



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/1214

Dormer House, School Lane, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3YH

DESCRIPTION:

Change of use from former school boarding house and residential flat (Use Classes C2 and C3) to a single dwelling (Use Class C3), replacement of windows, and alteration of ground floor bay to patio doors. (Full Application).

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/26/1215	Change of use from former school boarding house including residential flat (Use Classes C2 and C3) to a single dwelling (Use Class C3), replacement of windows, and alteration of ground floor bay to patio doors. (Listed Building Consent).	Under Consideration
DC/12/0294	Replacement and partial infilling of bay windows to East elevation ground floor and entrance door (Listed Building Consent).	Consent Granted on 05.04.2012

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application relates to Dormer House, a detached three-storey flint building located off School Lane within the Built-Up Area Boundary of Steyning. The site lies within the Steyning Conservation Area and forms part of the former Steyning Grammar School site. The building was formerly used as a boarding house associated with the school with a residential flat occupying the second floor. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of residential, educational and community uses. Access is obtained from School Lane.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

Planning permission and Listed Building Consent are sought for the change of use of the building from a former boarding house and residential flat (Use Classes C2 and C3) to a single 4no. bedroom dwellinghouse (Use Class C3). External works comprise replacement windows and the replacement of a ground floor bay window on the eastern elevation with patio doors. Limited internal alterations are proposed in connection with the residential conversion. No changes are proposed to the existing access arrangements.

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 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy

Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection

Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 39 - Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Steyning Neighbourhood Plan (2022):

SNDP1 – Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity
SNDP2 – Responsible Environmental Design
SNDP3 – Contribution to Character
SNDP4 – Improving our Facilities

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
Strategic Policy 23: Infrastructure Provision
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Strategic Policy 37: Housing Provision

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: Comment: -

Dormer House is an attractive building reflecting a domestic, vernacular character of Steyning. Although not listed in its own right, it does have a clear historic connection with, and formed part of the grammar school before 1st July 1948. For this reason it is considered to form part of the listed building. The proposed conversion to a single dwelling will not have a great impact on the appearance of the building and will not harm the special interest of the listed building. The reversal of the alteration that removed the ground floor doors is agreeable. However, the proposal for plastic windows is not appropriate in this context. Am satisfied the replacement windows can be fitted with thin section double glazing but they should remain traditionally constructed timber sashes, hung on sash cords. Conditions are recommended.

Archaeology Consultant: No Objection. The application is within an Archaeological Notification Area DWS8907- Ashurst Historic Core, but the proposals do not involve any below ground disturbance that would damage archaeological remains .

WSSC Highways: The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (in line with TR6 paragraph 4) and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Representations:

None received.

Parish Comments:

No objection, on the condition there is one parking space allocated.

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

Policy 43 of the HDPF seeks to resist the loss of sites and premises currently or last used for the provision of community facilities or services unless it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer required, alternative provision exists, or other specified criteria are met.

Dormer House was formerly used as a boarding house associated with Steyning Grammar School. The supporting information confirms that the wider school site ceased operating as an educational facility in 2021 and that the boarding use of Dormer House ceased in 2023 following the relocation of pupils to alternative boarding accommodation on the opposite side of School Lane. Since that time, the building has only been occupied intermittently for short-term accommodation purposes, with the residential flat at second floor level occupied until 2025.

The proposal would result in the permanent loss of the former boarding house use. However, the boarding function has been replaced by modern boarding accommodation serving the continuing educational use at the retained school campus. The replacement boarding accommodation remains available within Steyning and continues to serve the operational requirements of the school. As such, it is considered that the function previously performed by the building has already been re-provided in an alternative location and the proposal would not result in a deficiency in community or educational facilities within the locality.

In these circumstances, it is considered that the application has demonstrated that the former use is no longer required or feasible and that suitable alternative provision is available. The proposal would therefore not conflict with the aims of Policy 43 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

Policy 3 (Development Hierarchy) of the HDPF permits development within towns and villages that have defined built-up area boundaries, with any development needing to be of a scale and nature that maintains the core characteristics, function, and unique rural settlement pattern of the specific town or village. The site is located within the built-up area boundary of Steyning, and as a change of use of an existing building to create one dwelling would be of an appropriate scale to the wider settlement. The principle of development is therefore supported, subject to compliance with other relevant policies of the development plan.

Heritage, Design and Appearance:

Policy 32 of the Horsham District Planning Framework seeks to ensure that development is of a high standard of design and responds positively to local character and distinctiveness. Policy 33 requires development to respect the scale, appearance and character of its surroundings. Similar objectives are contained within Policies SNDP2 and SNDP3 of the Steyning Neighbourhood Plan. At national level, Policy DP3 of the NPPF 2026 requires development proposals to respond positively to their context and integrate with and enhance their surroundings through their form, materials and architectural detailing.

Policies HE4, HE5 and HE6 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026) require heritage assets to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Development proposals affecting designated heritage assets should avoid or minimise harm to significance, with any harm requiring clear and convincing justification. Substantial weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, whilst harm to significance must be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal.

Dormer House is an attractive building reflecting a domestic, vernacular character of Steyning. Although not listed in its own right, it does have a clear historic connection with and formed part of the grammar school before 1st July 1948. For this reason, it is considered to form part of the listed building.

The boarding use ceased following the relocation of pupils to alternative accommodation and the closure of the former school site, and the building has subsequently been subject to only limited occupation. The proposal would secure the continued occupation and viable re-use of the building through its conversion to a single dwellinghouse, and this is a clear benefit.

The proposed conversion works comprise replacement windows, and replacement of a ground floor bay window with patio doors together with a series of internal alterations. The nature and extent of these alterations are considered acceptable and would not result in any harm to the significance of the building or surrounding Conservation Area. Whilst detailed specifications for the replacement windows and doors have not been provided this can be secured through an appropriately worded condition. The development is therefore considered to accord with the above policies.

Archaeology

Policies HE4 and HE5 of the NPPF 2026 require heritage assets, including those with archaeological interest, to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and for sufficient information to be available to understand the significance of any heritage assets potentially affected by development.

The site falls within Archaeological Notification Area DWS8907 (Ashurst Historic Core). The proposed development would not though involve any below-ground disturbance capable of affecting archaeological remains, and consequently no archaeological concerns are raised.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF requires development to safeguard the amenities of existing and future occupiers. Policy P3 of the NPPF advises that development should provide acceptable living conditions for occupiers and should not give rise to unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring residents.

The proposal comprises the change of use of the existing building from a former school boarding house and residential flat to a single dwellinghouse, together with limited external alterations. The proposed use would likely result in a lower intensity of occupation than the previous established use as a boarding house, and no harm by way of noise or disturbance would be anticipated. No extensions, additional floorspace or new window openings are proposed, with replacement windows and new doors inserted within existing openings and having a neutral impact.

It is acknowledged that the proposed dwelling would not benefit from any dedicated off-street parking provision and that any vehicle parking associated with the development would need to be accommodated on-street or within nearby public parking facilities. However, this reflects the existing

arrangement at the site, which does not benefit from on-site parking. It is considered that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable level of parking displacement or associated disturbance, with the site in a sustainable location within walking distance of services, facilities and public transport connections, together with the availability of public parking provision nearby. The nil parking provision would not therefore cause unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity through an increased demand for street parking.

With regard to the living conditions of future occupiers, the submitted plans demonstrate that the building would provide a well-proportioned four-bedroom dwelling with appropriate internal accommodation arranged over three floors. The property would benefit from private amenity space and has access to existing areas suitable for cycle and refuse storage. The proposal would therefore provide an acceptable standard of residential accommodation for future occupiers.

Having regard to the above, the proposal would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation for future occupants and would not result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity, in accordance with the above policies.

Highways Impacts

Policy 40 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that development is sustainably located and does not result in unacceptable impacts upon the transport network, with Policy 41 requiring appropriate parking provision, having regard to the location and characteristics of the development. At national level, Policies TR3 and TR4 of the NPPF 2026 seek to locate development in sustainable locations and ensure that appropriate transport and parking arrangements are provided.

The site is located within the built-up area of Steyning, within walking distance of local services, facilities and public transport connections. Public car parking facilities are available within close proximity to the site, including Fletchers Croft Car Park approximately 100 metres to the east. The submitted information confirms that cycle parking can be accommodated within an existing storage building on the site.

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has been consulted and advises that the proposed change of use would not result in a material intensification of use. Whilst no off-street vehicle parking is proposed, this reflects the existing situation which the LHA does not anticipate would give rise to a highway safety concern. It is acknowledged that any vehicle parking associated with the proposed dwelling would need to be accommodated on-street or within nearby public parking facilities, with existing restrictions preventing parking in locations which may be harmful to highway safety.

Having regard to the scale of the proposal, the sustainable location of the site, the retention of existing access arrangements and the advice of the Highway Authority, it is not considered that the development would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in a severe cumulative impact on the operation of the highway network, in accordance with the above policies.

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 Policy N6 of the NPPF.

Climate Change:

Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the HDPF seek to ensure that development mitigates and adapts to the impacts of climate change through measures including the efficient use of resources, sustainable construction, biodiversity enhancement and the promotion of sustainable modes of transport. These objectives are reflected within the climate change provisions of the NPPF.

The proposal relates to the conversion and re-use of an existing building and represents an efficient use of existing built resources. In addition, the proposal includes the replacement of existing windows, which has the potential to improve the thermal performance and energy efficiency of the building. Provision is also made for cycle parking within the existing outbuilding, thereby supporting opportunities for sustainable travel.

Subject to conditions securing cycle parking and refuse/recycling storage, where considered necessary, the proposal is considered to make an appropriate contribution towards climate change mitigation and adaptation and would accord with Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the HDPF and the relevant provisions 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.

The Applicant has demonstrated that the development is exempt from the requirement to achieve a minimum 10% BNG, qualifying as 'self-build or custom housing' under Regulation 8 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

The proposed change of use from a former school boarding house and residential flat (Use Classes C2 and C3) to a single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3), together with replacement windows and alteration of the ground floor bay to patio doors, represents an appropriate and sustainable re-use of an existing building within the Built-Up Area Boundary of Steyning.

The proposal would preserve the significance of the heritage asset and the character and appearance of the Steyning Conservation Area, would not result in unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenity,

highway safety or archaeology, and would not result in the unjustified loss of a community facility. Furthermore, the development would contribute towards housing delivery through the provision of an additional dwelling and the continued beneficial use of an existing building.

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with relevant local and national planning policies, and is recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2. **Regulatory (Time) Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall be begun 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. **Pre-Commencement Condition:** No works to the replacement windows or proposed patio doors shall commence until the following details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works must not be executed other than in complete accordance with these approved details:

- Drawings to a scale not smaller than 1:5 fully describing the new / replacement windows and external doors. These drawings must show:
 - materials
 - cross section of frame, transom, mullions, glazing bars, etc
 - method of opening
 - method of glazing

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the significance of the designated heritage asset, and the character, appearance and integrity of the building, is not prejudiced, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and to comply with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4. **Pre-Occupation Condition:** Prior to occupation of the development hereby permitted, full details of all hard and soft landscaping works shall have been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include plans and measures addressing the following:

- Details of all existing trees and planting to be retained
- Details of all hard surfacing materials and finishes
- Details of all boundary treatments
- Details of all external lighting

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development that is sympathetic to the landscape and townscape character and built form of the surroundings, and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

5. **Pre-Occupation Condition:** No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until details for the provision for the storage of refuse and recycling facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These facilities shall be provided prior to occupation (or use) of the development hereby permitted and thereafter be retained for use at all times.

Reason: To ensure the adequate provision of recycling facilities in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

6. **Pre-Occupation Condition:** No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until details of secure and covered cycle parking facilities for the occupants of, and visitors to, the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied or use hereby permitted commenced until the approved cycle parking facilities associated with that dwelling or use have been fully implemented and made available for use. The provision for cycle parking shall thereafter be retained for use at all times.

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate provision for the parking of cycles in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

7. **Pre-Occupation Condition:** Prior to the first occupation of the dwelling, the necessary in-building physical infrastructure and external site-wide infrastructure to enable superfast broadband speeds of 30 megabits per second through full fibre broadband connection shall be provided to the premises.

Reason: To ensure a sustainable development that meets the needs of future occupiers in accordance with Policy 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

8. **Regulatory Condition:** The dwelling hereby permitted shall meet the optional requirement of building regulation G2 to limit the water usage of each dwelling to no more than 110 litres per person per day. The subsequently installed water limiting measures shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: To limit water use in order to improve the sustainability of the development in accordance with Policy 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), and to avoid an adverse impact on the Arun Valley SACSPA and Ramsar sites in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), and to allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

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/26/1214

(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **approved:**

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Floor plan	Existing ground, first and second	002	30.07.2026
Location plan	Site Location and Block Plan	001	30.07.2026
Elevation plan	Existing	003	30.07.2026
Floor plan	Proposed ground, first and second	004	30.07.2026

