

29 July 2026
Horsham District Council
Albery House
Springfield Road
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 2GB

RH/Let/P2367

Dear Sir, Madam

Application for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the “Retention and Conversion from a Former School Boarding House including Residential Flat (Use Classes C2 and C3) to a Self-Build Single Dwelling (Use Class C3), Replacement Windows and Alteration of Ground Floor Bay to Patio Doors” at Dormer House, Church Street, Steyning, BN44 3YH.

Introduction

This Letter has been prepared on behalf of **Mr James Hoad** and supports an application for planning permission and listed building consent for works to Dormer House, a Former School Boarding House (Use Class C2) with residential flat at second floor (Use Class C3) within a wider redevelopment site which comprises the Former Steyning Grammar School.

By means of a brief background, the Former Steyning Grammar School closed in 2021 following a decision by the Bohunt Trust to consolidate its operations across its campuses, compounded by the ongoing and significant repair costs associated with the buildings on site. Following the closure, the site was brought to the open market, with a sale eventually completing in 2026.

It is noted that the Trust's retained campus at The Shooting Field, located approximately 550 metres to the north, is currently subject to a development and extension programme and is the subject of a live planning application (DC/26/0322). The former Grammar School site is therefore no longer required for educational purposes. The prolonged period during which the site has been available on the open market is considered, in part, to demonstrate its lack of viability as an educational facility. It is reasonable to conclude that had an alternative educational provider required the facility, a transaction would have been completed within the five-year period since its closure.

The Former Boarding House, which was associated with the Former Steyning Grammar School, closed in the summer of 2023 as students were relocated to the new Boarding House, located on the opposite side of School Lane. The Former Boarding House therefore became redundant as a boarding facility and has since been used occasionally for ad-hoc lettings to foreign students or for teaching assistants from overseas. The residential flat at second floor was occupied up until August 2025.

A separate, comprehensive planning application will be submitted for the wider site in due course and by a separate Applicant. The proposals for Dormer House are being brought forward independently, by Mr James Hoad, to secure its retention, appropriate residential re-use as a single dwelling and sensitive repair and alteration to the building. The conversion is brought forward as a self-build project, and will be occupied by the Applicant as their sole residence.

Whilst Dormer House is not individually listed, it falls within the scope of a group listing, and following pre-application discussions with the Council under reference PE/26/0188, it is understood that listed building consent is required for the proposed works.

The Site

The application site is located within the centre of Steyning, in the Built-up Area Boundary and within the Horsham District of West Sussex. The site also falls within the Steyning Conservation Area. The total site area is approximately 0.04ha.

Dormer House comprises a three-storey detached building and features a dual-pitched roof with a flint finish. As set out previously, Dormer House was formerly in use on ground and first floors, as a School boarding house (Use Class C2) in association with Steyning Grammar School up until 2023. Whilst the former School closed in 2021, Dormer House remained in use as a boarding house until the summer of 2023, before the students relocated to the other side of School Lane.

Since then, the building has been used occasionally for ad-hoc lettings to foreign students or for teaching assistants from overseas. The residential flat (Use Class C3) at second floor was occupied up until August 2025.



Figure 1 - Dormer House

The building is located to the south of School Lane and to the east of Church Street. As illustrated in the below Location and Block plans, the building sits behind Holland Cottage and can be accessed via School Lane.

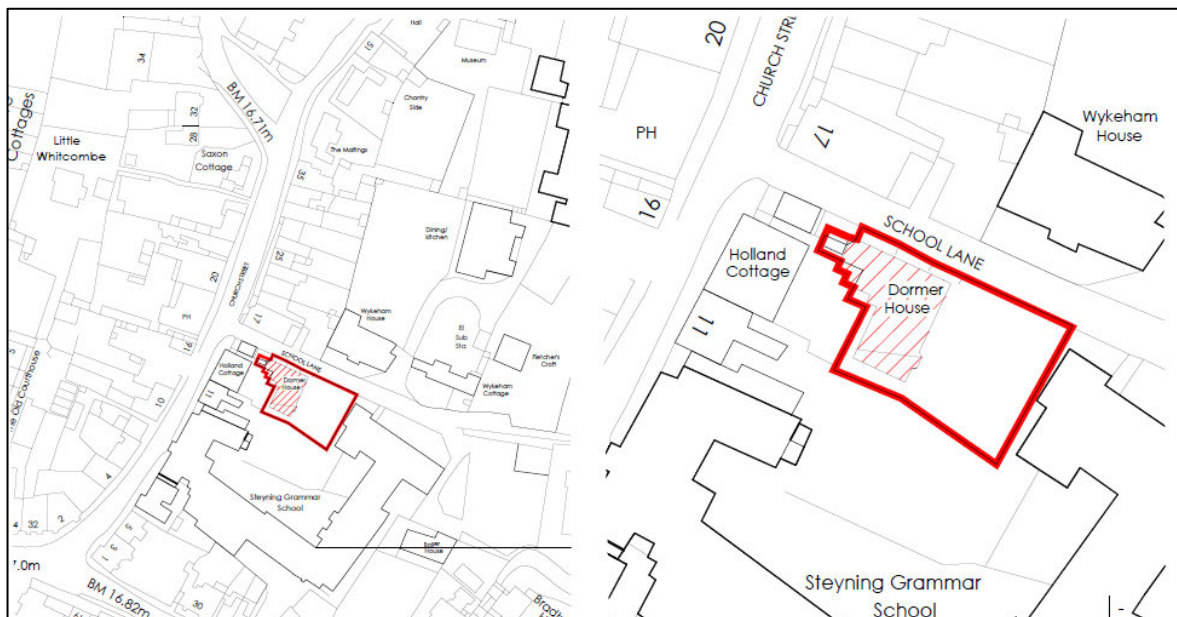


Figure 2 - Location and Block Plan

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore considered to be at a low risk of flooding. The site is also not subject to any surface water flooding. Refer to Figures 3 and 4.

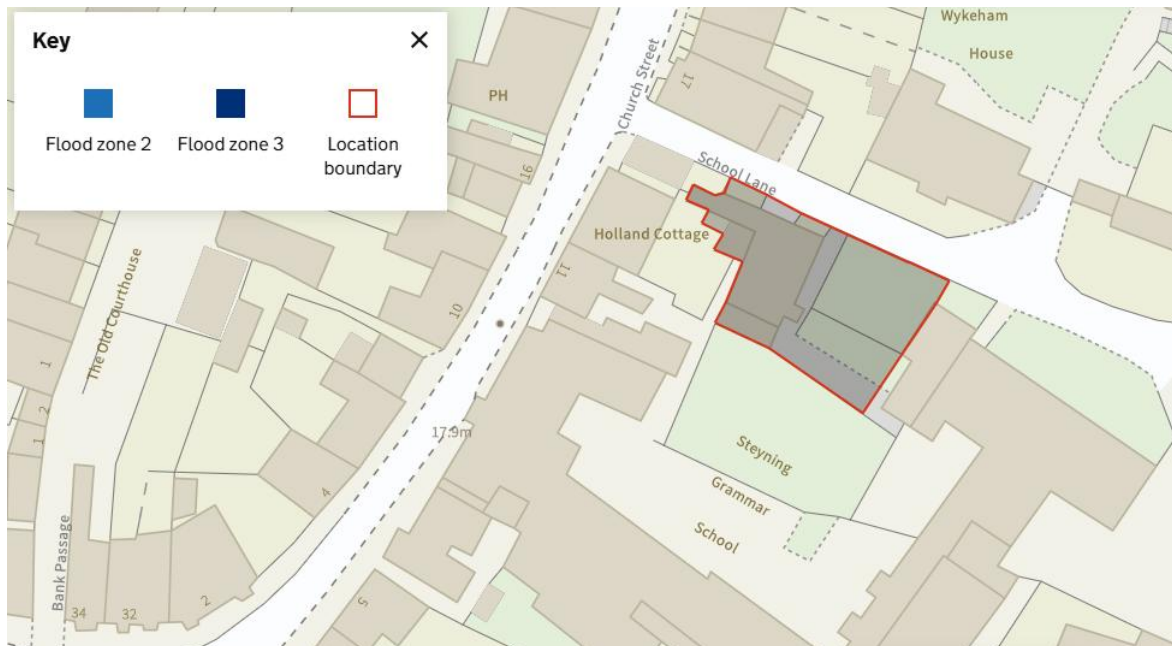


Figure 3 - Government Flood Maps for Planning - Flood Zones



Figure 4 – Surface Water Flood Map for Planning (Present Day)



Figure 5 - Surface Water Flood Map for Planning (Climate Change 2061 to 2125)

In terms of surrounding uses, the site is bounded to the north by a terrace of properties ranging between two and three storeys in height, the majority of which are in residential use. The immediate neighbour beyond School Lane is a three-storey flint building currently in use as a dental surgery. School Lane itself is a narrow single-track paved access road, which leads to a number of two and three-storey residential dwellings set within individual plots, intercepted by a gated entrance to a further area of land and buildings associated with Steyning Grammar School, which now accommodates the school's updated boarding facilities.

To the east, beyond the Former School buildings and car parking area lies the Steyning Centre, a village hall and function hire facility with a dedicated car park to its north. The Steyning Methodist Church and a number of two and three-storey residential dwellings are also located in this vicinity, all of which are accessed from the High Street to the south-west.

The immediacy is therefore occupied by a number of residential and commercial uses. The site is well located in close proximity to Steyning town centre, with a range of commercial services and facilities available along the High Street to the north-west. Steyning benefits from both a primary and secondary school, as well as ready access to the South Downs National Park.

The site is located within a sustainable location. Bus services are available along the High Street, with a stop located approximately 160m to the south. The stop is served by the Nos. 2, 2B, 60, 100 and 106 bus services. The No. 2 service operates at approximately hourly intervals between 6am and midnight, providing connections to Shooting Field, Shoreham-by-Sea, Brighton, and Rottingdean.

In addition to the above, the immediacy benefits from various car parking locations with two large car parks in close proximity to the site; the closest being Fletchers Croft located 100m to the east.

Planning History

Pre-Application Discussions

A pre-application request was submitted in June 2026 under reference PE/26/0188 to discuss the re-development of the Former Steyning Grammar School, including conversion of Dormer House. Whilst formal feedback is awaited, preliminary discussions at the pre-application meeting did not lead to any concerns being raised in principle in relation to the retention and conversion of Dormer House, or the proposed external and internal alterations.

Planning History Pertaining to the Site

The following comprises the relevant planning applications pertaining to the site and which are available on the LPAs website. It should be noted that the below relates directly to Dormer House and does not include reference to the wider Former Steyning Grammar School.

Reference DC/12/0294. Replacement and partial infilling of bay windows to East elevation ground floor and entrance door (Listed Building Consent). Permitted 5 April 2012.

The above application received Listed Building consent for a number of alterations to the existing fenestration at Dormer House, including the replacement of existing patio doors on the east elevation, to windows.

The current application proposes the reversion of this aspect of the consent and seeks to re-introduce the doors, instead of the windows. The proposal is therefore not introducing an entirely new opening or form of development, but rather returning the bay to an arrangement which previously existed. This planning history is material to the consideration of the application and supports the acceptability of the proposed alteration. This is discussed in further detail later in this Letter.

Wider Context

DC/26/0322 - Part-demolition of existing teaching buildings, MUGAs and all-weather pitch. Construction of replacement 2-storey and 3-storey teaching buildings, flood-lit all-weather pitch and hard surfaced sports courts, with associated access, parking, landscaping and infrastructure. Pending Decision.

The above-referenced application relates to the site known as 'Shooting Fields' and is the retained and enhanced school site. It seeks the redevelopment and extension of the existing school facility to increase its capacity, following the closure of the educational facilities at the former Steyning Grammar School site. The sale of the site in which this application request relates, was required in order to help fund the redevelopment of Shooting Fields.

The Proposal

The application seeks consent for:

- the retention and conversion of Dormer House to a single dwellinghouse comprising 4no. bedrooms;
- the replacement of existing windows; and
- the replacement of one ground floor bay window with a set of patio doors.

The proposed residential use is considered an appropriate form of re-use for the building and will secure its long-term occupation and maintenance. As set out in the proposed floor plans, the proposals seek the sensitive sub-division of the layout to convert the building from a former boarding house and residential flat, to a 4no. bedroom dwelling. This would involve the removal of a limited number of internal walls, as highlighted on the drawings.

The proposed replacement windows have been designed to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the building. The intention is to ensure that the replacement windows are sympathetic in terms of their proportions, design and finish. The immediacy has been reviewed in detail and it is noted that a Conservation Style uPVC sliding slash window has been used on surrounding buildings. A similar style will be explored for this building and further details can be subject to appropriately worded conditions.

In addition, one of the ground floor bay double glazed windows on the east elevation is proposed to be replaced with patio doors. As set out above, this bay is understood historically to have comprised doors prior to the alterations approved in 2012. The proposal therefore represents a modest and logical alteration which responds to the building's historic form while also improving the functionality and amenity of the dwelling.

At this stage, no on-site vehicle car parking is proposed. This is considered to be entirely acceptable given the site's close proximity to Fletchers Car Park in which season tickets can be purchased by residents on HDC's website, at a cost of £180 per annum. This is discussed in further detail later in this Letter.

Sufficient space is available on-site for cycle parking and bin storage, via the existing store building to the south of the building.

Planning Policy

The [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) was adopted in 2012 with a revised version published in December 2024. The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Those relevant parts of The Framework in respect of this application include **Section 2** (Achieving sustainable development), **5** (Delivering a sufficient supply of homes), **9** (Promoting sustainable transport), **11** (Making effective use of land), **12** (Achieving well-designed places) and **16** (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment).

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

The PPG was published by the Government in March 2014 and is a dynamic document, being updated regularly, including most recently the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment which was published alongside the new NPPF in December 2024 and updated in February 2025. While it generally supplements the overarching objectives and policies of the Framework by providing further detail, it has recently been clarified by the courts that it carries equal weight within the decision-making process (*Mead Realisations Limited v Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities & Anor* [2024] EWHC 279 (Admin)).

[Horsham District Planning Framework \(2015\)](#) is the overarching planning document for Horsham District outside the South Downs National Park (SDNP). The policies of most relevance to the proposals are bullet pointed below, and are explored in further detail later in this Letter.

- **Policy 1 – Sustainable Development**
- **Policy 2 - Strategic Development**
- **Policy 32 – The Quality of New Development**
- **Policy 33 – Development Principles**
- **Policy 34 – Cultural and Heritage Assets**
- **Policy 40 – Sustainable Transport**

[Steyning Neighbourhood Development Plan](#) sets out locally specific policies to guide development within the parish for the period 2019-2031. It is noted within the introduction to the Plan that infrastructure and new housing are not addressed within the NDP itself; however, reference is made to the overarching aspirations for the area through the Plan's 'Vision for Steyning'. The Vision for Steyning has been reviewed in full in the preparation of this application, and is considered to sit in conformity with the proposals.

Planning Appraisal

Principle of Development

The proposed development seeks the re-use of an existing building, which is already partly residential, within the built-up area boundary of Steyning, in a sustainable and highly accessible location. The principle of residential development in this location has already been established by reason of the flat at second floor, and is therefore considered acceptable having regard to the provisions of the NPPF, together with Policies 1, 2 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

Dormer House was formerly occupied as a school boarding house (Use Class C2) on ground and first floors, in association with Steyning Grammar School. However, as set out earlier in this Letter, the educational use of the wider Former Steyning Grammar School site has ceased and the boarding function associated with Dormer House came to an end in summer 2023, following the relocation of pupils to alternative boarding accommodation on the opposite side of School Lane. Since then, the building has been used occasionally for ad-hoc lettings to foreign students or for teaching assistants from overseas. The residential flat at second floor was occupied up until August 2025. In these circumstances, it is considered that the former use no longer serves an ongoing operational purpose and that the building is appropriately capable of being brought forward for an alternative use.

Furthermore and as discussed in pre-application discussions, the wider Former Steyning Grammar School site is coming forward for redevelopment purposes and by a different Applicant. The sale of both of these sites by the School has been required in order to help fund the redevelopment of Shooting Fields, the redevelopment of which is currently under consideration under reference DC/26/0322.

The proposal to convert the building to a single dwelling (Use Class C3) represents a logical and sustainable form of re-use. It would secure the long-term occupation and maintenance of the building and would make effective use of an existing structure in accordance with the core objectives of the NPPF. The development would also contribute, albeit modestly, towards the supply of housing within the District without requiring substantial new built form or resulting in encroachment into the countryside.

The site is located centrally within Steyning and is within easy walking distance of shops, services, public car parks and bus stops. The location is therefore well suited to residential occupation. The proposal is also modest in scale, comprising the conversion of a single existing building into one dwelling only, and would sit comfortably within the prevailing mixed residential character of the surrounding area.

Overall, the principle of converting Dormer House from its former boarding use and residential flat, to a single dwelling, is considered acceptable and consistent with the aims of sustainable development.

Design and Character

The proposals are limited in scope and are sympathetic to the existing character and appearance of the building. No extension or increase in footprint is proposed. The works principally comprise internal reconfiguration, replacement windows and the re-introduction of patio doors within part of the ground floor bay on the east elevation.

Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework require development to be of a high standard of design, to respond sensitively to local character, and to respect the existing built environment. The proposal is considered to satisfy these objectives.

The replacement windows are intended to reflect the proportions and appearance of the existing openings and will preserve the established visual character of the building. Whilst detailed specifications can be secured by condition if required, the overall approach is one of sensitive replacement rather than material alteration.

Similarly, the proposed patio doors are modest in nature and are to be inserted within an existing and previous opening. As explained within the Planning History section of this Letter, the opening historically comprised doors prior to the alterations approved in 2012. The proposal therefore does not introduce a new feature that would appear incongruous or out of place, but instead reinstates an earlier arrangement which is entirely compatible with the form and appearance of the elevation.

The building also lies within the Steyning Conservation Area, where particular care must be taken to ensure that development preserves or enhances local character. Given the limited extent of the external changes proposed, it is considered that the development will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. There is no enlargement of the building, no harmful alteration to its built form, and no visual intrusion arising from the proposal.

The use of the existing outbuilding to accommodate cycle parking and bin storage is also welcomed, as this ensures that functional servicing requirements can be met in a discreet manner without detracting from the appearance of the site.

In summary, the proposals are proportionate, respectful and consistent with the prevailing character of both the building and its surroundings.

Heritage Considerations

Although Dormer House is not individually listed, it falls within the scope of a group listing and, as confirmed through pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority, listed building consent is required in this instance. The site also lies within the Steyning Conservation Area. The heritage implications of the proposals have therefore been carefully considered.

Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework seeks to ensure that development conserves and, where appropriate, enhances heritage assets and their settings. The NPPF similarly requires proposals affecting heritage assets to be assessed with regard to their significance and the impact of any change upon that significance.

In this case, the proposed works are modest and heritage-led in nature. The external alterations are confined to the replacement of windows and the re-introduction of patio doors within an existing ground floor bay opening. Importantly, the patio doors are proposed in a location where doors previously existed prior to the 2012 alterations. The proposal can therefore reasonably be understood as a reinstatement of a former arrangement, rather than the introduction of a wholly new or uncharacteristic intervention.

The replacement windows are also intended to be appropriate to the age, appearance and character of the building. Subject to suitable detailing, the works will preserve the visual quality of the building and its contribution to the historic group whilst upgrading the building in terms of its energy efficiency.

The internal alterations are limited and relate to the practical conversion of the building from institutional accommodation and a residential flat, to a single family dwelling. These works are relatively minor and are not considered to result in any harmful impact upon the building's significance, but are simply to restore the building.

Importantly, the proposal will secure an ongoing viable use for the building. The long-term occupation, maintenance and repair of heritage assets and associated buildings is a clear planning benefit and one which should weigh positively in the planning balance. In the absence of a new use, there is a risk that the building could remain underused or vacant, which would not represent a positive heritage outcome.

Taking all matters into account, it is considered that the proposal will preserve the significance of the heritage asset and its contribution to the wider conservation area setting. The application therefore accords with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework and the heritage objectives of the NPPF.

Residential Use and Amenity

The proposed conversion will provide a suitable and high-quality single dwelling within a sustainable location. The submitted plans show that the building can comfortably accommodate a four-bedroom dwelling over three floors, with a clear and legible layout and appropriately sized rooms.

The proposal will create a form of accommodation that is entirely consistent with the existing use of the second floor (a residential flat), and surrounding pattern of development, where residential uses are already well represented. The building is considered well suited to domestic occupation and the proposed internal reconfiguration is modest and proportionate.

In amenity terms, the proposal will not give rise to any material adverse impact upon neighbouring properties but will sit in conformity with surrounding residential uses. No extension is proposed and no new window openings are to be created that would materially alter existing relationships. The replacement windows would occupy existing openings, while the proposed patio doors would be inserted within an opening that already exists at ground floor level. As such, there would be no materially increased overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing or overbearing effect arising from the development.

Indeed, it is relevant that the lawful former boarding house use and separate residential flat could reasonably be expected to generate a greater intensity of activity than a single private dwelling, including multiple occupants, staff movements and associated day-to-day comings and goings. The proposed use as one dwelling is therefore likely to result in a reduction in intensity when compared to the previous use.

The proposal also makes appropriate provision for practical servicing requirements, including cycle parking and refuse storage within the existing store building to the south. This is a sensible and unobtrusive solution which will assist in ensuring the dwelling functions appropriately. The proposed dwelling would also benefit from private amenity space to the south-east of the dwelling.

Overall, the proposals would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers while safeguarding the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Highway Considerations

The application does not propose on-site vehicle parking. Notwithstanding this, the proposal is considered acceptable in highway terms having regard to the site's location and the nature of the development.

Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework supports development that is sustainably located and promotes opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport. The NPPF likewise encourages patterns of development that reduce reliance on private vehicles where suitable alternatives exist.

Dormer House is centrally located within Steyning and within close walking distance of a wide range of day-to-day services and facilities, including shops, bus stops, public car parks and community uses. As set out earlier in this Letter, bus services are available from the High Street approximately 160 metres away, and Fletchers Croft public car park is located approximately 100 metres from the site. Season tickets are available for residents, thereby providing a realistic off-site parking option.

The proposal also benefits from an existing access arrangement from School Lane, with no changes proposed to the means of access. There would be no requirement for new highway infrastructure and no alteration to the local road layout.

It is also important to consider the scale and likely movements associated with the proposed use. The change from a former boarding house and residential flat, to a single dwelling is not considered likely to give rise to any severe transport impacts. On the contrary, it is reasonable to conclude that a single household would generate a level of activity that is comparable to, or lower than, that associated with the former C2 boarding use.

Cycle parking can also be accommodated within the existing store building, providing an appropriate and sustainable travel option for future occupiers.

In light of the above, the absence of on-site parking is not considered to justify refusal of the application. The proposal is acceptable in highway and transport terms and accords with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The proposal comprises the conversion and re-use of an existing building to form a single dwelling. The Applicant intends that the dwelling will be occupied as a self-build home and will therefore be applying for the relevant self-build exemption from the Community Infrastructure Levy.

On this basis, and subject to the submission and approval of the relevant CIL assumption of liability and exemption claim forms, it is anticipated that the development would not give rise to a chargeable CIL liability.

The necessary CIL documentation will be submitted and any requirements of the Council's CIL process will be complied with in full.

Biodiversity Net Gain Exemption

The proposed development comprises the conversion and re-use of an existing building to form a single dwelling. As set out above, the Applicant intends that the dwelling will be occupied as a self-build conversion and will therefore rely on the relevant exemption from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

In addition, the proposal relates to the re-use of an existing building and involves only very limited external alteration, with no encroachment onto undeveloped land.

On this basis, it is considered that the development would be exempt from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement, and a separate Biodiversity Gain Plan is therefore not required.

Conclusion

This application seeks planning permission and listed building consent for the retention and conversion of Dormer House from a former school boarding house (Use Class C2) and residential flat at second floor (Use Class C3) to a single dwelling (Use Class C3), together with replacement windows and the replacement of one ground floor bay window with a set of patio doors.

As set out within this Letter, the proposal represents an appropriate and sustainable re-use of an existing building within the built-up area boundary of Steyning. The site occupies a highly accessible location, close to local services, public transport and public car parking, and is therefore well suited to residential occupation.

The proposed works are limited in scope and have been carefully developed to respect the character and appearance of the building. The replacement windows and the reinstatement of patio doors within the east elevation bay are considered sympathetic alterations, particularly given that the bay historically comprised doors prior to the changes approved in 2012 under references DC/12/0294 and DC/12/0360. The scheme therefore preserves the character and significance of the building and its heritage context, including its contribution to the wider group listing and the Steyning Conservation Area.

The proposal would secure the long-term viable use of Dormer House through conversion to a single family dwelling, ensuring its continued occupation, maintenance and upkeep. It would not result in any material harm to the character of the area, neighbouring amenity or highway safety, and appropriate provision can be made for cycle parking and bin storage. Furthermore, the proposed dwelling is intended to be occupied as a self-build home, and the Applicant will apply for the relevant self-build exemptions in respect of Community Infrastructure Levy and Biodiversity Net Gain, as appropriate.

Overall, the proposals are considered to accord with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Horsham District Planning Framework, including Policies 1, 2, 32, 33, 34 and 40, and the overarching aims of the Steyning Neighbourhood Development Plan.

In light of the above, it is respectfully requested that planning permission and listed building consent are granted for the proposed development.

If you have any further queries or require further information, please contact me on 01903 248777.

Yours sincerely
ECE Planning



Chris Barker MATP MRTPI
Managing Director