



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/0487

Wellingham Way, Units 7 And 8 And 9, Crawley Road Westbound, Colgate, West Sussex, RH12 4SE

DESCRIPTION:

Part change of Use of Unit 8 from storage to offices. (Retrospective).

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

None.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site forms part of an established industrial estate accessed from Wellingham Way, which connects directly to Crawley Road (A264). Units 7, 8 and 9 are arranged as a terrace of single-storey industrial buildings with ancillary mezzanine areas, finished in a utilitarian industrial style typical of such estates.

The wider estate accommodates a mix of employment uses, including storage, industrial, workshops and office-based functions. The site is not within a Key Employment Area as identified by the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) but is an established existing employment site in a sustainable location with good access to the strategic road network.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development

Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth

Policy 9 - Employment Development

Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development

Policy 33 - Development Principles

Policy 41 - Parking

Colgate has not been designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area.

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council is currently in the process of reviewing its development plan however at this stage the emerging policies carry only limited weight in decision making. As the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for the determination of this application must be considered as to whether they are 'out of date' (NPPF paragraph 11d). This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, whether the Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (NPPF footnote 8).

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the supply currently calculated as being 1 year. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing development within the District (unless footnote 7 or Paragraph 14 applies to relevant applications), with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying only moderate weight in decision making.

All other policies within the HDPF as itemised above have been assessed against the NPPF and are considered to be consistent such that they continue to attract significant weight in decision making.

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

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development

Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality

Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles

Policy 25: Parking

Strategic Policy 30: Enhancing Existing Employment

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:

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

HDC Environmental Health: No Objection

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

WSCC Highways: No Objection

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

None received.

Parish Comments:

Colegate Parish Council: No Comments

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 the Development:

Policy 7.2 of the Horsham District Planning Framework supports the retention of existing employment land and recognises the importance of flexible and diversified employment uses, particularly outside designated Key Employment Areas.

Although the site is not identified as a Key Employment Area, the proposal would retain the unit in active employment use rather than resulting in a loss to non-employment purposes. The wider employment function of the site would be maintained, with storage and industrial uses remaining in Units 7 and 9 and part of unit 8.

The change of use reflects the operational needs of the existing business, where there is a reduced reliance on storage and workshop floorspace and an increased requirement for office and administrative accommodation. Office use remains an employment-generating use and is compatible with the objectives of Policy 7.2, which supports the continued productive use of employment sites and allows for changes that respond to modern business practices. The proposal therefore represents an appropriate and policy-compliant diversification of employment use, rather than an unacceptable loss of employment land.

The retrospective change of use of part of Unit 8 from storage to offices would preserve the character and appearance of the industrial estate, avoid harm to neighbouring amenity, retain the site in active employment use, and support business flexibility and evolving operational needs. The proposal accords with Policy 7.2 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, and no material planning harm has been identified. The development is therefore considered acceptable.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF seek to ensure that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development 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.

The application site forms part of a modern industrial estate comprising a terrace of single-storey employment units of utilitarian appearance. Units 7, 8 and 9 are constructed with light grey composite cladding panels, brick to lower levels, and large roller-shutter doors finished in a dark blue tone.

The frontage is dominated by hardstanding used for vehicle manoeuvring. The surrounding context comprises similar industrial buildings and employment uses, with no sensitive heritage assets.

The proposal relates solely to the internal change of use of part of Unit 8 from storage to office accommodation, with no external alterations proposed to the building. The elevations remain unchanged, retaining the existing roller shutters, doors, materials, colours and overall appearance of the unit and the wider terrace.

As the development would not alter the external appearance of the unit in any way, it would fully preserve the established industrial character of the building and the surrounding employment estate. The proposal would therefore have no adverse impact on visual amenity and is considered acceptable in terms of character and appearance.

Neighbouring Amenity

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

Given the nature of the surrounding employment uses and the absence of sensitive residential receptors nearby, the proposal would not result in harm to neighbouring amenity. The proposal is therefore acceptable in amenity terms.

Highways Impacts:

Policy 41 of the HDPF states that development which involves the loss of existing parking spaces will only be allowed if suitable alternative provision has been secured elsewhere, or the need for the development overrides the loss of parking and where necessary measures are in place to mitigate against the impact.

WSCC Highways has been consulted on the proposal and raise no objection. The change of use from storage to office accommodation is not expected to result in a material increase in vehicular movements when compared to the use of the unit.

The site benefits from existing access arrangements onto Wellingham Way, which would remain unchanged, and there is sufficient on-site parking and manoeuvring space within the industrial estate to accommodate the proposed use. WSCC is satisfied that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the operation of the local highway network and would not give rise to severe cumulative impacts, in accordance with national planning guidance.

Therefore the retrospective application would accord with the above policy.

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 Applicant has demonstrated that the development is exempt from the requirement to achieve a minimum 10% BNG by reason of:

- The application is retrospective made under Section 73(A) of the Town and Country Planning Act.

Conclusions:

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

Recommendation: Application Permitted

- 2 **Regulatory Condition:** The use hereby permitted shall be for the purposes of office accommodation under Class E(g)(i) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020) (or any order amending or revoking and/or re-enacting these Orders) only, and for no other purpose whatsoever without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: Changes of use as permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order or Use Classes Order 1987 are not considered appropriate in this case due to the countryside location under Policy 10 and 26 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/26/0487

(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
Location & Block plan		D 0326/791/01 B	19.03.2026
Elevation & Floor plan	Existing and Proposed	D 0326/791/02 A	19.03.2026
Supporting Statement	Planning	NONE	19.03.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Meg Bayliss Date: 12/05/2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial Tamara Dale Date: 12/05/2026