

SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

FOR:

**PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING PUBLIC HOUSE
INTO THREE RESIDENTIAL UNITS**

AT

**THE GREEN MAN, PARTRIDGE GREEN
RH13 8JT**



JANUARY 2025

(Revision B – April 2025)



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning statement supports a planning application for the change of use of The Green Man public house into 3 small residential dwellings, as it can no longer operate as a viable business due to challenging market conditions.
- 1.2 The owner has actively tried to seek new owners for the current business for many years and has also explored other types of commercial activities that could operate on the site, but has come to the conclusion that residential use is the only sensible and viable option for the site.
- 1.3 This supporting planning statement sets out in detail why the proposed development is acceptable having regard to the policies of Horsham District Council in addition to national planning policy and guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

2. SITE DESCRIPTION AND REVIEW OF PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 The site is located within the small hamlet of Jolesfield just to the north of the village of Partridge Green, and within the Parish of West Grinstead. It lies alongside of the B2135 road which provides the main access route from the nearby village to the main A24 trunk road.
- 2.2 The local area is predominantly characterised by large detached older properties and farmsteads set back from the road. The houses fronting the road comprise a mixture of types and sizes, including, bungalows, chalet bungalows, semi-detached and detached two storey dwellings of varying styles and plot sizes.
- 2.3 The Green Man public house is a two storey, late 19th-century free detached building, that sits front and centre on its spacious plot, complete with substantial pub garden to the rear used for hosting marquee weddings, generous off street parking for up to 30 cars, a fully operational kitchen and restaurant, and staff accommodation on the first floor. The property has expanded a number of times over its lifetime, with a mixture of extensions and outbuildings under pitched and flat roofs to the rear and south, which have added to its character and given it the ground floor space to become the pub that you see today.



Aerial plan with PH site outlined in red

2.4 Relevant Planning History

Ref. No: WG/27/84

Conversion of existing garage store to restaurant

Status: Application Permitted

Ref. No: WG/38/95

Erection of 1 house Site

Status: Application Permitted

Ref. No: WG/10/97

Erection of 2 houses and conversion of existing public house into 1 dwelling (outline)

Status: Application Refused

Ref. No: WG/27/97

Erection of 1 house and conversion of existing public house into dwelling (outline)

Status: Application Refused

Ref. No: WG/22/98

Extension to car parking area

Status: Application Permitted

Ref. No: WG/26/98

Installation of 5 signs

Status: Application Permitted

Ref. No: WG/34/00

Construction of dormers and external staircase to provide bedroom in roof

Status: Application Permitted

Ref. No: DC/17/1498

Proposed erection of a three bedroom two storey dwelling with, 2x dedicated parking spaces, as accommodation for staff associated with the Green Man public house

Status: Application Refused

3. BACKGROUND AND DETAILS OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED

- 3.1 This application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the current public house into three small residential units comprising 1 x 1 bedroom and 2 x 2 bedroom dwellings, with each property served with allocated parking and separate garden curtilages.
- 3.2 The application is being submitted following the owners extensive research concluding that unfortunately, the business is no longer a viable business and cannot continue to operate. The business has been suffering a number of years and given the present-day climate for remote public houses, the owners have no other alternative but to cease trading and consider planning permission for an alternative use of the property.
- 3.3 When having regard to the application proposals for a change of use for this property into residential use, it is accepted that the site is located outside of any defined built up area boundary where new development is not normally permitted. Where a proposal involves an existing rural business, there exists the presumption under local planning policy that supports the need to accommodate other types of business activity before residential use is considered.
- 3.4 When looking at this particular property however, its location and the fact that a public house/restaurant has operated for a considerable amount of time, the only other viable and sensible commercial alternative would be offices. But when looking at the viability and remote location of this site, it would be far more sensible and realistic to locate offices closer to the village of Partridge Green or into larger settlements such as Horsham, Southwater and Henfield.
- 3.5 It can be evidenced that the recent trading activity of the business has been clearly compromised in recent years by numerous reasons some of which include stringent drink driving regulations, lack of affordable local taxi services, rising food and staff costs, and competition from food delivery services and supermarkets selling cheaper food and alcohol. Also, the recent closure of the local bus routes has made recruitment of staff much more difficult and less appealing for those looking for full and part time work.

- 3.6 The centre of Partridge green has a number of retail outlets, in particular the Co-Op that sells a broad range of food and alcohol which is a constant competitor to the Green Man. The loss therefore of the public house and restaurant would not undermine the facilities available within the Partridge Green area, or be a loss with regards local pubs, with other busy pubs in the area including The Partridge in the village, The Windmill in Littleworth, the Bull Inn at Henfield and the Fountain Inn at Ashurst.
- 3.7 The property has been advertised as a 'going concern' for many years now by specialist agent A W Gore, and the property sales particulars we present within this application. The agent has advised that the pandemic has caused a vast slow down in sales and activities for public houses, and the hopeful bounce back in sales has failed to materialise due to soaring energy and staffing costs, recent high inflation, and interest rates remaining higher than pre-pandemic levels. A W Gore has advised that the majority of their current work surrounds pub failures and repossessions, and there remains a glut of such properties coming onto the market which is having an effect of depreciating values.
- 3.8 The advice of A W Gore has been to not openly market the property so not to jeopardise the little trade that is left and undermine customer and staff confidence in the business. Accordingly, A W Gore continue to offer the property in a low key manner as a 'going concern' but have advised that no potential sale is forthcoming and they do not see one arising in the foreseeable future.
- 3.9 The trading accounts for the business can be provided by the business accountant Jennifer Goddard, but we would ask that this information remains confidential and is shared at the request of the planning officer once the application is registered.
- 3.10 It is important that the owners of the business are allowed to plan their future and cannot be expected to continue to operate an unviable business and therefore need to seek an alternative use for the property. As seen by the accompany plans, the property allows a simple conversion into 3 small dwellings with minimal external modifications. Being the proportions of a

conventional detached dwelling, the conversion provides ideal spatial layouts and divides naturally into the 3 independent units.

- 3.11 Unit 1 will be accessed from the current staff accommodation block entrance and will provide a 2 storey, 1 bedroom unit with associated kitchen, dining and lounge areas, plus a separate Utility/WC. The northwest area of the site will be given over to Unit's 1 private garden area.
- 3.12 Unit 2 will be accessed from the main pub current front entrance and will provide a 2 storey, 2 bedroom unit with associated kitchen, dining and lounge areas. Direct access will be provided into unit 2's private garden that will also include private parking.
- 3.13 Unit 3 will be located to the rear of the building in mostly single storey areas. This unit will have 2 bedrooms and associated kitchen, dining and lounge areas together with direct access to its own private garden. A current kitchen store room will be demolished as part of the conversion works.
- 3.14 All proposed dwellings are shown incorporating internal thermal upgrading of all external walls, together with sound proofing wall linings to comply with current building regulation guidance. Also, all the units will comply with National Space Standards requirements for room sizes and storage volumes.
- 3.15 Allocated parking will be provided for all units plus one additional visitor space. Unit 1 and 3 parking will be located in the hardstanding of the current pub car park. All units will be provided with a bin hardstanding area, large enough to accommodate the refuse, recycling and garden waste bins. A secure shed will also be provided within each garden that will accommodate secure undercover parking for 2 cycles per dwelling.
- 3.16 The accommodation schedule for the conversion will be as follows:

Current public house GIA – 298m²

Proposed dwelling GIA's – 270m²

Unit 1 – 70m²

Unit 2 – 86m²

Unit 3 – 91m²

4. Summary of relevant planning policies

4.1 When considering the merits of development that requires a planning application the Council, in its function as the local planning authority, has a requirement to determine that application in accordance with the policies of its Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise

4.2 Therefore, in preparing this planning statement consideration has been had to relevant policies of the following documents:

- Horsham District Council Local Plan (Horsham District Planning Framework 2015)
- National Planning Policy Framework' (NPPF) (published in December 2023)

4.3 Horsham District Planning Framework

On 27 November 2015 Horsham District Council adopted the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF). With the exception of land within the South Downs National Park, the HDPF replaces the policies contained in the Horsham District Core Strategy and General Development Control Policies which were both adopted in 2007. The HDPF sets out the planning strategy for the years up to 2031 to deliver the social, economic and environmental needs for the district (outside the South Downs National Park) and contains the following relevant policies.

Policy 1: Sustainable Development – states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF. As such, planning applications that accord with the policies in the new Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date, the Council will grant planning permission, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy 2: Strategic Development – seeks to maintain the District's unique rural character whilst ensuring that the needs of the community are met through sustainable growth and suitable access to services and local employment. Whilst new development should be focused in and around Horsham, organic growth should be allowed in the rest of the District. In this respect, the Council will continue to support the sustainable development of settlements through an

appropriate scale of development which retains the existing settlement pattern. Development around the edges of existing settlements should be managed in order to prevent the merging of settlements and to protect rural character and landscape. Development should also provide for varied housing needs.

Policy 3: Development Hierarchy – sets out the hierarchy of development within the District and defines Partridge Green as a ‘medium village’. Medium Villages are described as settlements with ‘a moderate level of services and facilities and community networks, together with some access to public transport. These settlements provide some day-to-day needs for residents, but rely on small market towns and larger settlements to meet a number of their requirements’. Whilst the application site is outside the built-up area boundary of Partridge Green it is within the established settlement leading north from it, along the main access road serving the area. Therefore, the proposal is as well served by the amenities that Partridge Green offers.

Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character. The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development. The Council will support development proposals which:

- *Protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.*
- *Maintain and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the District.*

Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and ensures no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible.

Policy 32: The Quality of New Development – sets out the requirements for high quality inclusive design based on the physical, social, economic and environmental considerations.

Policy 33: Development Principles – sets out criteria for new development to comply with. This includes, among other things, making efficient use of land; prioritising previously developed land; ensuring no harm will result to the amenities of occupiers/users of nearby properties and by ensuring that the scale, massing and appearance of development is a high standard of design. High standard of building materials; finishes and landscaping should also be included.

Policy 35: Climate Change – sets out the requirements for mitigating and adapting to climate change. Mitigation should include: reducing energy use in construction; improving energy efficiency by changing the behaviour of occupants; reducing the need to travel and reducing waste. Adaptation should include reducing vulnerability to flooding or water shortages and reduce.

Policy 41: Parking - adequate parking and facilities must be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users. Consideration should be given to the needs of cycle parking, motorcycle parking, charging plug-in or other low emission vehicles and the mobility impaired. 3. Development which involves the loss of existing parking spaces will only be allowed if suitable alternative provision has been secured elsewhere or the need for the development overrides the loss of parking and where necessary measures are in place to mitigate against the impact.

4.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

The Government's national planning policies are currently set out in the newly published 'National Planning Policy Framework' (NPPF) (published in December 2024). The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF (2024) establishes the overriding principle that the planning system is to contribute towards sustainable development. Paragraph 8 explains that there are 3 strands to sustainable development - economic, social and environmental. In relation to social it includes the following reference to housing:

'...to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations...'

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF (2024) identifies the importance of the concept of 'sustainable development' and that in terms of decision making this means, inter alia:

‘...approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay...’

...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 clear 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...’*

Paragraph 73 of the NPPF (2024) recognises the importance of small and medium sized sites by stating that:

‘Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly.’

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF (2024) states *Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:*

- c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;*
- d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building*

Paragraph 124 of the NPPF (2024) states that *Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. 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 or ‘brownfield’ land*

5. Acceptability of development proposed

5.1 Having regard to the Council's adopted and emerging planning policies the main planning considerations in relation to this proposed development relate to:

- Principle of the development
- Impact on local character
- Residential amenity
- Transport and parking
- Other matters

5.2 Principle of the development

This change of use application seeks to comply with relevant policies to demonstrate the principle of development is acceptable as follows:

Although it is accepted that HDC Policy 43 calls for the resistance of loss of premises or sites currently or last used for the provision of commercial facilities or services, leisure or cultural activities within the community, the retention of unviable business is not sustainable long term and will result in a deterioration of service and quality. Also, there are other similar facilities that are conveniently located in the nearby community.

NPPF policies support the use of previously developed land and buildings. It can be argued that conversion of the public house would take the building back to its original intention of a dwelling, which would not look out of place amongst other nearby residents. The formation of 3 dwellings within the building would not detract from the building looking like a substantial single dwelling from the street scene.

This conversion will take the opportunity to upgrade the building fabric and make the building more sustainable and less likely to contribute to global warming. This would be achieved by providing a new internal

thermal wall lining envelope to achieve overall U values, and also improve heat loss through the windows by adding replacement double glazed windows. New efficient heating system will also be part of the conversion works.

This conversion also provide much needed smaller and affordable housing stock by the provision of smaller 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings

5.3 Impact on local character.

The conversion of the current public house into 3 individual dwellings will have minimal impact on the local character. It is likely the original building was used as a single dwelling before its conversion into a public house. The external appearance of the building will not change as a result of the conversion works except for the removal of a timber clad store room to the south and bricking up of one window on the northern elevation. In addition, the current pub signage will be retained (both attached to the building and the free standing post alongside the highway) to hint of the former use, and to give the perception that a public house still resides at this location.

The removal of the large customer car park in lieu of private gardens and just 7 car park spaces could be seen as an improvement to the local character with increased planting and encourage of wildlife within the gardens. Daily traffic movements will also decrease as a result of the conversion to residential use.

5.4 Residential amenity

Due to the siting and orientation of current building, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to any concerns relating to residential amenity of neighbouring properties. Furthermore, is not considered that the proposal would give rise to any negative impacts in terms of noise, light or odour pollution, particularly when compared against the existing use as a public house.

Each dwelling within the proposal will meet and exceed the Government's nationally described minimum space standards, with adequate storage also provided.

The dwellings have been designed in such a way that the separation distance between habitable windows is acceptable, avoiding a loss of privacy within the site. Each individual dwelling will also be provided with sufficient amenity space in the form of private rear/side gardens.

5.5 Transport and Parking

NPPF policies states that development should only be refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be serve. Any assessment against this would require consideration of the existing lawful use of the site, which is a public house open most days from midday until 10.30pm, with associated transport movements including staff, visitors and deliveries.

The proposals seek to make use of the two existing access points into the site which provide good levels of visibility on both directions. The proposals will see parking provision reduce from circa 30 spaces to only 7 allocated spaces including one visitor space. Each parking space will measure 2.4m x 4.8m. it is also proposed to provide EV charging points for each new dwelling, adjacent to each allocated parking area.

Secure cycle storage will also be provided within each residential dwelling, ensuring that the uptake of sustainable modes of transport can be maximised. In this regard, it is noted that the NPPF (2024) recognises that the opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions vary between rural and urban areas, and that this should be taken into account in planning decisions.

The scheme has also been designed to ensure suitable access for refuse vehicles and emergency vehicles, such as access for fire engines. Having regard to the above, and the existing lawful use of the site, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to any negative impacts in relation to transport or parking provision.

5.6 Other Matters

Water Neutrality

Water Neutrality has been considered as part of the proposals and a separate Water Neutrality Report by CGS Civils accompanies the application. This report concludes that the current public house uses on average 2,196.9 litres of water per day, whereas the proposed conversion will only use an average of 498.3 litres per day, so saving an average of 1698.6 litres of water per day.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain has been considered as part the proposals and a separate BNG Report accompanies the application.

6. Conclusions

6.1 This report has highlighted that the proposed development should be granted planning permission. This is due to the fact that the proposed conversion:

- Offers an opportunity to provide some much-needed new smaller housing in the area, and would result in the effective use of land;
- The current business has been actively marketed for sale for a number of years, demonstrating a lack of demand for the current use in this location;
- Provides the opportunity to thermally upgrade the existing building so adding to efforts to reduce carbon omissions
- Maximises the uptake of sustainable modes of transport;
- Has been sensitively designed to ensure that any impacts on the character of the area or landscape are minimised, including retention of the current pub signage, both attached to the building and the free standing post alongside the highway
- There are no technical reasons to refuse planning permission relating to highways, water neutrality, ecology or the character of the area.