DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

including Heritage Statement

Change of use of the redundant oil tank store (the 'Tank Room') to a one-bedroom holiday let, with a planning condition restricting its use to holiday accommodation only

Lock House, Lock Lane, Partridge Green, West Sussex RH13 8EG



Block plan: the Tank Room (labelled 'Tank room to be holiday let') on the western edge of the Lock House grounds.

Applicant: Lock House Partners LLP
Local planning authority: Horsham District Council
October 2026

1. Summary

This application seeks planning permission to convert the redundant oil tank store at Lock House, known as the Tank Room, into a single one-bedroom unit of holiday accommodation. The applicant invites a condition restricting its use to holiday letting only, so that it cannot be occupied as anyone's sole or main residence.

The proposal is the re-use of an existing, redundant structure on previously developed land within the established Lock House grounds. No new building is created in the countryside. The footprint stays the same, the historic stone walls are kept and repaired, and the failing timber fence that currently forms part of the enclosure is replaced with brick to match the existing east wall. A simple flat roof sits behind the existing parapet line.

The Tank Room is not a listed building and listed building consent is not required. The Council's Conservation Officer has already advised, on the withdrawn application DC/26/0927, that the works would not directly affect the listed building, and the Senior Planning Officer has confirmed that he has no in-principle objection to the conversion of the Tank Room to a holiday let, which is capable of support under Policies 10 and 11 of the Horsham District Planning Framework. This fresh application has been prepared on the basis of that advice and supplies every item of information the officer asked for (Section 11).

The scheme brings a derelict enclosure back into use, improves the setting of Lock House, adds a unit of residential accommodation, and brings year-round leisure visitors to Partridge Green and the wider district, with estimated business rates of about £5,000 a year.

2. The Site and its Surroundings

Lock House

Lock House is a Grade II listed country house (list entry 1389606, listed 6 December 2001), built around 1900 in the Vernacular Revival style and enlarged in the 1930s for the Harvey family, when the ballroom and leisure buildings were added. It was later a convent of the Order of the Visitation and was returned to a private house in 2003. The house stands in mature landscaped grounds reached by a long private drive from Lock Lane.

The grounds already contain a number of ancillary buildings in residential and holiday use, including the garden store and tennis court house, which were granted permission for conversion to holiday lets under DC/25/0359 (June 2025). In January 2026 the Planning Inspectorate allowed the conversion of Lock House itself into five dwellings and of the garage block into a further dwelling (APP/Z3825/W/25/3359623 and APP/Z3825/Y/25/3359626).

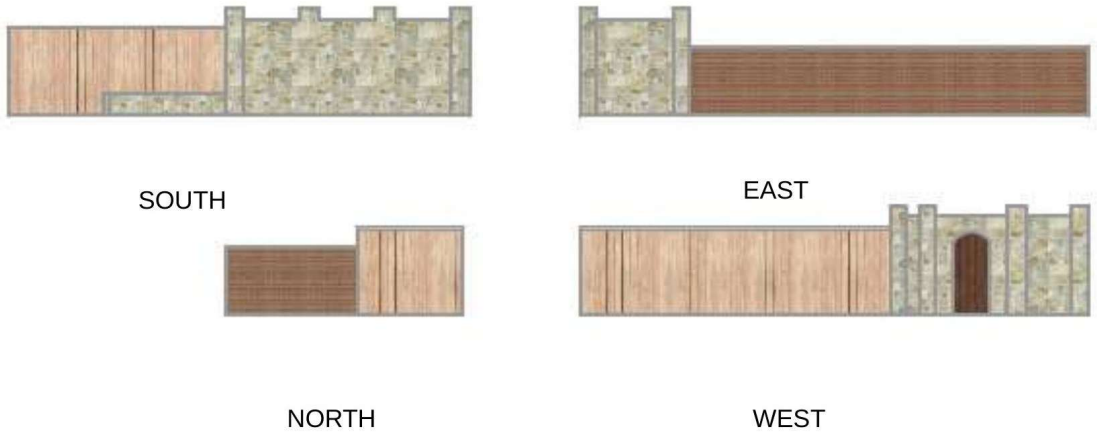
The Tank Room

The Tank Room lies on the western edge of the formal grounds, beside the curved section of the main drive and against an established hedge line, some [35m] south-west of Lock House. It is a single-storey, open-topped enclosure of approximately [6m by 13m]. It was built to house the oil tanks serving the house and has no remaining function: the oil tanks will be removed and the house no longer relies on oil storage at this location.

The enclosure is made up of:

- decorative natural stone walls with castellated tops on the south and west sides, including an arched doorway in the west wall;
- a plain red brick wall along the east side; and
- lengths of close-boarded timber fencing to the north, west and south, which are now weathered and failing.

A small walled paved yard adjoins the south-west corner. The structure is unroofed, unused and visibly deteriorating. It contributes nothing to the house or the grounds in its present state.



Existing elevations: south (top left), east (top right), north (bottom left) and west (bottom right).

3. Planning History

Reference	Proposal and outcome
DC/25/0359	Conversion of the garden store and tennis court house at Lock House to holiday lets. Granted June 2025.
APP/Z3825/W/25/3359623	Conversion of Lock House into five dwellings and the garage block into one dwelling. Allowed on appeal, January 2026.
DC/26/0927 and DC/26/0928	Car port and landscaping works across the estate, which by amendment came to include the conversion of the Tank Room, with a linked listed building consent application. Withdrawn on 29 September 2026 on the officer's advice.

On DC/26/0927 the Conservation Officer raised no objection to the conversion of the Tank Room and advised that the works would not directly affect the listed building, which is why the linked listed building consent application DC/26/0928 was withdrawn as unnecessary.

In his email of 29 September 2026, the case officer, Daniel Holmes, confirmed that he had no in-principle objection to converting the Tank Room to a holiday let, and that the officer report concluded the principle of an additional holiday let within the Lock House estate was capable of support under HDPF Policies 10 and 11. His concern was that the application had grown from the scheme first submitted and lacked the detail needed to assess it. He advised a fresh application focused on the Tank Room, with a tightly drawn red line and the supporting information listed in Section 11. This is that application.

4. The Proposal

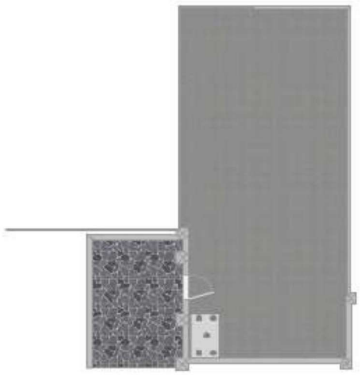
Use

Change of use of the redundant Tank Room to a one-bedroom unit of holiday accommodation (Use Class C3), let on a short-term basis to leisure visitors. The applicant invites a condition that the unit is used for holiday purposes only, is not occupied as a sole or main residence, and that a register of lettings is kept and made available to the Council on request. The unit will be managed with the existing Lock House holiday lets, by the same housekeeping and maintenance team.

Amount and layout

The unit occupies the existing footprint of about [80] square metres. No floorspace is added outside the walls of the existing enclosure. The layout is simple:

- an open-plan kitchen, dining and living room filling the northern half, with glazed double doors on the east side;
- a double bedroom in the centre, with a window on the east side;
- an entrance hall and a shower room at the southern end, entered through the existing doorway; and
- a small store or plant room.



Existing floor plan



Proposed floor plan

Scale and appearance

The building stays single-storey and does not rise above the existing wall tops. A flat roof is set behind a plain parapet, which follows the line of the existing walls and castellations so that the building reads as the same low walled enclosure in views from the drive.

- **Stone walls kept and repaired.** The castellated stone walls on the south and west sides, and the arched doorway, are retained and repaired. They are the only part of the structure with any architectural interest, and the conversion secures them.
- **Failing fencing replaced.** The decayed timber fencing is replaced with red brick walls matching the existing east wall.

- **Openings to the east only.** The only new openings are one window and one pair of glazed doors on the east elevation, facing into the grounds. The north and west walls are blank, so there is no outlook or light towards the boundary hedge and the countryside beyond.
- **Materials.** Natural stone (existing), red brick to match, a single-ply membrane flat roof [or sedum roof — confirm] with a slim coping, and painted timber window and doors.



Proposed elevations: south (top left), east (top right), north (bottom left) and west (bottom right).

External works, landscaping and lighting

- **No garden.** No private garden, patio, fence or enclosure is proposed. Guests use the shared Lock House grounds and facilities in the same way as guests of the existing holiday lets.
- **Parking.** One space for guests on the existing gravel forecourt on the existing drive.
- **Servicing.** Bins are kept out of sight in the existing bin store and collected with the estate's existing collection.
- **Drainage.** Foul drainage connects to the existing private treatment plant serving Lock House. Roof water discharges to the existing soakaways.
- **Lighting.** No external lighting is proposed.
- **Landscaping.** No trees or hedges are removed. The existing hedge on the western side is kept.

5. Access

The Tank Room is reached along the existing private drive from Lock Lane, which already serves Lock House, its residential units and the existing holiday lets. One additional holiday let adds a negligible number of vehicle movements and needs no change to the access.

Inside, the unit is on a single level. Partridge Green, with its shop, pub and other services, is about 1.5km away, and the estate is close to the Downs Link bridleway and the wider footpath network.

6. Trees, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

Trees

All works are within or on the line of the existing walls. No tree is felled or pruned. Where new brick walls replace the timber fencing, they are founded on the existing slab to avoid harm to roots.

Ecology

The Tank Room is an open-topped enclosure with no roof, loft or cavity, set on hardstanding. It offers little scope for roosting bats or nesting birds. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment by The Ecology Co-Op dated 4 November 2026 accompanies this application and confirms there is no effect on protected species. The absence of external lighting and of west-facing openings protects the darkness of the boundary hedge.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The red line has been drawn tightly around the land needed for the development, as the officer advised. It covers about 0.02 hectares, well under 0.2 hectares, and includes no onsite priority habitat. For applications made on or after 6 August 2026, development with a red line of 0.2 hectares or less that does not affect onsite priority habitat is exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gain. The development is also within the de minimis exemption, since it affects no more than 25 square metres of non-priority habitat and no hedgerow; the works take place on existing hardstanding and walls.

Water neutrality

Natural England has withdrawn its Water Neutrality Position Statement for the Sussex North Water Supply Zone, and Horsham District Council no longer requires new development to demonstrate water neutrality. The unit will nonetheless be fitted with water-efficient fittings.

7. Heritage Statement

The heritage asset

The only designated heritage asset affected is Lock House (Grade II). The Tank Room is not itself listed. It was built in the later 20th century to house the oil tanks. The Conservation Officer has advised that the works would not directly affect the listed building, and listed building consent is not required.

Significance

When allowing the conversion of Lock House in January 2026, the Inspector found that its significance lies in its Vernacular Revival country house appearance in its parkland setting, and in its interior finishes. The setting that contributes to that significance is the house seen in its gardens and parkland, particularly in the main views from the south and on the approach along the drive.

The Tank Room makes no positive contribution to that significance. It is a utilitarian service enclosure on the edge of the grounds, and in its current state, open, unused and with collapsing fencing, it detracts slightly from the approach.

Assessment of setting (Historic England GPA3)

Consideration	Assessment
Location and distance	On the western edge of the grounds, about 35m from the house, across the drive and behind a hedge line. Not part of the principal garden front or the main views of the house.
Visibility	Seen briefly from the drive as a low walled structure. The conversion keeps it low and walled, so its appearance in views from the drive and towards the house hardly changes, except that the enclosure is repaired.

Consideration	Assessment
Scale and form	Single-storey, footprint unchanged, no higher than the existing walls. Clearly subordinate to the house.
Materials and detail	Historic stone walls and arched doorway retained and repaired. Failing timber fence replaced with brick to match the existing east wall.
Activity and use	Low-key use by one couple or small party at a time, the same in kind as the holiday lets and dwellings already permitted within the estate. No garden or domestic paraphernalia.
Lighting	No new external lighting beyond a single controlled entrance light. No openings on the north or west.
Change to character	A derelict service enclosure becomes a neat, maintained outbuilding. The parkland setting is unaltered.

Effect on significance

Policy HE5 of the National Planning Policy Framework asks applicants to say whether a proposal will have a positive effect, no effect, or cause harm to the significance of a heritage asset. This proposal has a **positive effect**. It takes a derelict, unused structure within the setting of Lock House, repairs its stone walls, replaces its failing fencing and gives it a use that will keep it maintained. Nothing about the house itself, its interiors or its principal parkland views is altered. The proposal causes no harm to the significance of Lock House, and its setting is improved.

The proposal therefore preserves the setting of the listed building for the purposes of section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, accords with NPPF Policies HE4 to HE6, which support proposals with positive effects on heritage significance, and complies with HDPF Policy 34.

8. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)

- **Policies S3 and S5.** Outside settlements, the reuse, alteration or extension of existing buildings, and the redevelopment of previously developed land including a material change of use, should be approved unless the benefits are substantially outweighed by the adverse effects. The Tank Room is an existing building, and as a permanent structure within the curtilage of Lock House outside any built-up area it is previously developed land. This presumption replaces the former tilted balance in paragraph 11 of the 2024 Framework and applies whatever the state of the development plan.
- **Policy E4.** Supports the growth of rural businesses, including the conversion of existing buildings and facilities for rural leisure and tourism.
- **Policies HE4 to HE6.** Covered in Section 7. The proposal has a positive effect on the significance of Lock House.

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

- **Policy 10 (Rural economic development) and Policy 11 (Tourism and cultural facilities).** Support the conversion of existing buildings for tourism uses in the countryside. The case officer has confirmed the principle is capable of support under these policies.
- **Policies 25 and 26 (Countryside).** The proposal is contained within an existing structure in established grounds. It adds no new building in the countryside and has no effect on landscape character.
- **Policies 32 and 33 (Design).** The design respects the existing structure, keeps its best features and uses matching materials.
- **Policy 34 (Heritage).** See Section 7.
- **Policies 31 (Green infrastructure and biodiversity) and 40/41 (Transport and parking).** See Sections 5 and 6.

Under the August 2026 Framework, development plan policies that are materially inconsistent with the national decision-making policies carry very limited weight. The emerging Horsham District Local Plan 2023–2040 is still at examination, at the main modifications stage, and carries limited weight.

9. Benefits of the Proposal

- **Re-use of a redundant building.** An existing, unused structure on previously developed land is brought back into use, with no new building in the countryside. This is the efficient use of land the Framework encourages.
- **Heritage enhancement.** The derelict enclosure and failing fence are replaced by a repaired, maintained building, improving the setting of the Grade II listed Lock House. Holiday income helps fund the upkeep of the shared grounds that form the house's setting.
- **An additional residential unit.** The scheme adds a unit of residential accommodation (Use Class C3) by conversion, without any greenfield land.
- **Tourism and visitor spending.** Leisure visitors staying through the year, spending money in Partridge Green and the district's pubs, restaurants, shops and attractions, including the Downs Link, Knepp and the South Downs.
- **Business rates.** Estimated at about £5,000 a year, payable to the Council once the unit meets the letting thresholds for business rates.
- **Local jobs and suppliers.** Housekeeping, laundry, maintenance and grounds work, and local tradespeople for the conversion.

10. Conditions Offered

- Use as holiday accommodation only, not as a sole or main residence, with a register of lettings kept for inspection.
- Materials to match those shown on the drawings and described in this statement.
- No external lighting other than that approved.

11. How the Officer's Advice of 29 September 2026 Has Been Met

Information requested	Where it is provided
Revised location plan and red line covering only the land needed	Location plan with red line drawn tightly round the Tank Room, its walled yard and access, about 0.02 ha.
Properly scaled existing and proposed plans, elevations, roof plan and site layout	Plans and elevations, 1:100 at A1 and site layout.
Design and Access Statement	This statement.
Arboricultural information by a qualified arborist	None required since no impact on trees.
Ecological information by a qualified ecologist	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal attached
Biodiversity Net Gain position and evidence of exemption	Section 6: exempt as a red line of 0.2 ha or less with no priority habitat, and within the de minimis exemption.
External lighting	Section 4: none beyond one controlled entrance light. Condition offered.
External works, parking, servicing, drainage and landscaping	Section 4: no garden, one parking space on existing gravel, bins in existing communal bin store, bikes in existing communcal bike store, drainage to existing systems, no trees or hedges removed.

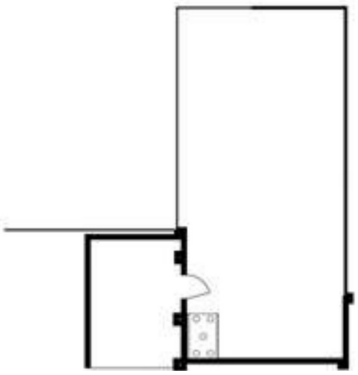
12. Conclusion

The proposal converts a redundant, deteriorating service enclosure within the grounds of Lock House into a small holiday let. It re-uses an existing building on previously developed land, keeps and repairs the only features of interest, and improves the setting of the listed house. It causes no harm to heritage significance, trees or ecology, and is exempt from biodiversity net gain.

The principle has the support of the case officer under HDPF Policies 10 and 11, and the Conservation Officer has confirmed the works do not directly affect the listed building. Under NPPF Policy S5 the reuse of existing buildings and previously developed land should be approved unless the benefits are substantially outweighed by adverse effects. Here there are no material adverse effects, and the benefits of heritage enhancement, an additional unit, tourism, local spending and business rates are clear. Planning permission should be granted.

Appendix: Drawings

Existing and proposed plans and elevations of the conversion of the existing tank house into a holiday let residential unit, 1:100 at A1 (reduced).



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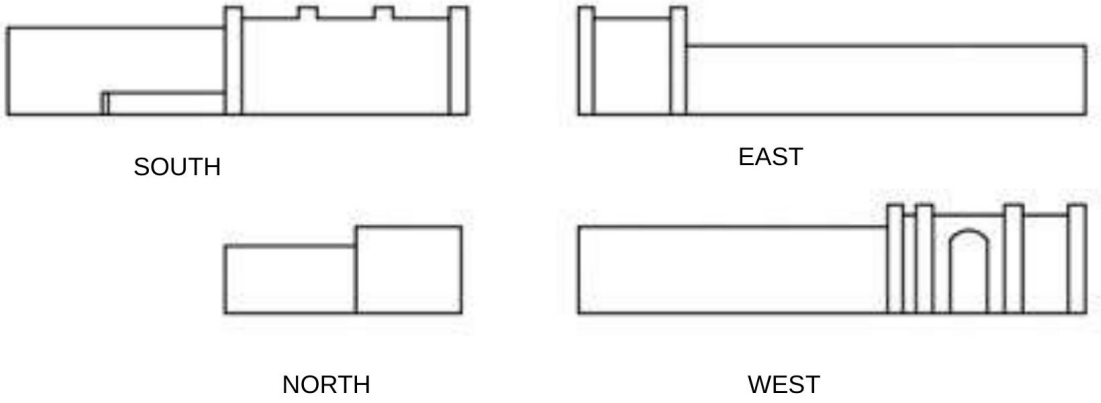
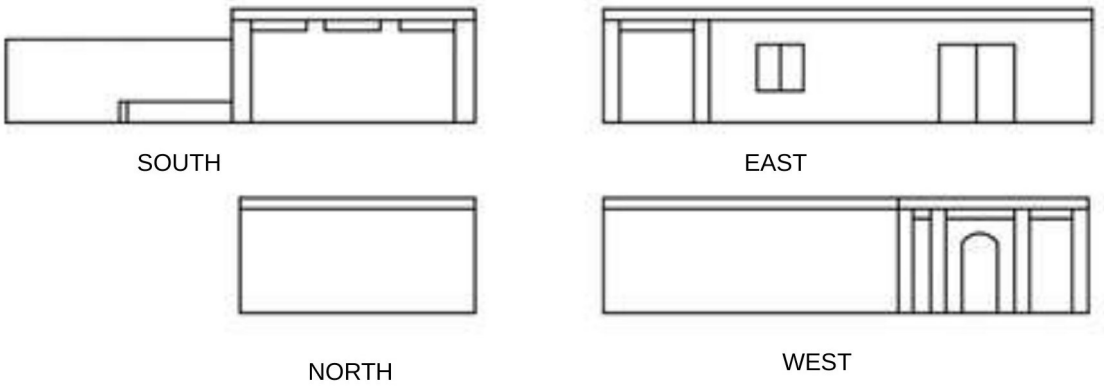
Proposed floor plan



Existing elevations



Proposed elevations