Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/25/0905
24 Carfax, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 1EB

DESCRIPTION:
Change of Use from Finance and Professional Services (Use Class E) to 2no. Apartments (Use Class C3) at the first, second and third floors with Class E use at ground floor level.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

HU/140/97	Change of use from shop to class A2.	Approved on 02/07/1997

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE
The application site is within the Horsham Town Centre conservation area and Horsham town centre's primary shopping area and is within the Built up area of Horsham. The surroundings comprise a mix of residential and commercial uses. The neighbouring building is a Grade II listed building run by an estate agents and has a pedestrian access between this unit at ground floor level leading to Pirie's Place.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION
The application seeks a change of use for the first, second and third floor to class E use at ground floor level. The external alterations required would include two flat roof dormers. The existing ridge height would be raised to match the neighbouring building.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
Policy 9 - Employment Development
Policy 12 - Strategic Policy: Vitality and Viability of Existing Retail Centres
Policy 13 - Town Centre Uses
Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
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 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking

Horsham Blueprint business neighbourhood forum area (unparished 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 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion
Strategic Policy 4: Horsham Town
Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 10: Flooding
Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection
Strategic Policy 12: Air Quality
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
Policy 22: Shop Fronts and Advertisements
Strategic Policy 23: Infrastructure Provision
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Strategic Policy 34: Tourism Facilities and Visitor Accommodation
Strategic Policy 35: Town Centre Hierarchy and Sequential Approach
Strategic Policy 36: Town Centre Uses
Strategic Policy 37: Housing Provision
Policy 40: Improving Housing Standards in the District

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. The property is of some significance in the street scene and has been altered over the years. This includes making the ground floor shop larger and more prominent at

street level. The proposal to reduce the perceived height of the shopfront and reintroduce windows at first floor levels will result in a positive change to the principal elevation and will preserve the character of the conservation area. Conditions recommended.

Environmental Health: Comment in regard to building regulations, light required, non-slip stairs, 60 minute fire separation between commercial and domestic premises, need for ventilation. Conditions recommended.

Natural England: Standing Advice issued.

WSCC Highways: No Objection. The site is located in a predominantly pedestrianised area, no car parking spaces are proposed, although the 4 parking spaces to the rear are shown on the plan. Little free parking is available nearby. However public transport or cycling is also a viable option.

Economic development: Concerns about this application due to loss of commercial floorspace. Request a more detailed explanation as to why the commercial use is not viable.

Representations:
One representation has been received, objecting to the application on the following grounds: -

- Future noise disturbance for the residents of the units would interrupt the viability of the nearby venues
- Insufficient information with regards to noise reduction

Neighbourhood Council Comments:
Objection. More info needed for new windows on first floor, insufficient information about the minor changes to floor levels

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:

The site falls within the primary shopping area of the Horsham, where Policy 13 of the HDPF states that main town centre uses will be encouraged, and that proposals must be of an appropriate scale and complement the vitality and viability of the centre, while being accessible and improving the character, quality and function of the centre. Policy 9(2) of the HDPF states that the redevelopment of employment sites must demonstrate that the site / premises is no longer needed and / or viable for employment use.

The upper floors are accessed through the ground floor premises with an external stair providing direct access from the rear to first floor level. The building is considered to form a single planning unit and is seemingly rated as such for Business Rate purposes. The proposal would retain an active street

frontage with a ground floor commercial premises of approximately 50 sq metres, which is comparable in size to other occupied units within the town centre. There is no evidence to suggest the ground floor commercial premises would not be suited to continued use within Class E, and the change of use at first and second floor levels would not adversely impact on the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole. It is therefore considered that the loss of ancillary floorspace at first and second floor levels of the building would not create any significant conflict with the above polices.

Policies 2 and 3 of the Horsham District Planning Framework state that the district has a distinctive settlement pattern, which the framework seeks to retain and enhance. Development within the built-up area boundary is accepted in principle, and appropriate development, including infilling, within the built-up areas is prioritised.

The site is located within the built-up area of Horsham. Horsham is defined as a settlement with a large range of employment services and facilities and leisure opportunities, including those providing a district function. There are strong social networks with good rail and bus accessibility and meets the majority of its own needs and many of the nearby smaller settlements. Given the location of the site within the built-up area boundary of Horsham, the principle of re-development is considered acceptable.

Character and Appearance:

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF require development to be of a high standard of design and layout. Development proposals must be locally distinctive in character and respect the character of their surroundings. Where relevant, the scale, massing and appearance of development will be required to relate sympathetically with its built-surroundings, landscape, open spaces and to consider any impact on the skyline and important views.

Policy 34 of the HDPF seeks to sustain and enhance the historic environment through the positive management of development affecting heritage assets. Development will be required to preserve and enhance the special character of heritage assets through appropriate siting, scale, form, design, materials and techniques. Development proposals must be designed to preserve a clear appreciation, and the legibility, of distinctive vernaculars, features and fabrics, whilst appropriate assessment should be undertaken to inform an understanding of the significance of the heritage asset.

The introduction of residential dwellings at upper floor levels of the building would not be out of keeping with the mixed-use character of the locality.

The scheme proposes a raising of the ridge height, the installation of two dormers to the rear elevation along with alterations to fenestration (including the re-introduction of first floor windows) and within the rear courtyard. The proposed roof form would be in keeping with the scale and proportions of surrounding development, with the rear dormers and other associated alterations modest in scope and nature. The building is a prominent feature of the Carfax within the Horsham Conservation Area and conditions are recommended to ensure appropriate detailing to new and replacement features.

The proposal is considered to be of an appropriate design, form and scale in relation to the host building and surrounding area, and there would be no adverse impacts on the significance or historical interest of surrounding heritage assets. The visual impact of the proposal is therefore acceptable and in accordance with the above policies.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33(2) 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 scale and siting of the proposed extensions and alterations and the resulting relationship with adjoining properties and land would not be expected to result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity.

The continued use of the retained ground floor premises for commercial purposes would not be expected to result in significant potential for harmful levels of noise or disturbance, with the use in keeping with the town centre location and conditions recommended in respect of opening hours.

The proposed residential units would meet the minimum requirements under Nationally described space standards and would have a sufficient number of windows to provide natural light and outlook. The first-floor dwelling would be sited above the ground floor commercial premises. This arrangement is present throughout the town centre with no evidence to suggest the relationship, as a matter of course, would provide a poor standard of amenity for the residential occupants or adversely impacts on the ground floor commercial use. Notwithstanding the above, the proposal includes changes to internal floor levels throughout the building, and this provides an opportunity to ensure appropriate soundproofing between the commercial and residential elements. A condition is recommended to secure details of sound testing between these uses and this would ensure no unacceptable impacts / pressures on either planning unit. It is therefore considered that the proposal would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation for future occupants of the residential dwellings.

Highways Impacts:

Policy 40 of the HDPF states that transport access and ease of movement is a key factor in the performance of the local economy. The need for sustainable transport and safe access is vital to improve development across the district. Policy 41 of the HDPF stipulates that development must provide adequate parking and facilities to meet the needs of anticipated users, with consideration given to the needs of cycle parking, motorcycle parking and electric/low emission vehicles.

The development would not benefit from on-site parking, and none can realistically be provided. The absence of parking is not though considered harmful in this instance. The site is located within a sustainable location where services and amenities are available within the immediate vicinity of the site and where a range of public transport options exist. There are complimentary parking controls surrounding the site and these would prevent parking taking place in locations which are either oversubscribed, or which would be harmful to highway safety.

The Local Highway Authority has advised that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in ‘severe’ cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network. There are no reasons to take a different view and the highway impacts on the proposal would similarly not be expected to result in unacceptable harm to amenity.

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. There would be no change in floorspace such that the proposal would be exempt from the mandatory BNG requirements.

Conclusions:

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

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-Commencement Condition:** The development hereby approved shall not commence until the following construction details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the following measures:

i. Details of site management contact details and responsibilities including out-of-hours contact details;
ii. A plan detailing the site logistics arrangements, including:
    a. location of any site compound,
    b. location for the loading, unloading and storage of plant and materials,
    c. site offices (including location, height, size and appearance) – if applicable,
    d. location of site access points for construction vehicles,
    e. location of on-site or off-site parking,
iii. The arrangements for public consultation and liaison prior to and during the demolition and construction works – newsletters, fliers etc, to include site management contact details for residents;

The construction shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the details and measures approved.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental in order to consider the potential impacts on the amenity of nearby occupiers and highway safety during construction and in accordance with Policies 33 and 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Pre-Commencement Condition:** No development 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:

i) new windows. These drawings must show:
- materials
- decorative/protective finish
- cross section of frame, transom, mullions, glazing bars, etc
- formation of openings including reveals, heads, sills, arches, lintels, etc
- method of opening
- method of glazing

ii) shopfront. These drawings must show:
- materials
- decorative/protective finish
- cross section of architrave, fascia, frieze, corbels, pilasters, frame, transom, mullions, etc
- formation of opening including structural support
- shopfront lettering
- colour scheme
- hanging/projecting signs
- illumination

iii) Roof details including sections through:
- roof ridge
- eaves
- verges
- dormers

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).

5 **Pre-Commencement Condition:** No development shall commence until a scheme for sound attenuation between the ground floor commercial unit and first floor dwelling has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The first-floor dwelling shall not be occupied until the sound attenuation has been installed in accordance with the agreed details. The attenuation shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of future occupiers 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 provision for the storage of refuse and recycling has been made in accordance with the approved plans.

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

7 **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).

8 **Pre-Occupation Condition**: No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until cycle parking facilities have been constructed and made available for use in accordance with the approved plans. The cycle parking facilities shall thereafter be retained as such for their designated use.

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).

9 **Regulatory Condition:** All new and replacement rainwater goods shall be cast iron or cast aluminium or cast effect plastic.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policies 33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

10 **Regulatory Condition:** No new plumbing, pipes, soil stacks, flues, vents, ductwork or the like, shall be fixed to the southern (front) external face of the building without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policies 33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

11 **Regulatory Condition:** No new grilles, security alarms, lighting, cameras or other like items shall be fixed to the southern (front) external face of the building without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policies 33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

12 **Regulatory Condition:** No works for the implementation of the development hereby approved shall take place outside of 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 hours to 13:00 hours on Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or public Holidays

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of adjacent occupiers in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

13 **Regulatory Condition:** The residential development hereby permitted shall limit the water usage of each person per day to 110 litres in the residential part of the development. The water limiting measures shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental 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).

14 **Regulatory Condition:** Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order amending or revoking and/or re-enacting that Order), the ground floor premises hereby permitted shall only be used for purposes falling within Class E(a), (b), (c), (e), (f), (g)(i) or (g)(ii) (as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification). The ground floor premises shall not be used for any other purpose(s) without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: To safeguard the vitality and viability of the Horsham Town Centre and to protect the amenities of adjacent occupiers, in accordance with Policies 13 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

15 **Regulatory Condition:** The ground floor commercial premises hereby permitted shall not be open for trade or business except between the hours of 07:00 and 18:00 Monday to Saturday and 08:30 and 16:30 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Biodiversity Net Gain Condition
Based on the information submitted in the planning application documents, the Planning Authority considers that this permission is exempt from biodiversity net gain, and as such does not require approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun. \b0

NOTE TO APPLICANT
Temporary Works Required During Construction.
The applicant is advised of the requirement to enter into early discussions with and obtain the necessary licenses from the Local Highway Authority to cover any temporary construction related works that will obstruct or affect the normal operation of the public highway prior to any works commencing. These temporary works may include the placing of skips or other materials within the highway, the temporary closure of on-street parking bays, the imposition of temporary parking restrictions requiring a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, the erection of hoarding or scaffolding within the limits of the highway, the provision of cranes over-sailing the highway.

Temporary Developer Signage.
The applicant is advised that the erection of temporary directional signage should be agreed with the Local Traffic Engineer prior to any signage being installed.

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/25/0905
(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		4059-CON-05	30.05.2025

Elevation plan	Proposed and Sections	4059-CON-04 REV D	30.05.2025
Floor plan	Proposed and Roof	4059-CON-03 REV D	30.05.2025
Elevation plan	Existing and Section	4059-CON-02 REV A	30.05.2025
Floor plan	Existing and Roof	4059-CON-01 REV C	30.05.2025
Supporting Statement	Planning	SL/Let	30.05.2025

DELEGATED

Authorising Officer sign/initial Guy Everest Date: 24.02.2026