Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/25/1046
Sunny Croft, The Street, Bramber, West Sussex, BN44 3WE

DESCRIPTION:
Proposed change of use from hotel (c1) to a single dwellinghouse (c3).

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/05/0888	Part demolition of Sunnycroft and change of use of dwelling to Class C1 (Hotels) and erection of two storey rear extension	Approved 31.05.2005

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application is within a Built up area boundary of Bramber and is within a Bramber Conservation area, and is within a Flood zone 1, Flood Zone 2 and 3. The application site consists of a detached to storey building and is in some proximity to the road. The building is not a listed building but bounded by a number of listed properties including the Bramber Castle scheduled ancient monument, the Bramber Castle ruins (Grade I), the Parish Church of St Nicholas (Grade I) and Yew tree Cottage (Grade II). The application was a dwelling and converted in 2010 to a hotel with eight guest rooms.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The hotel would be converted back to a residential dwelling and would not require any operational development, although some internal alterations would be required. No external alterations would take place within the site.

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 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 27 - Settlement Coalescence
Policy 28 - Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
Policy 29 - Equestrian Development
Policy 30 - Protected Landscapes
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 42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities

Bramber Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031 made in 2021
Policy B1: Location of Development
Policy B2: Character of Development
Policy B9: Protecting Locally Significant Views

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.

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 [Summary]
It would be considered that the change of use of the property from hotel to residential (without any external alterations) would not result in harm to the historic character of the conservation area.

Natural England: No Objection [Summary]
The development would without mitigation result in an increase in mains water abstraction such that the mitigation measures outlined within the WNS would need to be ensured by condition.

Compliance officer: Comment
Compliance investigation in relation to front wall and removal of trees.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:
None received.

Parish Comments:
Support

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:

Policy 3 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states that development will be permitted within towns and villages which have defined built-up areas. Any infilling and redevelopment will be required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale to maintain characteristics and function of the settlement in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. Bramber is categorised as a "Smaller Town and Larger Village", where these settlements have a good range of services and facilities, strong community networks, and local employment provision, together with reasonable rail and/or bus services. The settlements act as hubs for smaller villages to meet their daily needs, but also have some reliance on lather settlements/each other to meet some of their requirements.

The development would result in the loss of tourist accommodation such that Policy 11 is relevant. Policy 11 in the HDPF states that measures which promote tourism will be encouraged and proposals which do not result in the loss of a 'cultural resource' will be supported. However, there is no specific policy in regards to the retention of tourist accommodation. Nevertheless, whilst tourist accommodation in the overall district is limited, the applicant has outlined a sufficient provision within the immediate locality including The Castle Inn Hotel; Kings Head Inn; Riverside Park; Hill View B&B; and The Barton within 0.5 miles such that it is considered that there is sufficient provision within this immediate locality.

The application site is located within the built-up area of Bramber and seeks permission for the change of use of a hotel to a residential dwelling. The principle of the development is acceptable, subject to further considerations as detailed below.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves and enhances the landscape character from inappropriate development. Proposal should take into account landscape characteristics, with development seeking to provide an attractive, functional and accessible environment that complements the locally distinctive character of the district. Buildings should contribute to a sense of place, and should be of a scale, massing, and appearance that is of a high standard or design and layout which relates sympathetically to the landscape and built surroundings.

Policy 34 of the HDPF states that development will be required to reinforce the special character of the district's historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form, and design; and make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area, and ensuring that development in Conservation Areas is consistent with the special character of those areas.

The application has been consulted with the HDC Conservation Officer who has stated that they would have no objections to the change of use. The development would relate to a change of use, involving no external alterations to the proposal. It is not considered that the development would result in a form of development that would result in an increase in activity.

For these reasons, it is considered that the resultant design and appearance is compliant with the relevant policies of the HDPF (2015).

Residential 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.

The form of development would result in no increase in built form such that it would give no rise to concerns regarding overlooking, loss of privacy or obtrusive appearance over and above what currently existing within the site. The current site benefits from acceptable footprint in terms of Nationally described space standards and refuse/waste provision.

The proposal is acceptable in light of policy 33 of the HDPF.

Highways Impacts:

Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF promote development that provides safe and adequate access, suitable for all users.

The location is sustainable given with provisions within the locality including nearby shops, schools, and amenities reducing car dependency. Regular bus services provide transport links to Pulborough, Steyning, and Burgess Hill, connecting to wider rail networks. There are no alterations proposed to the access, the parking provision within the site and it is considered likely that the change of use would decrease the intensification of the use of the highway given that an eight-bed guest house is likely to result in a greater number of vehicle movements. The development complies with policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF.

Flood Risk:

Policy 38 of the HDPF states that development proposals will follow a sequential approach to flood risk management, giving priority to development sites with the lowest risk of flooding and making required development safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

The application site lies within a Flood zone 1, 2 and 3. A Flood risk assessment has been submitted and noted that the bedrooms at ground floor level would be removed such that the development in terms of risk to future habitants would represent 'a betterment compared' to the existing site situation. The Flood risk assessment recommends the surface water runoff is discharged along the existing drainage infrastructure. The built form itself would lie within Flood zone 1 and given that there would be no increase in built form, the proposal would not be considered to result in an increased risk of flooding within the site, or to the surrounding locality. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest the drainage within the site is operating in such a way as to be unacceptable or to give rise to future concerns.

Overall, the proposal is in accordance with policy 38 of the HDPF.

Water Neutrality:

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a

Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

Water Neutrality was addressed within the Design and Access statement submitted and outlined an approximate baseline water usage and proposed usage for a dwellinghouse. As above, the existing use comprises an eight-bed hotel. Though the applicant has not provided a water demand or bills of the existing use, an assumed baseline for a pre-2010 constructed building within a residential use (or in this case, a residential-adjacent use) can be applied at 125lpd. As each room could affectively be occupied similar to that of a residential dwelling, an occupancy of 1x persons should be applied. Therefore, the existing baseline water demand can be calculated as such:

125lpd x 8occupants = **1,000l/d**

The proposal seeks to change the use of the building back to a four-bedroom residential dwelling. Applying the same water demand for a pre-2010 dwelling, 125lpd can be applied, and in accordance with the Council's average occupancy, 2.86 occupant is also expected. Therefore, the proposed demand can be calculated as such:

125lpd x 2.86occupants = **375.5l/d**

With the above calculated water demand in mind, the proposed use as a dwelling is anticipated to comprise a lower demand than the existing. Therefore, the proposal can be screened out from significant impact on the protected Arun Valley sites.

Climate Change:

Policies 35, 36 and 37 require that development mitigates to the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reducing flood risk, reducing water consumption, improving biodiversity and promoting sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect the requirements of Chapter 14 of the NPPF that local plans and decisions seek to reduce the impact of development on climate change. The proposed development includes the following measures to build resilience to climate change and reduce carbon emissions:

- Water consumption limited to 110litres per person per day
- Cycle parking facilities
- Improved pedestrian and cycle links
- Electric vehicle charging points
- Air quality mitigation strategy

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 development would result in no increase in built footprint such that the development is exempt from mandatory Biodiversity net gain.

Conclusions:

It is acknowledged that there would be a loss of tourist accommodation, however this would occur in a locality where there are numerous opportunities for tourist accommodation and whilst there is no evidence to suggest an oversaturation of accommodation such that it would fully justify its loss, there is a considerably greater shortfall in housing which would be considered to deliver greater benefits in granting the permission than in refusing it. In this respect the loss of tourist accommodation is attributed limited weight and the benefit of housing would be attributed moderate weight until the 'tilted' balance is applied in respect of 11(d) of National Planning Policy Framework such that the provision of housing would be valued as significant. Overall the permission is tilted in favour of development and a recommendation is made for approval subject to the inclusion of relevant conditions.

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 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** No dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied until a fast charge electric vehicle charging point for that dwelling has been installed. As a minimum, the charge point specification shall be 7kW mode 3 with type 2 connector. The means for charging electric vehicles shall be thereafter retained as such.

Reason: To mitigate the impact of the development on air quality within the District and to sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants in accordance with Policies 24 & 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Pre-Occupation Condition**: No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until 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 has been 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).

5 **Regulatory Condition**: Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (and/or any Order revoking and/or re-enacting that Order no development falling within Classes A, AA, B and C of Part 1 or Class AD of Part 20 of Schedule 2 of the order shall be erected, constructed or placed within the curtilage of the development hereby permitted without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to protect the amenities of the adjoining neighbours 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/25/1046
Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan		NONE	25.06.2025
Location & Block plan		P001	25.06.2025
Supporting Statement	Flood Risk Assessment	AEG7937_BN44_Bramber_01	25.06.2025
Floor plan	Existing	P002 REV A	25.06.2025
Floor plan	Proposed	P003 REV A	25.06.2025
Supporting Statement	Planning, inc Water Neutrality and Heritage	W3227	25.06.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Hannah Darley Date: 16.09.2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 17.09.2025