HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Lock House, Lock, Partridge Green
DESCRIPTION:	Conversion of existing dwelling into 5 no. dwellings, replacement of existing garage and flat with 1 no. dwelling, and erection of 7 no. dwellings as enabling development
REFERENCE:	DC/24/0608 and DC/24/0609
RECOMMENDATION:	Holding Objection

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

LBC – The proposed works would cause harm to the significance of the listed building. It is not considered that the information provided to date would overcome the harm identified, or the criteria for enabling development has been met.

PP – The proposed development would cause harm to the setting of Lock House, and the adjoining farmstead of Grants Farmhouse.

MAIN COMMENTS:

Lock House is situated to the west of Partridge Green. The property is set within generous grounds located primarily to the southeast. The property is accessed via a driveway which follows the eastern boundary (it formally passed through the central archway of Gatehouse Cottages), with a second access to the west close to Grants Farmhouse itself (grade 2 listed).

Lock House is a grade 2 listed building, the main portion of which was constructed circa 1900 with further additions in the 1930's and then 1970's.

The application seeks to convert the existing property into 5 dwellings, with parking for each unit, a private patio area and shared grounds. The justification for the conversion of the property relates to the lack of market demand for houses of this size, and the repair work that is required. Although the property is currently habitable the applicant's agent has suggested that there is a need to replace the roof, replace windows, renew the heating system and replace the driveway as well as other works. Within the property there is evidence of water damage to some ceilings and externally some of the roofing tiles have failed.

The house has been marketed by different agents over some years and rented out. It has been marketed as a single dwelling, and also rented as such. The property was converted into a single dwelling after having been occupied as a convent.

The optimum viable use for Lock House would be as a single dwelling. The property was built and designed as such, and the function and layout of its rooms supports its character as a large mansion house. As a single unit the grounds and outbuildings are utlised as a single entity without the additional demands of differing occupiers. It would be considered that the change of use of the property into a number of units would result

in harm to the listed building. The building still retains a clear segregation between the domestic and service areas of the house; the latter being represented by the well-preserved service wing. These elements provide a clear insight into the rigid class system that still remained in place during the first decades of the 20th century. This understanding of the building, and the appreciation of the hierarchy of spaces would be reduced. The associated domestic paraphernalia would blur an appreciation of the building in its designed landscape as a county house resulting in harm to its significance. It would be considered that this harm would be less than substantial to the middle of the scale.

The proposed new dwellings to be sited to the south are of a size and scale which would compete with the principal building. The amount and form of activity including traffic movements and lighting would detract from the tranquillity of the wider estate. The scale of the proposed development and its form would also be unexpected in this location due to its domestic proportions and height, which in addition to the car parking, cycle store and domestic gardens would have a suburban character disconnected to the evolution of an early twentieth century country house. It would therefore be considered that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed building.

The buildings would also bring development closer to Grants Farmhouse. It is acknowledged that there is a vegetated boundary between Lock House and Grants Farmhouse. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. The increased noise, light and perceived activity from the new units would detract from the rural setting of Grants Farmhouse which forms part of its significance when appreciated as a historic farmstead. It would result in less than substantial harm at the lower end of the scale.

The new cottage would be experienced in views of the main house along the original driveway. The new dwelling with its associated boundary treatments opposite, and at a higher level than the main entrance with its Porte-cochère would detract from the grandeur of the house and dilute an appreciation of the sense of arrival to a country estate. The placing of a new property in such close proximity to the entrance to the house would result in the primacy of the seclusion of Lock House being lost. It would therefore be considered that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed building.

The NPPF is unambiguous that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

As the application has been submitted as enabling development paragraph 214 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to assess the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, and outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

The applicant has indicated through the marketing undertaken that the house due to changes in demand and its condition is not viable for sale. The applicant has outlined the works required to bring the house into a saleable condition although it remains occupied and habitable. There is no condition survey submitted with the application.

It could be argued that some of the work now needed would form part of the routine maintenance of the property, with the owner noting that on the purchase of the property a surveyor had suggested the roof had a remaining life of 25 years. It would also not be considered that the resurfacing of the access drive should be considered when determining the deficit between the houses value and the works required to secure its future.

Historic England is clear that the case for enabling development rests on there being a conservation deficit - *The amount by which the cost of repair (and conversion to*

optimum viable use if appropriate) of a heritage asset exceeds its market value on completion of repair and conversion, allowing for all appropriate development costs.

The Local Authority would expect to see as part of an enabling development application that market testing has been undertaken to explore the possibility of different owners (which has been submitted) or different uses providing an alternative to enabling development (which has been considered in writing but not market tested), and evidence as to whether public or charitable grant-funding or ownership could displace or at least reduce the need for enabling development.

At this stage it would not be considered from the information submitted that enabling development would be the appropriate way forward at this time. Further information would be required relating to alternative uses for the building, other funding opportunities and evidence that the work required to the listed building goes beyond that required as ongoing maintenance. The case for enabling development can then be considered in the whole and the public benefit of the scheme in terms of the long term future of the building established. Enabling development should be seen as a long-term solution of last resort, with proposals coming forward when other solutions have been tried but have failed.

It is also noted that the application does not contain the details of the proposed repair works required and therefore listed building consent would be required if this application were to be recommended for approval.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

NAME:	Nicola Mason
DEPARTMENT:	Strategic Planning
DATE:	15.08.2024