



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/0307

11 West Street, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 1PF

DESCRIPTION:

Alterations to the existing building for additional retail space, erection of a first floor infill extension for an additional office, and alterations to the rear elevation fenestration to allow the formation of a new fire escape and extension of the retail space.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/20/1964	Installation of new shopfront incorporating installation of an external roller shutter covering the full width of shopfront.	Application 18.12.2020	Permitted	on
DC/20/1965	Installation of 1x internally illuminated fascia sign with individually internally-illuminated letters and 1x non-illuminated window logo sign.	Application 18.12.2020	Permitted	on

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site relates to an existing commercial premises located at 11 West Street, Horsham, within the defined town centre and the Horsham Town Centre Conservation Area. The site forms part of a continuous terrace of retail units along a primary pedestrianised shopping street.

The building is a two-storey structure with retail use at ground floor and ancillary office/workshop accommodation at first floor level. To the rear, the site backs onto a service yard area accessed from Blackhorse Way, which serves surrounding commercial properties and accommodates servicing, access, and limited parking arrangements. The rear elevation is functional in character, typical of town centre service areas.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The application seeks planning permission for alterations to the existing building to facilitate an expansion of the retail floorspace and associated operational improvements. Specifically, the proposal comprises:

- The reconfiguration and extension of the ground floor retail space, increasing the retail area from approximately 254m² to 344m².
- The erection of a first-floor infill extension to provide additional office accommodation.
- Alterations to the rear elevation, including changes to fenestration, relocation of an existing fire escape door, and the formation of a new escape route leading to Blackhorse Way.

The total gross internal area would increase by approximately 35m² as a result of the development.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
Policy 9 - Employment Development
Policy 12 - Strategic Policy: Vitality and Viability of Existing Retail Centres
Policy 13 - Town Centre Uses
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Planning Advice Notes:

Facilitating Appropriate Development
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:

HDC Conservation: No Objection - Due to the siting and design of the extension it is not considered that it would adversely affect the character of the conservation area. No objection would therefore be raised.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

None Received

Parish Comments:

Horsham Denne Parish Council: No Objection - Horsham Denne NC has no objection to this application providing that access for The Works is maintained for the courtyard area.

Member Comments:

None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

The site lies within Horsham town centre where policies 7, 12 and 13 of the HDPF support proposals that maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of existing retail centres.

The proposal seeks to expand an existing retail unit and improve its functionality, which is considered to support the continued economic use of the premises, and using an existing neighbouring vacant unit. The intensification of retail floorspace within a designated town centre location is acceptable in principle and aligns with the NPPF which promotes town centre uses in such locations.

Furthermore, the proposal does not result in a change of use and retains the established commercial function of the site. Accordingly, the development is considered acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with other relevant policies.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF further require development to achieve a high standard of design which reflects local character, maintains distinctiveness and responds sensitively to its surroundings.

The proposed first-floor infill extension would be contained within the existing built form, positioned between existing parapet walls and not exceeding the current roof height. As such, it would appear subservient and visually contained within the host building.

The materials proposed, including matching brickwork and a flat roof set behind parapet walls, would reflect the existing building and surrounding context.

Alterations to the rear elevation, including the relocation of the fire escape and blocking up of windows, are modest in scale and relate to a functional service area. These changes would be discreet and would not adversely impact the wider street scene or visual amenity.

Overall, the proposal is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the existing building and surrounding townscape.

Heritage:

Policy 34 of the HDPF states that development should be reinforce the special character of the historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form and design; and should make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area. Proposals should preserve and ensure clear legibility of locally distinctive vernacular building forms and their settings, features, fabric and materials.

The site is located within the Horsham Town Centre Conservation Area, and therefore Policy 34 of the HDPF and the statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 are engaged. The proposed infill extension would be positioned to the rear of the building and would not be visible from West Street or wider public viewpoints.

The scale, form, and materials of the extension are designed to match the existing building, ensuring it remains subordinate and does not disrupt the established built form. Additionally, the rear elevation alterations are minor and located within a service area of limited visual sensitivity. The Council's Conservation Officer has raised no objection, confirming that the proposal would not adversely affect the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, in accordance with Policy 34 of the HDPF and the NPPF.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF states that planning permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers or users of nearby properties and land.

The proposed development is located within a commercial town centre setting, where residential receptors are limited. The infill extension is enclosed within the existing built form and would not introduce additional overlooking, loss of light, or overbearing impacts. The Design and Access Statement confirms that there are no neighbouring windows directly affected by the new office extension. Alterations to the rear elevation relate to a service area and are not considered to give rise to additional noise or disturbance beyond the existing lawful use of the site. Overall, the proposal is not considered to result in any unacceptable impact on residential amenity.

Water Neutrality:

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality.

On 31st October 2025 Natural England formally withdrew the 2021 Position Statement, citing a package of measures that they were satisfied would safeguard the Arun Valley sites. Principal amongst these measures is a reduction in the Southern Water abstraction licence 'by March 2026'. However, given the licence change has not yet taken place Horsham District Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, cannot yet be certain that new development will not result in adverse impacts on the Arun Valley sites.

To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000 litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching. Natural England standing advice dated 10 November 2025 raises no objection to using these savings to enable development to come forward. The standing advice clarifies that it functions as Natural England's formal response pursuant to Regulation 63(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to all relevant planning applications which seek to achieve water neutrality using the above Southern Water savings.

Officers have undertaken an Appropriate Assessment which demonstrates that the anticipated increase in mains water consumption from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day.

Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby complying with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool, and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed. Off-site

gains (on unregistered sites) and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

- The development qualifies as 'de minimis' under Regulation 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Conclusions:

The proposed development would support the continued and enhanced use of the site for town centre retail purposes, in accordance with the objectives of the HDPF and the NPPF. The design and scale of the development are appropriate to the host building and its surroundings, preserving both the character and appearance of the area and the significance of the Horsham Town Centre Conservation Area. Furthermore, no unacceptable impacts on residential amenity have been identified. Taking all material considerations into account, the proposal is considered to represent sustainable development and is recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

- 2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 **Regulatory Condition:** The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the application form and approved plans.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/26/0307

Schedule of plans/documents **approved:**

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan		NONE	20.02.2026
Supporting Statement	DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT	NONE	20.02.2026
Block plan	EXISTING AND PROPOSED	25567 / P100	20.02.2026
Floor plan	EXISTING GROUND FLOOR	25567 / P101	20.02.2026
Floor plan	EXISTING FIRST FLOOR	25567 / P102	20.02.2026
Elevation plan	EXISTING	25567 / P103	20.02.2026
Floor plan	PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR	25567 / P104	20.02.2026

Floor plan	PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR	25567 / P105	20.02.2026
Elevation plan	PROPOSED	25567 / P106	20.02.2026
Roof plan	EXITING AND PROPOSED	25567 / P107	20.02.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Shazia Penne Date: 14.04.2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 17.04.2026