round, the proposal delivers modest local economic and social benefits by enabling a small healthcare service that can meet local needs in a rural area, without requiring a separate commercial unit or travel to larger centres. It also represents an efficient use of existing built form, aligning with the NPPF's emphasis on making effective use of land and supporting sustainable patterns of development.
- 6.22 Crucially, the proposal has been designed to ensure that the operational characteristics remain compatible with the residential setting. The low-intensity appointment model, the lack of overlap, the daily cap on clients, the self-contained layout and the generous on-site parking collectively demonstrate that the use would not cause unacceptable impacts. The proposal therefore achieves policy compliance across the relevant Development Plan and national policy considerations.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The conversion of part of existing dwelling of New April Cottage to form a small acupuncture treatment studio, alongside the change of use to enable an appointment-only home-based clinic, is an appropriate and policy-compliant form of development within Horsham District.
- 7.2 The principle of the proposal is supported by the Development Plan and national policy that seeks to enable sustainable small businesses and home working, particularly in rural areas where local services and enterprise may reasonably operate from residential properties, provided impacts are controlled. The proposal responds positively to HDPF Policy 10 by enabling a modest rural enterprise that is appropriately scaled, contained within an existing building, and capable of being accommodated without harm to countryside or settlement character.
- 7.3 The detailed operational information demonstrates that the use would remain low impact and compatible with the residential environment. Appointments of 45–60 minutes with at least 15 minutes between clients prevent overlap and ensure a calm, managed flow. The maximum of 10 clients per day provides a clear upper limit on intensity and confirms that activity would be modest and dispersed rather than concentrated. The stated maximum operating window has been provided transparently as a worst-case envelope, but the structure and nature of the use indicate that day-to-day operation will be materially less intensive than the maximum parameters.
- 7.4 Residential amenity is protected in accordance with HDPF Policy 33. The use is quiet by nature, does not involve noisy equipment or group activity, and is designed to avoid waiting or congregation. The self-contained clinic layout with dedicated entrance and WC provides clear separation from the main dwelling, supporting privacy for the household and minimising the potential for disturbance to neighbours.

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- 7.5 Highway and parking considerations are addressed robustly in accordance with HDPF Policy 41. The site's generous driveway, capable of accommodating around five to six vehicles, ensures that client parking can be contained within the site. With staggered appointments and no client overlap, the proposal would not generate harmful parking pressure or highway safety concerns. The resulting vehicle movements would be limited and spread throughout the day, broadly comparable with typical residential visitor patterns for a property of this type and location.
- 7.6 The physical alterations are modest and domestic in character, consistent with HDPF Policies 32 and 33. The conversion makes efficient use of existing built form and the installation of French doors represents a typical residential feature that supports a discreet and orderly access arrangement. There is no material harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling or its surroundings.
- 7.7 For these reasons, the proposal represents a sustainable, low-impact home-based healthcare use that aligns with the Development Plan and national policy objectives. The change of use can be supported without giving rise to unacceptable impacts, and planning permission should therefore be granted.