



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/0651

Barclays Bank Ltd, 84 High Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9QS

DESCRIPTION:

Prior Notification for Change of Use of Class E space to form 4 nos apartments to the rear of ground and first floor only.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/21/0909	Change of Use of existing building to provide 1no. commercial unit (Class E) and 6no. 1-bedroom flats with associated external alterations.	Withdrawn Application on 20.07.2023
DC/25/1141	Change of Use and external alterations to provide 1no. retail/commercial unit and 6no. 1 bedroom flats.	Application Refused on 05.01.2026
DC/20/2378	Change of use to provide 1No. retail/commercial unit, 1No. 2-bedroom flat and 1No. 4-bedroom dwelling and erection of a double garage	Application Permitted on 03.02.2021

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

The application site relates to the former Barclays Bank building located at 84 High Street, Billingshurst, within the built-up area boundary of Billingshurst and within the Billingshurst Conservation Area. The property occupies a prominent position on the western side of the High Street and comprises a two-storey brick-built commercial building formerly occupied as a bank, together with a private access road running along the southern boundary and a surfaced parking area to the rear. The building has been vacant since the closure of the Barclays branch in November 2017. Surrounding land uses are mixed in character, comprising retail, commercial and service uses along the High Street frontage, with residential properties located to the south and west of the site. Access to the rear parking area is obtained via an existing private driveway from the High Street.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION:

This application seeks prior approval under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the change of use of part of the existing building from Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) to Class C3 (Dwellings).

The proposal relates solely to the rear sections of the ground and first floors of the former Barclays Bank building and would create four self-contained residential apartments. No extensions or alterations to the external appearance of the building are proposed as part of this prior approval application. The development would utilise the existing building envelope and retain the existing access arrangements and rear parking area.

The application is supported by a Prior Notification Statement, Flood Risk Assessment and associated plans. The supporting information confirms that the building has been in a lawful Class E use for a period significantly exceeding the two-year requirement of Class MA and that the premises have remained vacant since the closure of the bank in 2017. The proposal would provide four residential

units within a sustainable town centre location whilst retaining the existing frontage building and parking arrangements.

Consultations:

HDC Environmental Health: No Objection

Environmental Health raise no objection to the proposed development. The submitted asbestos survey confirms that no asbestos-containing materials or suspected asbestos-containing materials were identified within the parts of the building proposed for residential conversion. The submitted Noise Impact Assessment identifies the potential for noise disturbance from nearby commercial plant and activities; however, it concludes that suitable mitigation measures can be incorporated within the development to ensure acceptable living conditions for future occupiers. Subject to the implementation of the recommendations contained within the assessment, Environmental Health are satisfied that the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable impacts in terms of noise, disturbance or contamination.

HDC Drainage Officer: No Objection

The Council's Drainage Engineer has reviewed the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and accompanying plans and raises no objection. It is noted that the proposal comprises a change of use only and would not result in any increase in impermeable area or hardstanding. The Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates an understanding of the surface water flood risk affecting the site and identifies appropriate mitigation measures. Whilst no measures are proposed to reduce existing surface water runoff rates, this is not considered necessary given the nature of the development.

West Sussex Highway Authority: No Objection

The Highway Authority advises that the proposal is unlikely to result in a material increase or material change in the character of traffic in the vicinity of the site. The existing Class E use would be expected to generate greater vehicle movements than the proposed residential use. Six parking spaces and secure cycle parking are shown within the site and on-site turning is achievable. No highway safety concerns are identified, and the proposal is considered acceptable in highway terms.

Parish Comments:

Billingshurst Parish Council: Objection

The committee felt that application failed to address the issue of the front of the building and its dilapidated state within the conservation area. The change of use of the rear of the building would leave new residents to reside behind a building that is subject to vandalism due to its abandoned state. There would have been no objection to the application had it included a clear proposal for eliminating the issues with the front of the property.

Representations:

2 letters of representation received from 2 separate addresses objecting for the following reasons:

- Concern regarding potential impact on our adjoining wall, as construction vehicles will need access to the rear of the property, with no acknowledgement or assurances provided about possible damage.
- Concern about loss of privacy due to first-floor rooms overlooking garden, along with potential increases in noise and lighting disturbance.
- Concern about the effect of construction activity on local parking, particularly as a previous informal arrangement with Barclays Bank is no longer available, adding pressure to already limited parking on Billingshurst High Street.
- Uncertainty over whether first-floor flats include balconies based on revised plans.
- Potential increase in noise and lighting disturbance affecting neighbouring property.
- Concern about construction works increasing parking pressure in the area.

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

Paragraph W of Part 3 within Schedule 2 of the GPDO sets out the procedure for applications for prior approval (under Part 3), stating: -

- (11) *The development must not being before the occurrence of one of the following –*
- a) *The receipt by the applicant from the local planning authority of a written notice of their determination that such prior approval is not required;*
 - b) *The receipt by the applicant from the local planning authority of a written notice giving their prior approval; or*
 - c) *The expiry of 56 days following the date on which the application under sub-paragraph (2) was received by the local planning authority without the authority notifying the applicant as to whether prior approval is given or refused.*

In this case, the application has been duly made and assessed against the requirements of Part 3, Class MA of the GPDO. The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposal relates to the rear sections of the ground and first floors of the former Barclays Bank building at 84 High Street, Billingshurst. The building has been lawfully used for purposes now falling within Class E for a period significantly exceeding the two-year requirement set out within Class MA and is not subject to any planning conditions removing permitted development rights. Accordingly, the proposal is capable of being considered under the prior approval process and an assessment has been undertaken against the relevant matters set out under MA.2.

Notwithstanding the above, the following assessment is based on the limitations / criteria set out in MA.1: -

Permitted development

MA. Development consisting of a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use falling within Class E (commercial, business and service) of Schedule 2 to the Use Classes Order to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 to that Order.

MA.1 (1) Development is not permitted by Class MA—

- ~~(a) unless the building has been vacant for a continuous period of at least 3 months immediately prior to the date of the application for prior approval;~~

(deleted following the 2024 update to the order on 05.03.2024)

- (b) unless the use of the building fell within one or more of the classes specified in subparagraph (2) for a continuous period of at least 2 years prior to the date of the application for prior approval;**

The spaces to form 4 no apartments to the rear of ground and first floor only have been in continuous Class E (retail/commercial) use for more than two years and are not subject to restrictive planning conditions (BL-26-70).

- (c) ~~if the cumulative floor space of the existing building changing use under Class MA exceeds 1,500 square metres;~~

(deleted following the 2024 update to the order on 05.03.2024)

- (d) **if land covered by, or within the curtilage of, the building –**
- (i) **is or forms part of a site of special scientific interest;**
 - (ii) **is or forms part of a listed building or land within its curtilage;**
 - (iii) **is or forms part of a scheduled monument or land within its curtilage;**
 - (iv) **is or forms part of a safety hazard area; or**
 - (v) **is or forms part of a military explosives storage area;**

The building is not listed, and is not located on a site of special scientific interest or other excluded categories.

- (e) **if the building is within—**
- (i) **an area of outstanding natural beauty;**
 - (ii) **an area specified by the Secretary of State for the purposes of section 41(3) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;**
 - (iii) **the Broads;**
 - (iv) **a National Park; or**
 - (v) **a World Heritage Site;**

N/A

- (f) **if the site is occupied under an agricultural tenancy, unless the express consent of both the landlord and the tenant has been obtained**

N/A

- (g) **before 1 August 2022, if—**
- (i) **the proposed development is of a description falling within Class O of this Part as that Class had effect immediately before 1st August 2021; and**
 - (ii) **the development would not have been permitted under Class O immediately before 1st August 2021 by virtue of the operation of a direction under article 4(1) of this Order which has not since been cancelled in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 3.**

N/A

MA.2(1) Before beginning development under Class MA, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to—

- (a) **transport impacts of the development, particularly to ensure safe site access;**

The proposed development would utilise the existing access arrangements serving the site. The Highway Authority advises that the existing Class E use would be expected to generate a greater level of vehicle movements than the proposed residential use and therefore the proposal would not be likely to result in a material increase or material change in the character of traffic within the vicinity of the site. Six parking spaces are provided within the rear parking area together with secure cycle storage and adequate turning space enabling vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear. The Highway Authority raises no objection, and it is therefore concluded that the proposal is acceptable in transport and highway terms.

- (b) **contamination risks in relation to the building;**

The Council's Environmental Health Officers have noted that as the building was constructed pre-2000, it is likely that asbestos would be present. However, suitable mitigation could be implemented during the conversion process, and is secured by way of condition.

(c) flooding risks in relation to the building;

Although the site lies within Flood Zone 1, the submitted Flood Risk Assessment identifies areas of surface water flood risk affecting parts of the site and access during extreme rainfall events. The assessment concludes that the proposal can be occupied safely for its lifetime and would not increase flood risk elsewhere. The Council's Drainage Officer has reviewed the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and raises no objection. In the absence of any technical objection from the Council's specialist consultee, the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposal adequately addresses flooding risks in relation to the building for the purposes of Class MA.

Officers note a previous reason for refusal on the site for application DC/25/1141 relating to flood risk. However, the present prior approval relates only to the change of use of the building, and not the surrounding / adjacent land within the site. As no alterations are proposed to this arrangement, the change of use of the building is not considered adversely impact on surface water flood risk over and above the existing arrangement. Coupled with the response received from the Council's Drainage Engineer, no objection is raised on these grounds relating to this prior approval.

(d) impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development

The submitted Noise Impact Assessment identifies potential noise impacts associated with nearby commercial activities. Environmental Health have reviewed the submitted information and raise no objection subject to conditions. In particular, Environmental Health advise that either the layout must demonstrate that there is no adverse stacking of habitable rooms or that an appropriate scheme of sound insulation and construction is provided to ensure the sound insulation of party floors exceeds Building Regulations standards. Subject to the implementation of the recommended conditions, it is considered that future occupiers would benefit from an acceptable standard of residential amenity, and the proposal would not be adversely affected by noise impacts.

(e) where—

- (i) the building is located in a conservation area**
- (ii) the development involves a change of use of the whole or part of the ground floor, the impact of that change of use on the character or sustainability of the conservation area.**

the impact of that change of use on the character or sustainability of the conservation area;

The application site is located within the Billingshurst Conservation Area, and the proposal involves the change of use of part of the ground floor of the building. No external alterations are proposed and therefore the appearance of the building and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area would remain unchanged. Whilst Billingshurst Parish Council have raised concerns regarding the condition of the frontage building, the scope of assessment under Class MA is limited to the impact of the proposed change of use on the character or sustainability of the conservation area. Given that the proposal comprises internal alterations only, it is considered that the development would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

(e) the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses;

The submitted floor plans demonstrate that all habitable rooms would be served by existing windows providing an adequate level of natural light. The Local Planning Authority is therefore

satisfied that future occupiers would benefit from acceptable living conditions in accordance with the requirements of Class MA.

- (f) **the impact on intended occupiers of the development of the introduction of residential use in an area the authority considers to be important for general or heavy industry, waste management, storage and distribution, or a mix of such uses;**

The site is located within Billingshurst village centre in an area characterised by a mixture of commercial, retail, service and residential uses. The site is not located within an area identified by the Local Planning Authority as being important for general industry, heavy industry, storage and distribution or waste management uses. Accordingly, no conflict arises with this prior approval matter.

- (h) **where the development involves the loss of services provided by—**
(i) **a registered nursery, or**
(ii) **a health centre maintained under section 2 or 3 of the National Health Service Act 2006, the impact on the local provision of the type of services lost and**

None of the units comprise or previously comprised a nursery or NHS-maintained health centre.
Not applicable

- (i) **where the development meets the fire risk condition, the fire safety impacts on the intended occupants of the building.**

The proposal comprises fewer than 7 storeys and is under 18 metres in height. A fire statement is therefore not required.

Other Matters

The concerns raised by neighbouring residents relating to construction impacts, parking pressure, privacy and potential disturbance have been carefully considered. However, the Local Planning Authority's assessment of a Class MA prior approval application is restricted to the matters prescribed within Schedule 2, Part 3 of the GPDO. Matters relating to temporary construction impacts, private property rights and general residential amenity are not matters that can be taken into account beyond the specific prior approval considerations. The proposal has been assessed against the prescribed matters and is considered acceptable.

Conclusion

The proposal satisfies the limitations set out within Class MA.1 of Schedule 2, Part 3 of the GPDO and has been assessed against the prior approval matters contained within MA.2. The Highway Authority, Drainage Engineer and Environmental Health Officer raise no objection to the proposal. The sub-mitted information demonstrates that the development would provide adequate natural light, would not result in unacceptable transport, contamination, flooding or noise impacts and would preserve the character and appearance of the Billingshurst Conservation Area. Having regard to the limitations of the prior approval process, the proposal is considered acceptable and prior approval is therefore required and granted.

Recommendation: Prior Approval Required and PERMITTED

Conditions:

- 1 **Pre-commencement Condition:** Prior to the commencement of development an intrusive pre-demolition and refurbishment asbestos survey in accordance with HSG264 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All confirmed or suspected asbestos containing materials shall be removed from areas of the development which are to form private dwellings. A verification report prepared by a competent person which confirms all asbestos or

suspected asbestos containing materials have been removed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to first occupation of the development.

Reason: To ensure that no unacceptable risks are caused to humans, controlled waters or the wider environment during and following the development works and to ensure that any pollution is dealt with in accordance with Policies 24 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 2 **Pre-commencement Condition:** Prior to commencement of construction the applicant shall either provide layout plans to demonstrate that there is no adverse stacking of habitable rooms or they shall provide a scheme of sound insulation and construction that shall ensure that the sound insulation of the party floors is 5dBA or better than normal building regulations. The scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and shall also include details of post construction verification to be carried out. Prior to occupation the post construction verification report shall be submitted to and approved by the local Planning Authority and the premises shall not be occupied until any necessary remedial work has been satisfactorily completed.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental in the interests of residential amenities by ensuring an acceptable noise level for the occupants of the development in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 3 **Regulatory Condition:** All Site clearance debris and construction waste shall be removed from site by an appropriately licensed waste removal contractor including all asbestos waste.

Reason: To ensure that no unacceptable risks are caused to humans, controlled waters or the wider environment during and following the development works and to ensure that any pollution is dealt with in accordance with Policies 24 and 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/26/0651

Schedule of plans/documents **approved:**

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Supporting Docs	Apendix A Site Location Maps	NONE	22.04.2026
Supporting Docs	Appendix B Existing Site and Proposed Plans	NONE	22.04.2026
Supporting Docs	Appendix C Geological Map	NONE	22.04.2026
Supporting Docs	Appendix D Topographic map	NONE	22.04.2026
Supporting Docs	Appendix E EA Flood Map	NONE	22.04.2026
Supporting Docs	Flood Risk Assessment	QFRA 2856 REV 1	22.04.2026
Supporting Statement	Cover letter	NONE	22.04.2026
Supporting Statement	Refuse collection	NONE	22.04.2026
Block plan	and Site	HSB,84,BP	22.04.2026
Floor plan	Proposed Ground and First Floor	HSB,84,PR,01	22.04.2026

Elevation plan	Proposed Side, Rear, Front	HSB,84,PR,02	22.04.2026
Site plan	Proposed	HSB,84,PR,SP	22.04.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Shazia Penne Date: 15.06.2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 16.06.2026