



26th January 2026

Our Ref: 25.5063

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Sam Nye
Horsham District Council
Albery House
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Dear Sam

Re: 30 West Street, Horsham - Class MA Prior Approval

This Cover Letter has been prepared on behalf of Ganco (Holdings) Limited (the 'Applicant'), to accompany a submission seeking prior approval for the change of use of the existing retail space (Class E(a)) to residential accommodation (Class C3) under Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2024. This prior approval application relates to 30 West Street, Horsham (the 'Site').

The formal description of development is:

"Prior approval for the change of use of the existing retail space at first and second floors (Class E(a)) to 8 residential dwellings (Class C3) under Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2024".

This letter considers the criteria set out under Class MA of the GDPO and outlines the relevant assessments required for Prior Approval. The application is supported by the following information and supporting documents:

- Application forms;
- A full set of drawings, including a site location plan – prepared by Hillman Design Ltd;
- Noise Impact Assessment – Prepared by ACA Acoustics;
- Daylight and Sunlight Assessment – prepared by Richard Staig; and
- Transport Statement – prepared by Apex.



The Application Site

The Site is located within Horsham Town Centre and comprises a plot of land on the south of West Street, situated between West Street and Black Horse Way. The Site accommodates a building in retail use and is occupied by Poundland who use the ground floor as a shop, with the upper floors used for ancillary storage. The building is two storeys on the High Street frontage and steps up to four storeys to the rear.

The front of the Site has an active frontage at ground floor which is reflective of the Primary Shopping Frontage designation and provides access to the shop. Above this is Poundland signage, and at first floor are brown rendered panels.

The rear of the Site detracts from the character of the area. It has a tired appearance and lacks activation. There are two fire doors at ground floor as well as two low cupboard doors. There is a single central window on the first and second floor staircases with metal bars across. To the second floor are two windows and two vents.

The surrounding area is mixed in character and use which is reflective of the Town Centre location. To the immediate west is a Travelodge hotel which rises to five storeys. The building is a C shape, with a courtyard close to the boundary of the Site which means that the hotel rooms are set back from the boundary. To the immediate east is a two-storey building which is in retail use at ground floor and is in residential use on the upper floor, which comprises three flats. These were approved under application ref: DC/16/1094. There is a terrace in the middle of the building at first floor. To the south of the Site is Horsham Bus Station.

The Site is not located within a conservation area but is located approximately 40m to the west of the Horsham Conservation Area which includes a number of listed buildings. It is located within Flood Zone 1, with the lowest risk of flooding.

Planning History

The table below outlines the relevant history of the Site:

Reference	Description	Decision
DC/25/1391	External alterations including installation of new windows and doors and alterations to existing windows and doors at ground, first and second floors.	Permitted 3 rd October 2025
DC/22/2135	Formation of one flat above the existing ground floor retail use fronting West Street and the construction of 9 flats on four floors above a retained ground floor (following demolition of existing floors) fronting Blackhorse Way.	Refused 30 th June 2023



Proposed Development

The application seeks to convert the redundant space at first and second floor to form 8 residential units.

As this is a Prior Approval application for the change of use to residential made under Class MA of the GPDO, no external changes are proposed. A separate full planning application has already been approved for alterations to windows and doors (ref: DC/25/1391). A second full application has been submitted for associated external alterations which predominantly involve the formation of a new courtyard. This is to allow for the central area of the Site to be converted to residential use. It is proposed that a condition is attached to the Prior Approval condition requiring the external alterations to be completed prior to the occupation of the units.

The ground floor retail uses will remain; it is only the first floor and second floor, which were previously used as ancillary storage space to the retail units, that are subject to this application.

The mix and areas of the 8 units are summarised in the table below. Each unit would meet or exceed the Nationally Described Space Standards to ensure future occupiers enjoy a good standard of living. Two of the units would also benefit from private terraces, which exceeds what would be required for a Prior Approval application and reflects the high quality of accommodation.

Unit	Unit Size (Internal)	Nationally Described Space Standards
1 Bedroom 2 Person	53 sqm	50 sqm
1 Bedroom 2 Person	54 sqm	50 sqm
1 Bedroom 2 Person	64 sqm	50 sqm
1 Bedroom 2 Person	55 sqm	50 sqm
1 Bedroom 2 Person	55 sqm	50 sqm
1 Bedroom 2 Person	62 sqm	50 sqm
2 Bedroom 3 Person	72 sqm	61 sqm
2 Bedroom 3 Person	75 sqm	61 sqm

Compliance

Paragraph MA.1 of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (England) (Amendment) Order 2021 sets out the criteria for which development is not permitted under Class MA. This includes if:



(b) Unless the use of the building fell within one or more of the classes specified in sub paragraph (2) for a continuous period of at least 2 years prior to the date of the application for prior approval.

The building has been in long term rerail use including for a continuous period of 2 years prior to this submission.

(d) If land covered by, or within the curtilage of, the building –

- (i) Is or forms part of a site of special scientific interest;
- (ii) Is or forms part of a listed building or land within its curtilage;
- (iii) Is or forms part of a scheduled monument or land within its curtilage;
- (iv) Is or forms part of a safety hazard area; or
- (v) Is or forms part of a military explosives storage area.

No land covered by, or within, the curtilage of the building forms part of the land types specified in criteria (i) – (v) above.

(e) If the building is within –

- (i) An area of outstanding natural beauty;
- (ii) An area specified by the Secretary of State for the purposes of section 41(3) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
- (iii) The Broads;
- (iv) A National Park; or
- (v) A World Heritage Site.

The building is not within any of the areas specified in criteria (i) –(v) above.

(f) If the site is occupied under agricultural tenancy, unless the express consent of both the landlord and the tenant has been obtained.

The site is not occupied under agricultural tenancy.

(g) Before 1st August 2021 –

- (i) the proposed development is not of a description falling within Class O of this Part as that Class had effect immediately before 1st August 2021; and
- (ii) the development would not have been permitted under Class O immediately before 1st August 2021 by virtue of the operation of a direction under article 4(1) of this Order which has not since been cancelled in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 3.



The proposed development is not of a description falling within Class O; the use of the Site is retail and not office, as such Class O is not relevant to this application.

In summary, the use of the building has been retail (Class E (a)) since 2018 and none of the above restrictions apply to the subject building, therefore this change of use is permitted under Class MA. The development is therefore compliant with the requirements to benefit from Class MA permitted development – commercial, business and service uses to dwellinghouses.

Conditions

The required conditions are set out in Class MA.2 of the GPDO. A full assessment against the criteria is provided below for the proposed development.

Transport and Highways

Adopted in 2015, the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) serves as the district's local plan and establishes the policy basis for reviewing transport consequences of development proposals.

Through Policy 40, development is guided to locations and designs that limit the necessity of travel, particularly by private car, while actively promoting walking, cycling, and public transport. The policy favours sites with appropriate infrastructure and services and facilitates proposals to deliver improved connectivity wherever possible.

Policy 41 says new developments must include enough parking, but it also allows flexibility depending on local conditions, like how easy it is to walk, cycle, or use public transport. In central areas such as Horsham, the policy supports lower levels of on-site parking.

A Transport Report has been prepared by Apex assessing the transport and highways implications of the proposed development. The report concludes that the proposal is car-free, supported by nearby parking controls and public car parks, with secure cycle parking exceeding standards. Servicing can be safely managed from Black Horse Way, and overall vehicle activity will be minimal, limited to occasional deliveries. Pedestrian and cycle trips from the eight units will be easily absorbed into the town-centre network, with no safety or capacity concerns. The scheme aligns with national and local sustainable transport policies (HDPF Policies 40 and 41) and meets GPDO requirements, meaning there are no transport or highway grounds to withhold Prior Approval.

Contamination

Given the fact that no ground works are proposed, and that there is no industrial history on the Site, it is considered that the risks of contamination on the Site are minimal. We do not consider that the change of use would present any risk to human health or other risks from contamination, as the proposed change of use would not cause any disturbance to the ground beneath the Site.



Flood Risk

Condition MA.2 (2) (C) of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (England) (Amendment) Order 2021 requires flooding risks in relation to the building to be considered.

As the Site is located in Flood Zone 1, there are no flooding risks in relation to the building and therefore the development is acceptable in flood risk terms, especially by virtue of the location of the proposed flats at first and second floor.

Noise

The GPDO requires the impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development to be considered.

HPDF Policy 33 outlines that proposals should be designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property particularly in relation to noise.

A Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared by ACA Acoustics which accompanies this letter. The assessment demonstrates that potential adverse impacts can be adequately mitigated to ensure noise is not detrimental to the amenity of future occupants. As such, the proposals are fully compliant with HPDF Policy 33.

Daylight and Sunlight

Condition MA.2 (2) (f) of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (England) (Amendment) Order 2021 requires the provision of adequate natural in all habitable rooms of dwellinghouses.

Accordingly, a Daylight & Sunlight report prepared by Richard W Staig accompanies this letter and concludes that adequate natural light has been achieved in all proposed residential units.

Conclusion

In summary, it has been demonstrated that the building can benefit from Class MA to change the redundant retail storage space at first floor to residential (Class C3) use. The change of use of the upper floors of the building from ancillary retail use to residential is therefore considered acceptable and complies with the requirements of Class MA of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

The new flats will provide a good standard of accommodation, with all units providing generous room sizes and benefitting from a good provision of natural light. The transport, contamination, flood risk and noise impacts have also been demonstrated to be acceptable.

The proposed change of use from Class E(a) to Class C3 is therefore in full accordance with Class MA of the GPDO and as such, Prior Approval should be granted without delay.

Should you have any questions or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Yours sincerely,

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