

Design & Access Statement incorporating Heritage Impact Assessment

**Conversion and Alteration of Former Stables to Form a 1-bed Holiday
Let Unit**

The Blue Ship, The Haven, Billingshurst

Prepared for

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Design & Access Statement, incorporating Heritage Impact Assessment, is in support of a full and associated listed building consent application for works to a former stables outbuilding within the grounds of Public House known as The Blue Ship, The Haven, Billingshurst. The main building is Grade II listed.
- 1.2. The application envisages the conversion and alteration of the outbuilding to form a 1-bed dwelling unit for use as a holiday let. It would principally comprise accommodation on the ground floor, with a bedroom at first floor. The unit would be operated by the owners of The Blue Ship to supplement and support their existing business.
- 1.3. The application should be read in conjunction with the following plans and documents:
 - Drawing Number EA0204/PL1 - Location Plan, Block Plan, Floor Plans and Elevations - as Existing;
 - Drawing Number EA0204/PL2 - Site Layout Plan, Floor Plans and Elevations - as Proposed; and
 - Preliminary Roost Assessment, Bat Emergence Survey and BNG Review.
- 1.4. This Statement details the site and its surroundings, sets out relevant planning background, describes the application works, summarises relevant planning policy and heritage guidance, and assesses the scheme in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan and other material considerations, including heritage guidance.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1. The Blue Ship is located in the hamlet of The Haven. This is broadly equidistant between the settlements of Five Oaks to the south-east, Slinfold to the east, and Buck's Green to the north.
- 2.2. The Blue Ship is located on the north side of the public highway, immediately north-east of the junction of Blue Ship Road with Okehurst Road.
- 2.3. The property has a main building which comprises a Public House at ground floor with residential dwelling unit above, and associated outbuildings. Land to the north-east is used for seasonal camping as part of the business enterprise.
- 2.4. The main building is formed of a historic core that is set back a shortway from the public highway with an east-west ridgeline. A latter addition, attached to the west side of the building has a north-south ridgeline and presents a dominant south facing gable. The building is principally externally faced in brick and tile hanging at first floor level, under a plain tile roof.
- 2.5. The principal entrance to the property is via the side (west) elevation and the front (south) elevation. There are outbuildings attached to the west of the building, including a timber framed barn.

- 2.6. The application building comprises a detached structure that is located some 15m to the west of the main building, close to the side (west) boundary of the site and the public highway.
- 2.7. The building comprises a former stables, that has long been used for ancillary purposes (predominantly storage), associated with the operations of The Blue Ship.
- 2.8. The building has a central two-storey form with lower single storey wings to either side, that form a symmetrical structure. The main central core, has an east-west ridgeline that presents a front elevation facing east and a rear elevation facing west. Attached to the north and south are single storey wings which both have north-south ridgelines. There is a small lean too structure attached on the north end of the building. The building is constructed in brick under a plain tile roof.
- 2.9. The openings and fenestration in the building are predominantly in the front (east) facing elevation. They comprise a timber door positioned centrally at ground floor, within the two-storey element, with a further timber door position centrally at first floor level. The south wing has timber double opening, side hung doors, whilst the north elevation has a timber door and window.
- 2.10. There is a window at first floor level in the rear (west) facing elevation. All other elevations are blank.
- 2.11. The building is positioned close to the edge of the public highway and the side boundary of the property. The latter is delineated by a fence line and hedge/ tree line. To the east of the building is a concrete hardstanding, and beyond this is further hardstanding used for parking to serve the pub. To the north and north-east is a garden area, part of which comprises a publicly accessible pub garden.
- 2.12. The property is generally set within a rural area. There are buildings to the south and southeast, beyond the public highway.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. As part of the preparation in this application, the planning applications register as held by the Local Planning Authority, has been inspected.
- 3.2. This reveals only a single planning application related to the property. This comprised an application for the installation of an illuminated pictorial sign in relation to the public house, (LPA reference RW3796).
- 3.3. The Blue Ship long operated as a public house in the ownership of a brewery, occupied by tenants.
- 3.4. The property is currently run by the applicant. This was managed and operated under a tenancy for many years, until the freehold of the property was bought in 2025.
- 3.5. The property operates as a public house, with land to the north-east used as facilities for camping/ caravanning on a seasonal basis. This is integral to supporting and underpinning the

vitality and viability of the business (and typically operates between May and October each year, dependent on weather).

4. HERITAGE GUIDANCE

4.1. The Blue Ship is a Grade II Listed building. It was added to the the national register on 28th November 1980 (List Entry Number 1027004).

4.2. The summary of the listing description states:

“Public house with outbuildings. Timber-framed core (originally a three-bay cottage) dating to around 1540-1600, with later additions of 1884-1891.”

4.3. A listed building includes (a) any object or structure fixed to the building; and (b) any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since 1st July 1948. The legal definition of the extent of curtilage is complex and the Courts have identified a number of factors to be taken into account when deciding whether a structure falls within the curtilage of a listed building.

4.4. Having regard to this guidance, it is considered that the application building is part of the extent of the listed buildings on the site.

4.5. Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, requires that, in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works, the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

4.6. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, requires that, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

4.7. The concept of ‘preserve’ has been interpreted through case law to mean ‘to cause no harm.’

5. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1. The application relates to a former stables building, that has long been used for purposes ancillary to the public house, predominantly for storage.

5.2. The application envisages the conversion of the building to provide a one bedroom unit of self-contained accommodation, for use on a holiday let basis.

5.3. The unit would be managed and operated by the owners and occupiers of the Blue Ship, to supplement and support the existing business, and complement the seasonal camping accommodation which has long operated on the site.

5.4. The scheme envisages conversion of the building with relatively modest alteration.

- 5.5. The main ground floor area of the building would be used as a living area. A revised internal staircase would be provided from this room to the first floor, which would be converted for use as a bedroom.
- 5.6. The single-storey northern part of the building would be converted for use as a kitchen, with lean-to beyond this comprising an externally accessed log store. The single storey southern part of the building would be converted to provide the main access to the building with a toilet and shower room.
- 5.7. The proposed external alterations would be limited to the provision of new opening doors within the rear elevation of the central part of the building; the insertion of 3 conservation style roof lights into the single-storey elements; and the re-use of existing openings in the building with new fenestration.
- 5.8. Internally, the scheme envisages the creation of openings between the main ground floor part of the structure and the single storey elements to the north and south. The application envisages the insertion of a wood burner within the main living area.
- 5.9. The existing hard standing immediately to the east of the building would be retained and reserved for parking associated with the occupiers of the unit.
- 5.10. The wider garden layout of the property would be retained unaltered.

6. PLANNING POLICY

- 6.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2. The approved Development Plan in relation to this application, for the purposes of the Act, comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework, adopted November 2015 and the Rudgwick Neighbourhood Development Plan, made June 2021.
- 6.3. Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), online planning practice guidance, and locally produced guidance.

7. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 7.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It was most recently updated in December 2024.
- 7.2. It sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, made up of the three dimensions of economic, social and environmental objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the three objectives (paragraphs 7 - 8).

- 7.3. Paragraph 10 states that *‘so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.’*
- 7.4. Paragraph 11 notes that Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This notes that for decision-taking, this means:
- Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan without delay; or
 - Where there are no Development Plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:
 - The application of policies in the framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development; or
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the 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.
- 7.5. Chapter 6 relates to building a strong, competitive economy.
- 7.6. Paragraph 85 states that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. It notes that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 7.7. Paragraph 88 relates to support for a prosperous rural economy. It states that planning decisions should enable (a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings; (c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and (d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities such as public houses.
- 7.8. Chapter 12 relates to achieving well-designed and beautiful places.
- 7.9. Paragraph 131 notes that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It notes that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 7.10. Paragraph 135 notes that planning policies and decisions should ensure, amongst other things, that developments:
- a) Function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

- b) Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) Optimise the potential of the site to sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

7.11. Chapter 16 relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

7.12. Paragraph 202 states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

7.13. Paragraph 207 states that in determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. It notes that the level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

7.14. Paragraph 210 states that in determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should take account of (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage of assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; (b) the positive contribution that the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

7.15. Paragraph 212 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be).

7.16. Paragraph 213 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, either from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting, should require clear and convincing justification.

- 7.17. Paragraph 214 states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, Local Planning Authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or one of a number of limited exceptions apply.
- 7.18. Paragraph 215 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

8. HORSHAM DISTRICT PLANNING FRAMEWORK

- 8.1. The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) was adopted in November 2015 and seeks to guide development in the district up to 2031.
- 8.2. The following policies are considered to be of relevance to this application.
- 8.3. **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. It states it will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions, which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible and to secure development that improves the economic, social, and environmental conditions in the area. It notes that planning applications that are in accordance with policies in the Development Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.4. **Policy 7: Economic Growth** - states that sustainable development in the District over the Plan period will be achieved by a number of means, including (Policy 7(6)) 'promotion of the district as an attractive place to stay and visit to increase the value of the tourism economy'.
- 8.5. **Policy 10: Rural Economic Development** - states that sustainable rural economic development and enterprise within the district will be encouraged in order to generate local employment opportunities and economic and social and environmental benefits for local communities. It notes that in the countryside, development which maintains the quality and character of the area, whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity will be supported in principle. It notes that any development should be appropriate to the countryside location and must:
- Contribute to the diverse and sustainable farming enterprises within the district, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, contribute to the wider rural economy and/ or promote recreation in, and the enjoyment of, the countryside; and either:
 - Be contained wherever possible within suitable located buildings which are appropriate for conversion or, in the case of an established rural industrial estate, within the existing boundaries of the estate; or
 - Result in substantial environment improvement and reduce the impact on the countryside particularly if there are exceptional cases where new or replacement buildings are involved. New buildings or development in the rural area will be acceptable

provided that it support sustainable economic growth towards balanced living and working community and criteria (a) has been considered first.

- 8.6. The policy also states that the development proposals must demonstrate that car parking requirements can be accommodated satisfactorily within the immediate surrounds of the buildings or an alternative, logical solution is proposed.
- 8.7. The policy states that *'proposals for the conversion of rural buildings to business and commercial uses will be considered favourably over residential use in the first instance'*.
- 8.8. The supporting text notes that there is an ongoing need to maintain and enhance the rural economy, and this includes diversification of rural employment space and maximising visit spending through tourism across the district.
- 8.9. **Policy 11: Tourism and Cultural Facilities** - states that measures which promote tourism and enhance local cultural facilities, including recreation based rural diversification, will be encouraged. It notes that any development should be of a scale and type appropriate to the location and should increase the range, or improve the quality of accommodation, attraction or experiences for tourists, day visitors, business visitors, and residents in the District. It states that support will be particularly given to amongst other things, proposals which develop the opportunities associated with rural diversification and rural development initiatives, particularly where they assist farm diversification projects, benefit the local economy, or enable the retention of buildings contributing to the character of the countryside.
- 8.10. The supporting text notes that tourism plays a big role in the district's economy, but more accommodation is required, given the generally limited number of hotels. On this basis, it is noted that more accommodation provision would increase the visitor economy.
- 8.11. **Policy 25: Natural Environment and Landscape Character** - states that 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. It notes that the Council will support development proposals which protect, conserve, and enhance the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintain settlement identity.
- 8.12. **Policy 26: Countryside Protection** - states that outside built up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. It notes that any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and meet one of a limited number of criteria, including (Policy 26(3)) provide for quiet informal recreational use. It states that proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location.
- 8.13. It notes development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead either individually or cumulatively to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects and/ or conserves and/ or enhances the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located, including the development pattern of the area, historical and ecological

qualities, tranquility and sensitivity to change; the pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, water bodies, and other features; and the landform of the area.

- 8.14. **Policy 32: Quality of New Development** - states that high quality and inclusive design for all development in the district will be required, based on a clear understanding of the local, physical, social, economic, environmental, and policy context for development. It notes that in particular, development will be expected to provide, amongst other things, an attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environment, complement the locally distinctive character and heritage of the district, contribute a sense of place in buildings and spaces and the way they integrate with their surroundings, and optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development.
- 8.15. **Policy 33: Development Principles** - states that in order to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment, developments will be required to:
- make efficient use of land and prioritise the use of previously developed land and buildings whilst respect any constraints that exist;
 - ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/ users of nearby property and land, for example, through overlooking or noise, whilst having regard to sensitivities of surrounding development;
 - ensure that the scale, massing, and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout, and where relevant, relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces, and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views;
 - are locally distinctive in character, respect the character of the surrounding area (including its overall setting, townscape features, views, and green corridors) and, where available and applicable, take account of the recommendations/ policies of the relevant Design Statements and character assessments;
 - use high standards of building materials, finishes, and landscaping;
 - presume in favour of the retention of existing important landscapes and natural features, for example, trees, hedges, banks, and water courses; and
 - ensure buildings and spaces are orientated to gain maximum benefit from sunlight and passive energy unless this conflicts with the character of the surrounding townscape, landscape, or topography where it is of good quality.
- 8.16. **Policy 34 Cultural and Heritage Assets** - states that the Council recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and as such, the Council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets. It states that applications affecting heritage assets will be required to, amongst other things:
- Reinforce the special character of the district's historic environment through appropriate siting, form and design; including the use of traditional materials and techniques;

- Preserve, and ensure clear legibility of, locally distinctive vernacular building forms and their setting, features, fabric and materials;
- Secure the viable and sustainable future of heritage assets through continued preservation by uses that are consistent with the significance of the heritage asset; and
- Retain and improve the setting of heritage assets, including views, public rights of way, trees and landscape features, including the historic public realm features.

- 8.17. **Policy 35: Climate Change** - states that development must be designed so that it can adapt to the impacts of climate change, including through the use of measures which promote the conservation of water.
- 8.18. **Policy 37: Sustainable Construction** - states that proposals must seek to improve the sustainability of development and that schemes should incorporate a range of measures to achieve this.
- 8.19. **Policy 41: Parking** - states that adequate parking facilities must be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users.

9. HORSHAM DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2023 - 2040 (REGULATION 19)

- 9.1. Horsham District Council are preparing a new Local Plan. Consultation on the Submission Version (Regulation 19) Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 (eHDLP) took place in early 2024.
- 9.2. It was subsequently submitted for Examination and following the opening of Hearings, the Inspector issued an Initial Findings Letter¹ which recommended that the Plan be withdrawn.
- 9.3. More recently, following the announcement of proposed changes to the national requirements regarding the 'Duty to Cooperate', the LPA have written to the Inspector² stating that it wishes to resume Hearings and the Examination.
- 9.4. **Policy 31: Rural Economic Development** - states that sustainable rural economic development and enterprise within the District as a whole will be supported where it is shown to generate local employment opportunities and economic, social and environmental benefits for local communities.
- 9.5. It states that outside of built-up area boundaries or secondary settlements, economic development which maintains the quality and character of the area, whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity will be supported in principle. It notes that any development should be appropriate to the countryside location and will be supported providing that it meets a number of criteria. For non-farming countryside based enterprises, this states that as a first preference, (Policy 31(2)(c)(i)) it is contained within suitably located existing buildings which are appropriate for conversion. The policy notes that proposals will be supported provided that they do not adversely affect the character, appearance or visual

¹ letter dated 04th April 2025

² letter dated 04th December 2025

amenities and the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the location in question, demonstrate a net increase in biodiversity in and around the site, and parking proposals can be satisfactorily accommodated within the immediate surroundings of the buildings,

- 9.6. **Policy 32 - Conversion of Agricultural and Rural Buildings to Commercial, Community and Residential Uses** - despite the heading of the policy, the body of the text states that it relates to the 'conversion of redundant agricultural and forestry buildings to residential use'.

10. RUDGWICK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 10.1. The Rudgwick Neighbourhood Plan (RNP) was 'made' in June 2021. It forms part of the Development Plan for the district. It covers the parish area and seeks to guide development up to 2031.
- 10.2. The 'Parish Spatial Strategy' notes that The Haven is a large dispersed settlement of mainly old cottages and farms in the south of the Parish, loosely centred around Haven Road and the Blue Ship junctions, with a dispersed settlement pattern.
- 10.3. **RNP.1: Spatial Strategy** - states that proposals for sustainable development will be supported. It notes that outside of defined built up areas new residential development will only be supported on allocated sites or where they would accord with the residential exception policies in the plan.
- 10.4. **RNP.2: Spatial Strategy** - states that all development should be designed to (a) maintain the settlement pattern in the parish and avoid coalescence of settlements; and (b) avoid the diminution of a settlements identity and actively respond to its built pattern.
- 10.5. **Policy RNP6.1: Materials** - states that development should utilise materials that reflect the common building styles across the parish. It notes that this means brick should be the main building material complemented by tile hanging or timber cladding on upper floors, with tiles on the roof.
- 10.6. **Policy RNP7.1 - Architectural Style** - states that new development proposals should be designed with reference to the surrounding architecture, local vernacular and local characteristic details, such as the details of rooflines, chimneys, sash windows and timber doors.
- 10.7. **Policy RNP9.3 - Street Scene** - states that development should establish traditional boundary features, such as a low native hedge, low brick wall, low palisade wooden fence or Sussex style oak cleft and rail.

11. CONSIDERATIONS

11.1. In the assessment of this application, it is considered that the main issues are:

- Principle of Development;
- Effect on Heritage;
- Landscape Effect;
- Residential Amenity;
- Ecology; and
- Access and Parking.

11.2. Each of these is now considered in turn.

Principle of Development

- 11.3. The application site is in a rural countryside location for the purposes of applying planning policy. The building comprises a former stables, that is in use for purposes ancillary to The Blue Ship Public House, and the associated residential dwelling.
- 11.4. All tiers of planning guidance set out support for a prosperous rural economy, including through the provision of rural tourism accommodation and facilities.
- 11.5. At a national level, the NPPF makes clear that planning decisions should support proposals that contribute to the growth and expansion of businesses in rural areas, including through the conversion of existing buildings, support for sustainable rural tourism which respect the character of the countryside, and proposals which support the retention and development of local services and facilities, such as public houses.
- 11.6. At a local level, the HDPF sets out support for proposals which promote tourism and local cultural facilities, including those which increase the range or quality of accommodation for tourists, where they are of a scale and type appropriate to the location, and enable the retention of buildings that contribute to the character of the countryside.
- 11.7. The application proposals will directly and positively contribute to supporting the existing public house and associated seasonal camping facilities on site. It is widely acknowledged that public houses are currently under significant viability pressure. The applicant seeks to provide on site accommodation as a supplemental source of income and to facilitate additional guests and visitors to the site, encouraging greater use of the public house.
- 11.8. The scheme comprises the reuse of an existing building, which is in keeping with the character of its setting, and which presently is underused.
- 11.9. The provision of a holiday let unit will positively and directly contribute to the vitality and viability of the existing public house, as well as helping to support the wider rural economy through additional added spend in the local area.

- 11.10. The holiday-let unit will help to secure added income throughout the year, representing a benefit over the camping facilities which are seasonal. This will help to facilitate the viability of The Blue Ship outside of the summer camping period. The existing camping use and the proposed holiday let are key elements of diversification in seeking to ensure the viability of the public house use.
- 11.11. Subject to design and impact, the proposed works are considered to be acceptable in principle and in accordance with Chapter 6, and in particular Paragraph 85, of the NPPF, as well as Policy 10 and Policy 11 of the HDPF.

Effect on Heritage

- 11.12. The Blue Ship is a Grade II Listed Building. Having regard to the age of the application building, its physical proximity to the Listed Building and its historic functional relationship, it is considered to comprise a building which is part of the designated heritage asset.
- 11.13. Attached at Appendix 1 are extracts of Ordnance Survey maps from 1875, 1895, 1909, and 1935.
- 11.14. On the Ordnance Survey extract of 1875, neither the application building nor the addition to the main public house are in evidence. They are shown on the Ordnance Survey extract of 1895. This reflects the Listing description of the building, that notes the property was the subject of additions between 1884 and 1891.
- 11.15. The application building was thus contemporaneous with the Victorian era addition, that is attached to the western end of the main public house structure.
- 11.16. The heritage significance of the application building therefore lies primarily in its illustrative value of the evolution of the main Listed Building as a public house.
- 11.17. All tiers of planning guidance state that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. The NPPF sets out that where development proposals would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 11.18. The application building was constructed as an ancillary stable serving the public house. Its current use is predominantly for ancillary storage. It no longer serves a key functional purpose supporting the operations of the main building, and is redundant from its originally intended purpose.
- 11.19. The applicant seeks to deliver a new use in order to secure a viable use for the building in the long term, and also support the wider viability of the main building.
- 11.20. The proposed works envisage conversion of the building within its existing fabric, without extension. The extent of external change is modest and is predominantly limited to alterations to existing openings, together with the introduction of conservation style roof lights, and new

fenestration in the rear (west) elevation. The main elevation (east) facing the public house would be little altered.

- 11.21. The works would retain the overall plan-form of the building, with openings created within the internal walls where required, to facilitate a access through the ground floor.
- 11.22. The application proposals will help to support and underpin the viability and vitality of the public house, with a use that is complementary to its primary purpose.
- 11.23. The works have been designed to minimise the extent of alteration to the building and in particular, external elevations, and retain its overall character, fabric and contextual relationship with the public house.
- 11.24. The heritage significance of the building is defined by its relatively recent age, and its subservient relationship to the main building. It is considered the application proposals will preserve this character and relationship, and thus the significance of the building, both in its own right, and its contribution to the significance of the main Listed Building.
- 11.25. Notwithstanding this, and in the eventuality that it is concluded that the works will result in some, modest harm to the heritage asset, it is submitted that this would be clearly 'less than substantial'. It would therefore be subject to the test set out in Paragraph 214 of the NPPF. This notes that any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 11.26. It is considered that the works would facilitate both the long-term preservation of the application building, and help to support and underpin the vitality and viability of the public house, at a time when it is accepted that public houses are experiencing pressure on long-term viability.
- 11.27. These represent benefits to the application proposals, that are considered to be public benefits that satisfy the requirements of the NPPF test.
- 11.28. It is considered that the scheme would have no undue impact on the heritage asset and will support its long-term conservation in an optimum viable use that will also help support the public house use. On this basis, the scheme is in accordance with Chapter 16 of the NPPF, and Policy 34 of the HDPF.

Landscape Effect

- 11.29. A Landscape Character Assessment was carried out of Horsham district in 2003. Within this, the application site was defined as falling within the 'Slinfold and Five Oaks Wooded Farmlands'. The key characteristics of this area are:
 - Gently undulating wooded landscape;
 - Many small streams draining to the Adur;
 - Small hedged pastures. Some larger arable fields;
 - Extensive coppice woodland in small and large irregularly shaped blocks;

- Glimpsed views across the Arun Valley from hedgerow gaps;
 - Historic farmsteads dispersed along winding lanes;
 - Local vernacular of timber framing, weatherboarding, brick and tile hanging; and
 - Largely rural character, although busy A29/A272 road corridors in the west, together with some aircraft noise.
- 11.30. Its overall character is defined as being bounded by the Arun Valley to the west and lying on the Weald Clay. It is dominated by the enclosing presence of woodlands around small irregular pastures. There are gentle undulations created by small streams that cut through the clay. There are many small historic farmsteads which are dispersed along winding lanes and tracks. Much of the area has a strong rural character, although nearer the A29 road corridor there are some urban influences.
- 11.31. The setting of the application site is broadly reflective of this landscape character. It is rural in character, located adjacent to winding lanes that are typically defined by indigenous hedgerows, beyond which are irregular and frequently small field parcels that are predominantly laid to grass and interspersed with woodland blocks (the latter in particular that lies to the south of the application site).
- 11.32. The application building is set close to the public highway. Despite this, as a result of boundary hedgerows, in particular immediately to the west of the site, the building has relatively little visibility within its wider context. Views of the building are substantively limited to its immediate context from the east along Blue Ship Road, and from the south along Okehurst Road. Within these views, the building is seen either against the backdrop of, or filtered by, surrounding hedgerows and trees. This includes a number of mature trees within hedgelines.
- 11.33. The application works envisage relatively modest external alteration to the building, and without increase in its overall size. As a result of this, the application works will have no detrimental impact on the character of the local landscape.
- 11.34. The retained building will present as an ancillary structure within the context of the adjacent, and public house. The building is constructed of traditional vernacular materials comprising brickwork walls and clay tile roof. Overall, the works will have a neutral landscape effect.
- 11.35. On this basis, the application is in accordance with Chapter 12 of the NPPF, Policy 11, 25, 26, 32, and 33 of the HDPF and Policy RNP6.1, RNP7.1 and RNP9.3 of the RNP.

Residential Amenity

- 11.36. The closest residential property to the application site is the residential dwelling unit located on the upper floors of The Blue Ship Public House. The is owned and occupied by the applicant.
- 11.37. Other residential properties within the vicinity are located to the south and south-east beyond the public highway and are separated and screened by intervening landscaping, in particular mature hedgerows and trees that lie close to the public highway.

- 11.38. The application works would result in only a modest increase in intensity of the use of the site. This would be limited to the comings and goings of occupiers of the unit. This would be a relatively modest level of activity, within the context of the adjacent public house. It would be unlikely to result in any material effect.
- 11.39. The application works will have no undue impact on local residential amenity. On this basis, the application is in accordance with the requirements of Policy 33 of the HDPF.

Ecology

- 11.40. The application is supported by a Preliminary Roost Assessment, Bat Emergence Survey and BNG Review prepared by The Ecology Partnership.
- 11.41. This notes that the application building was the subject of a Preliminary Roost Assessment, which considered it has 'low' suitability for roosting bats. On this basis, a single Dusk Emergence Survey was carried out on 6th August 2025. No bats were recorded emerging during this survey. As a result, it has been concluded that the building does not support roosting bats and no further surveys are required in conjunction with the proposed application works.
- 11.42. The report sets out a number of recommendations to be followed in the implementation of the development. This includes sensitive lighting, and enhancements that include the installation of bat boxes.
- 11.43. The report also contains an assessment of the compliance of the scheme in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain obligations. It notes that the site does not support any habitat, and having regard to its character, it falls within the de minimis development threshold and is not required to provide Biodiversity Net Gain post development.
- 11.44. Having regard to the above, it is considered that the application works can be implemented without adverse impact on habitats and biodiversity features. It is therefore in accordance with the requirements of Policies 25 and 26 of the HDPF.

Access and Parking

- 11.45. The application site is accessed from Blue Ship Road close to its junction with Okehurst Road. The site provides off-street parking for the applicants and patrons of The Blue Ship, in the form of hard surfacing along the site frontage.
- 11.46. In conjunction with the development, an extent of existing hardstanding located immediately adjacent to the east elevation of the building is proposed to be reserved for use by occupiers of the holiday let unit. This would provide off road parking for one car.
- 11.47. It is considered that the proposed works will have no material effect on highway capacity or highway safety.
- 11.48. On this basis, the application is in accordance with the requirements of Policy 41 of the HDPF.

12. SUMMARY

- 12.1. The application envisages the conversion of an existing building that is within the grounds of, and ancillary to, the The Blue Ship Public House. The building is no longer required for its original purpose as stabling, and has long been in limited use for ancillary storage.
- 12.2. It is widely acknowledged that public houses are experiencing pressure on their viability. In order to counter this, the applicant seeks to convert the application building to a single holiday let unit. This would supplement the income of the public house, and reflects the seasonal camping that takes place on other parts of the site and is an important component in generating visitors and customer spend at the public house. The existing and proposed diversification are fundamental to contribute to the viability of the public house use.
- 12.3. All tiers of planning guidance support the reuse of rural buildings in principle, and in particular, where they help to support and underpin the rural economy.
- 12.4. The application building is a designated heritage asset, constructed between 1884 and 1891. Its value lies in its reflection of the evolution of the public house.
- 12.5. The application envisages conversion with relatively modest external and internal change. The key characteristics of the building will be preserved, and the works will have no undue impact on the heritage significance of the building or wider site.
- 12.6. The application building has limited public views, primarily related to short sections along the adjacent public highway. The works will have no undue impact on local landscape character.
- 12.7. The scheme will have no undue impact on local residential amenity, or on biodiversity interests.
- 12.8. The site is served by existing off-street parking, which is suitable for the proposed use.
- 12.9. Overall, the application is in accordance with Development Plan policy, and in particular, Policies 10, 11, 25, 26, 32, 33, 34, and 41 of the HDPF, and Policies RNP6.1, RNP7.1 and RNP9.3 of the RNP, together with the NPPF, including Chapters 12 and 16.
- 12.10. Overall, there are no material considerations that weigh against the scheme, and on this basis, it is considered that planning permission and associated Listed Building Consent should be granted.

APPENDIX 1

Extracts of Ordnance Survey Maps from 1875, 1895, 1909, and 1935

IMAGE 1: EXTRACT OF ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP OF 1875



IMAGE 2: EXTRACT OF ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP OF 1895

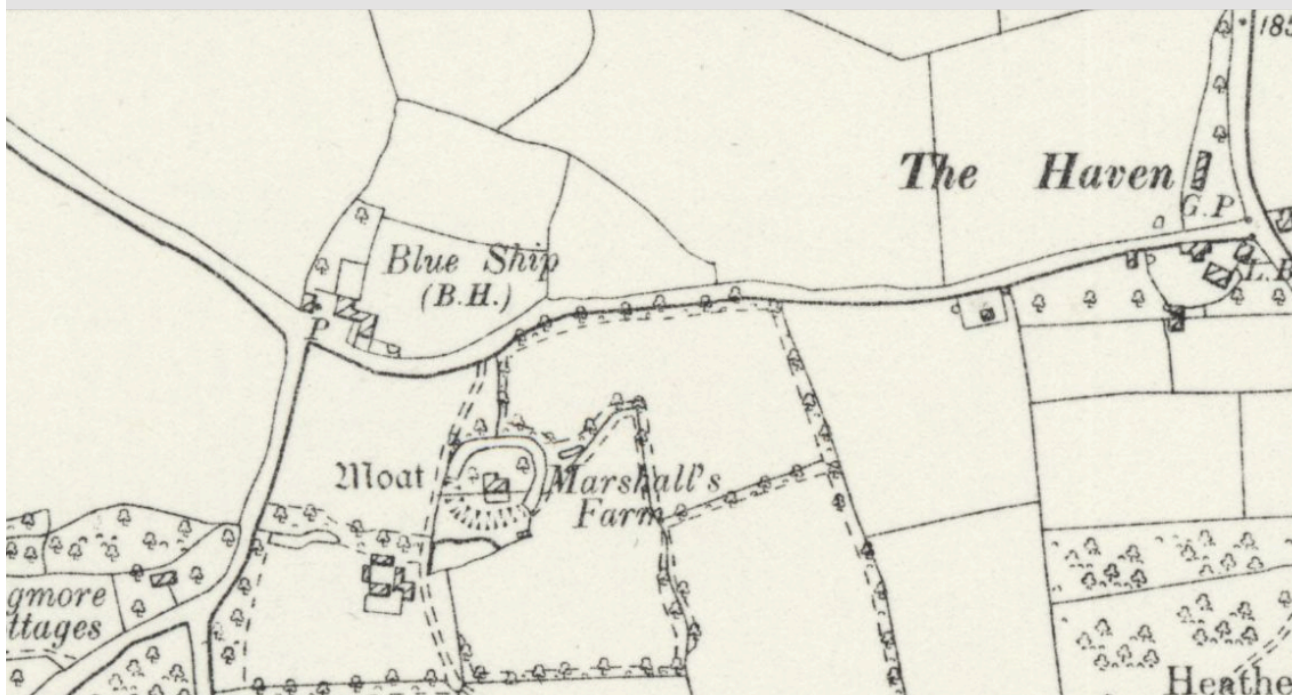


IMAGE 3: EXTRACT OF ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP OF 1909



IMAGE 4: EXTRACT OF ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP OF 1935

