

LOCK HOUSE, LOCK LANE, PARTRIDGE GREEN, RH13 8EG

PLANNING AND LISTED BUILDING APPLICATION FOR CONVERSION OF HOUSE 2 IN THE LISTED BUILDING INTO 2 NO. HOUSES

Introduction

This planning statement has been prepared by Nicholas Sutton on behalf of the owner of Lock House to accompany a detailed planning and listed building application for the conversion and development of Lock House. The application seeks approval for the conversion of Unit 2 of Lock House, a Grade II listed building, from a single-family dwelling to a total of 2 No. residential units.

Lock House was originally purchased by the applicant in 2003 and has since been used as a private residence, following its conversion from the Convent of the Visitation. The proposed development aims to sensitively adapt and restore the property, ensuring the long-term preservation of this important heritage asset while providing much-needed housing in the area. The proposal also brings substantial heritage benefits by safeguarding the future of this historic structure.

Site and Surroundings

The site, approximately 2.95 hectares in size, is located to the west of Partridge Green. It comprises Lock House as the main feature, together with various more recent buildings. The Grade II listed house, that is Lock House, is set within expansive, parkland-style grounds with roaming deer, mature oak, cedar, Scots pine, and lime trees, contributing to its rural and tranquil character. The property faces southeast, overlooking its private parkland grounds and offering views toward the South Downs.

Access to Lock House is via Lock Lane, a private road which joins the public highway at Bines Road. The property benefits from two gated access points off Lock Lane, enhancing its privacy and security.

Existing Buildings

The main structure, Lock House, extends to 19,673 square feet (1,828 sqm) and is considered the primary heritage asset on the site. Additional buildings on the property include a garden store (135 sqm), garages and a guest cottage (150 sqm), a tennis pavilion and additional garages (100 sqm), and a summer house (60 sqm).

Historical Development of Lock House

Lock House was originally constructed around 1909, following the clearance of Grants Copse. The initial design featured a main house connected to a smaller block. It remains unclear whether the original owner, who passed away in 1914, ever resided in the property. Subsequently, the house changed hands between two landowners, as the estate at that time encompassed over 1,000 acres of land.

In 1937, the estate was purchased via John D. Wood estate agents by Mr. Andrew Harvey, a cotton spinner and merchant associated with the East India Company.

The original plans, held in the West Sussex Records Office, show that in 1940 Lock House underwent a major reconstruction programme. The architect on the plans are listed as being Maple & Co, well-known London furniture company that likely also managed the reconstruction.

The 1940 Reconstruction

The 1940 renovation significantly altered both the interior and exterior of Lock House. The most notable external change was the addition of a new entrance gable to accommodate an enhanced entrance hall and staircase. The link between the original two blocks was extended, incorporating a mahogany-panelled Dining Room on the ground floor, a new Guest Bedroom on the first floor, a loft extension, and a modified roofline. A ballroom was added to the eastern end of the house, while the western wing saw further expansion with additional staff bedrooms. Various other elevational alterations included the creation of a new bay for the Morning Room and the addition of the loggia.

Notably, these plans clearly show the extent of the internal fit out during this period, with all significant features – many of which are highlighted in the building's current listing – originating from the 1940s reconstruction. These features, including much of the joinery, were crafted by Maple & Co.

Mr. Harvey died in 1957 at his home in London, and his wife remained living at Lock House until her death in 1971. The estate was then broken up and sold at auction in 26 separate lots, leaving Lock House with approximately 5 hectares of garden. The farmland and all separate staff cottages, houses and auxiliary buildings were all sold to individual purchasers. Lock House itself was bought by the Church and became the Convent of the Visitation.

Convent of the Visitation Period

During its use as a convent, various extensions were added to Lock House, altering its architectural balance detrimentally. Most notably, a two-bay extension was built to the east of the ballroom, resulting in windows that were formerly on the end elevation being repositioned to face both north and south. Above the former ballroom, now repurposed as a chapel, a first-floor extension with a flat roof was constructed, leaving the property with an unbalanced and somewhat institutional appearance.

Recent Ownership and Alterations

The applicant acquired Lock House in 2003 from a property trader, who had previously purchased it after the Convent relocated to Albourne. In 2002, the trader had sold off the two gatehouses, redirected the entrance driveway, and obtained planning consent for the conversion of Lock House into six dwellings, despite this permission not being entirely sympathetic with the heritage of the building. The sale to the applicant was agreed subject to planning permission for the house to become a single dwelling.

Upon taking ownership, the applicant undertook significant refurbishment of the entire property. This included completely re-wiring and re-plumbing the property (with the exception of the original Art Deco bathrooms), converting the chapel into a family kitchen, and removing demountable partitions installed by the Convent to restore the original rooms to their former glory. They also secured planning permission for the construction of an indoor swimming pool, a large garden store, and a garage with a flat above. Additionally, the applicant purchased much of the surrounding land to enhance the privacy of the property and to restore part of the original estate, reconnecting it with the house.

Following failed marketing to sell the property as one since 2011, Horsham Council granted planning consent for the conversion of Lock House to 3 No. dwellings in March 2025 under

reference DC/25/0037. This followed an unsuccessful planning application for the conversion of the property to a scheme of 5 units DC/24/1667. The grounds for refusal of this 5 unit scheme were water neutrality baseline not being sufficiently demonstrated and that the separation off of the service wings stopped an appreciation of the hierarchy of the country house as one with access between service and polite areas. This refusal was appealed and the appeal has been allowed under reference APP/Z3825/W/25/3359623, where the inspector determined the optimum viable use of Lock House was as 5 dwellings, that the modest provision of further residential units provided significant public benefit outweighing the less than substantial harm to the significance of the building as a heritage asset arising from the loss of hierarchy.

Planning has been implemented for DC/25/0037 with the creation of the 3 units – east wing house 1, central wing house 2 and west wing house 3. However, commercially House 2, the central unit retains many of the problems of the original Lock House in just being too large at over 14,000 square feet with 9 bedroom suites. As determined by the planning inspector the conversion of the listed building to 5 houses would be the optimum viable use. However, house 3 has already been converted in accordance with DC/25/0037 as a single unit but could in the future be sub-divided. This proposal is for the sub-division of House 2 to create one additional unit taking the total units in Lock House to 4 residential units. As determined by the planning inspector the provision of additional dwellings whilst modest has significant weight in terms of public benefit.

Heritage of Lock House

Lock House is a Grade II listed property, with its official listing entry recorded as follows:

Listing Reference: 965/0/10047

Date of Listing: 06-DEC-2001

Location: West Grinstead, Partridge Green

Property Name: Lock House (formerly Convent of the Visitation)

Large house. Circa 1900, first shown on the 1911 Ordnance Survey map, in Vernacular Revival style with extensions and alterations of the 1930s for the Harvey family comprising ballroom, loggia, extension to service wing and refitting in matching style.

EXTERIOR: Built of red brick in English bond with hipped tiled roof with eight clustered brick chimneystacks. Two storeys and attics. Irregular fenestration, mainly casement windows with leaded lights.

North west or entrance front comprises central projecting gable and projecting end wings. Central gable has carved bargeboards with oriel to attic and three windows below. Four-centred arched oak door with plain spandrels. In front of this is a timber framed three bay porte-cochere and behind a four centred arched doorcase with floral spandrels. On either side are set back portions of two bays. The left side projecting wing has a three-light dormer and to the extreme left is a two bay one storey 1930s ballroom, with round-headed windows and keystones, extended by a further two bays in matching style and with a further floor added above c1970 to provide a chapel and accommodation for a convent. The right-hand projection has a square bell turret, timber framed on a tiled base with ogee top. South east side has four casement windows and a further 1930s four window extension with tiled porch in matching style. The south west or garden front was originally of 12 bays but a three bay extension was added in the 1930s to the left and a loggia of three bays and a two bay ballroom extension added to the right. There is a projecting tiled gable with bellcast followed by a recessed part with five windows to the first floor and central five-light mullioned and transomed casement to ground floor flanked by two carved oak four-centred arched entrances and half-glazed doors. The centre has three projecting tiled gables, the end ones with two storey seven-light canted bays, the central bay three-light casements. To the extreme right of the original building is a three-light dormer and three windows to the first floor, including a canted bay with a ground floor three bay brick loggia with wooden double doors at ground floor level. To the extreme right is the 1930s ballroom with round-headed windows extended by two bays c1970 and a further storey with three casement windows.

INTERIOR: Staircase Hall has stone fireplace with strapwork frieze and foliate spandrels, cornice with frieze of beasts and ribbed ceiling. Jacobean style carved wooden well staircase with carved balusters and newel posts with strapwork panels and elaborate finials. Drawing Room has marble fireplace and four alcoves. Morning Room has a baronial fireplace with a Coat of Arms, panelled doors with four-centred arches and dado linenfold-type panelling. Former Ballroom has panelled walls. Former Music Room has a built-in china cabinet. Former Bar has wooden fireplace with surround with shell decoration and strapwork pilasters. Dining Room is panelled throughout in maple in an early C18 style and has a green marble bolection-moulded fireplace and coved cornice.

The service end is completely of c1937 including tiled kitchen and scullery with original cupboards, strongroom for silver and Housekeeper's Parlour with bolection-moulded

fireplace with tiled surround. Subsidiary staircase with moulded balusters and service staircase with stick balusters and square newel posts. First floor retains a few c1900 fireplaces to servants rooms but was mainly refitted in the 1930s. There are guest rooms with panelling and fireplaces including wooden Adam style surround with marble insert and Gibbs surround with marble insert. Master's bedroom has built-in cupboards, marble washbasin and marble bolection-moulded fireplace. Mistress' Bedroom has built-in cupboards, marble fireplace and four floral paintings over the doors. The Dressing Room has walnut built-in wardrobes with interior fittings and fireplace with carved brackets and foliate motifs. Bedrooms to the Harveys daughters Pat and Daphne also have built-in cupboards and wardrobes. There are three Vitrolite lined bathrooms with original fittings, heated towel rails and some original 1930s light fittings. Part of the attic was used as a playroom and has oak panelling.

HISTORY: The Harvey family are reputed to have owned Claridges Hotel. Their daughter Daphne was the first wife of Donald Campbell, holder of the world record for waterspeed.

Optimum Viable Use

In order to preserve the heritage and character of House 2 of Lock House, a range of alternative uses have been carefully considered to determine the optimum viable use for the property. The goal is to identify a sustainable use that both respects the historic significance of the Grade II listed building and ensures its long-term preservation. The following options have been evaluated:

Alternative use	Heritage comments	Planning comments	Commercial comments
Hotel	In order to be functionally used as a hotel, various changes to the site and its listed buildings would be required which would likely result in significant detrimental effects on the heritage assets. These changes could include: - Further sub-division of rooms on the 1st floor because of expectation that each room has an ensuite bathroom. - Increased level of services through the historic elements of the heritage asset to accommodate air conditioning, fire alarms, plumbing services and feature lighting. - Need for a commercial kitchen within the building with its	Hotel use falls within the definition of 'Main Town Centre Use' for the purposes of the NPPF. Para 87 of the NPPF requires a sequential test so it is Town Centre, then edge of centre then only if these options are not available should an out of town location be considered. The development would not meet the small scale rural development exemption of para 89. Increased level of traffic generation. Whilst the hotel option	Whilst the building is characterful in a rural location to become a viable hotel it would need significant extension for spa/leisure facilities and further guest rooms. The viability of any hotel business is driven by the number of guest bedrooms. A country house hotel with high levels of customer service befitting of the heritage asset needs significant numbers of guest rooms to achieve viability. The local area is also well served by first

	requirement for large ductwork. - Increased level of car parking over other uses - Significant need for built form of the heritage asset to be expanded for spa and leisure facilities, further guest rooms and back of house space.	offers limited guest rooms, the restaurant, bar and leisure facilities would be open for the public to use generating significant vehicle movements. Significant local conflict with the neighbouring residential uses consented by DC/25/0037 on the site.	class country house hotels with South Lodge with extensive spa facilities, 2 restaurants and 90 guest rooms and Ockenden Manor with again extensive spa facilities and 28 bedrooms. Lock House with 11 bedrooms could just not operate viably and compete with these 2 hotels. Hotel use is therefore unlikely to be viable.
Care Home	Similar to the hotel use in order to be functionally used as a care home significantly detrimental changes would be required to the heritage asset which would include: - Sub-division required to rooms on the 1st floor because of expectation each would have an ensuite bathroom. - Increased level of services through historic elements of the property including Fire alarm, call alarms, higher levels of lighting, ventilation and further plumbing services. - Need for a commercial kitchen including ductwork - Increased levels of activity and equipment damaging the historic fabric. - Requirement for a large lift for access. - Requirement for ramps in corridors with the different levels. - Requirement to strengthen ceilings for hoists in rooms.	Additional servicing of a care home would generate significant increase in the levels of traffic generated. Not suited to a rural environment not served by public transport. Significant local conflict with the neighbouring residential uses consented by DC/25/0037 on the site.	A typical commercially viable new build care homes has 70+ bedrooms. With the additional costs of converting a heritage asset compared to new build a greater number of rooms would be required. Lock House cannot accommodate sufficient guest rooms to be commercially viable.

Offices	Various changes to the heritage asset would be required to meet modern day office standards which would have a significantly determinantal effect including: - The requirement for comfort cooling/ air conditioning effecting the fabric of the building - The requirement for raised floors for data cabling and power - The requirement for a higher level of car parking - The requirement for open plan office space removing historic fabric - The requirement for new WC facilities - The requirement for a commercial kitchen and ducting - The requirement for floor strengthening to accommodate office floor loadings.	Even with a very low employee ratio of 1:15sqm the site could potentially accommodate 120 employees with significant traffic generation. Similar to a hotel, office use is a town centre use under the sequential test. Significant local conflict with the neighbouring residential uses consented by DC/25/0037 on the site.	The building would have a very inefficient net to gross floor ratio. With higher costs of creating the offices than new build equivalents and with a poor net to gross ratio and rents considerably less than town centre levels the office development would not be viable. The demand for all office accommodation is declining post pandemic and the demand for this type of office space has considerably diminished over the last 30 years.
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Residential as Optimum Viable Use

The detailed analysis has concluded that the only viable use for Lock House is as a residential property. This use aligns with both the preservation of the building's historical integrity and the practical requirements for its long-term sustainability. Several forms of residential use have been considered, each offering different potential benefits for the property:

1. The Heritage Asset as a Single Dwelling

House 2 as consented by DC/25/0037 commercially is a more manageable unit than the original single dwelling Lock House. However, it does remain over-sized at 14,000 square feet with 9 ensuite bedrooms. This is particularly the case in the context of it being a country house conversion where little to no comparables exist or have existed within 30 miles of such a sized unit. In terms of space distribution the walk from end to end of the consented house internally is 46m which is clearly excessive.

2. Conversion of House 2 into 2 more commercial sized units

Sub-division of house 2 generates an central east (unit2a) house of 1,004 square metres over ground and first floors. It creates a central west (unit 2b) house of 377 square metres.

This sub-division is achieved with no changes to the fabric of the building internally or externally.

The only changes are the existing doorway into the walnut panelled room being sealed shut and a new stud partition closing off the service corridor at the bend point. At 1st floor the only change is closing off the corridor going to the further bedrooms to create a vertical party wall line separation.

Between ground and first floor a new stair case is installed in this service corridor for the house in the same way as consented by DC/24/1667.

House 2a remains a very impressive house with the entrance hall, large kitchen in the former ballroom, sitting room, linen fold panelled dining room and 4 bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms.

House 2b is also an impressive house having its kitchen in the former service kitchens bringing these rooms into use with an impressive sitting room in the mahogany panelled room. The house has 4 bedrooms.

In terms of gardens these remain unchanged with a division planting screen on the southerly terrace to separate the private area for house 2a and 2b.

As determined by the planning inspector, the relationship to the wider parkland that serves the house would be retained with the sub-division of the garden terraces only being the area closest to the house.

Parking will be directly adjacent to the front doors for each house on the existing hardstanding driveway which has sufficient space for cars.

Future of Heritage Asset

The proposed conversion of Lock House unit 2 to its optimum viable use is designed to cause minimal harm to the heritage asset. Careful planning ensures that the development will not adversely affect the setting of Lock House, preserving its historical and architectural significance while providing a sustainable future for the property.

Water Neutrality

The proposed development based on existing metered water use and the implementation of DC/25/0037 and DC/25/0359 achieves water neutrality whilst leaving a significant remaining water credit.

Flood Risk

Lock House is located in Flood Risk Zone 1, meaning it faces a none to low risk of flooding from all potential sources. However, access to the property is via Lock Lane, a private road owned by the local landowner that serves all properties on the Lock Estate. This road crosses

a tributary of the River Adur and floods approximately eight times per year, typically for around 24 hours on each occasion. When flooding occurs, the lane remains accessible to 4x4 vehicles or vans, with water reaching a maximum of 40 cm above the road surface, which would still allow the passage of emergency vehicles such as fire engines, ambulances, or 4x4 police vehicles.

Residents of the Lock Estate also benefit from an informal arrangement allowing rear access via Grinders Lane, near Bucks Barn nursery, when the river floods. Lock House, having formerly owned the surrounding land, retains legal access rights to Grinders Lane, ensuring continued connectivity even during flooding events.

Traffic Impact Assessment

The proposed development is projected to have no impact on AM peak or PM peak vehicle movements, contributing to a positive traffic impact. In terms of total daily movements the proposed development increases daily arrivals by 2 and departures by 3 generating 5 vehicle movements per day. The development does not introduce any new highway safety concerns and is not expected to effect overall traffic conditions in the area.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The development has a minimal impact on the site's natural habitats. With less than 25 square metres of habitat and 5 metres of linear habitat affected, the project falls below the threshold for mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements. As a result, while the environmental impact is minimal, the proposal remains fully compliant with biodiversity regulations and poses no significant risk to local ecosystems.

Planning History

The most relevant planning and listed building applications for Lock House are as follows:

- **WG/20/02:**
Granted on 20 May 2002, this planning and listed building consent allowed for the conversion of the former Convent of the Visitation into 6 houses. This consent has not been implemented. However, since this consent was given, little has changed in Planning law and policy that would mean this application would fail today.
- **WG/26/03 and WG/27/03:**
On 10 June 2003, planning and listed building consent was granted for the conversion of the former convent into a single dwelling. This consent has been implemented and remains the current use of the property.
- **WG/81/03 and WG/82/03:**
Granted on 20 February 2004, this consent allowed for the construction of a triple garage with a workshop above. This has been fully implemented, and the workshop has been used as a flat for over 10 years. It is also recognised for Council Tax purposes as the 'Garage Flat.'
- **DC/06/1537, DC/06/1539, DC/07/0544, and DC/07/0543:**
These consents, granted on 28 September 2006 and amended on 16 May 2007,

allowed for the extension of the listed building to include an indoor swimming pool. Both the original and the amended consents have been implemented.

- **DC/17/1968 and DC/17/1973:**
Planning and listed building consent was granted on 10 November 2017 for a pitched roof extension to the east end of the building. However, this consent has not yet been implemented.
- **DC/24/1667 and DC/24/1668** – Planning and listed building consent for the conversion of Lock House to 5 units with the conversion of the existing flat and garage to a further unit was rejected on the basis:
 - Conservation officer objection on the basis dilution of the hierarchy of the building's insight into the rigid class system because proposed scheme did not allow the ability to move through the building to contrast the experience between polite rooms and service rooms. Further objection on the basis that the conversion to 5 units resulted in an intensification of use which would not be conducive to the nature and character of the building.
 - Planning officer objection on the basis insufficient information has been provided to establish the existing baseline water consumption for the water neutrality statement.
 - APP/Z3825/W/25/3359623 & APP/Z3825/Y/25/3359626 – appeal allowed on the basis the Inspector had not found any conflict with policies of the HDPF in relation to the conversion of Lock House to 5no. dwellings and conversion of the existing garage block with flat to a single dwelling. As a result, the proposal would comply with the development plan as a whole. The Inspector had not found any material considerations that indicated he should conclude other than in accordance with the development plan.
- **DC/25/0037 and DC/25/0038** Planning and listed building consent granted 7 March 2025 for the Conversion of a single dwelling into 3no. dwellings and conversion of the existing garage block with flat into single dwelling. (Full Application). Consent being implemented.
- **DC/25/0359 and DC/25/0360** Planning and listed building consent granted 16 June 2025 for the Conversion of 2no. existing buildings to holiday let use. Consent being implemented.

Planning Policy Framework

Relevant Planning Policy Documents

In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning applications should be determined in line with the development plan unless other material considerations suggest otherwise. The statutory development plan for the site includes the Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding the South Downs National Park, adopted November 2015).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) plays a key role in decision-making. Paragraph 7 encourages local planning authorities to take a positive and creative approach in decision-making, aiming to approve applications for sustainable development whenever possible.

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF is particularly relevant to this application, stating that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more specific circumstances apply:

- a) There is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of farm businesses, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
- b) The development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
- c) The development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
- d) The development would involve the sub-division of an existing residential building; or
- e) The design is of exceptional quality, in that it is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

The Framework does not define the word ‘isolated’, but in *Braintree District Council v SSCLG & Ors* [2017] EWHC 2743 (Admin), the judge found ‘isolated’ should be given its ordinary objective meaning of ‘far away from other places, buildings or people; remote’. That judgement was subsequently upheld at the Court of Appeal, *Braintree DC v SSCLG, Greyread Ltd & Granville Developments Ltd* [2017] EWHC 2743 (Admin); [2018] EWCA Civ 610. The Court of Appeal’s judgment in *Bramshill v SSHCLG* [2021] EWCA Civ 320 however went on to affirm that the essential conclusion in *Braintree* was that in determining whether a particular proposal is for “isolated homes in the countryside”, the decision-maker must consider “whether it would be physically isolated, in the sense of being isolated from a settlement”.

What is a “settlement” and whether the development would be “isolated” from a settlement are both matters of planning judgment for the decision-maker on the facts of the particular case. At paragraphs 33 and 34 of the judgement the Court held that to adopt remoteness from other dwellings, instead of remoteness from a settlement, as the test for “isolated homes in the countryside” would seem inconsistent with the Government’s evident intention in producing the policy in paragraph 79. Stating: It would mean that the policy would not apply to a development of housing in the countryside – large or small – on land next to an individual dwelling remote from the nearest settlement, because although the new homes might be “isolated” from the settlement, they would not be “isolated” from existing development. It would prevent the policy from applying to the development of additional dwellings, one or two at a time, on sites next to other sporadic rural housing, again on the basis that they would not then be “isolated”. It might even prevent the policy from applying to a proposal for two or more dwellings on a single, undeveloped site in the countryside, because none of them would itself be “isolated” from another dwelling, and the development as a whole would therefore not be “isolated”.

If this were so, only the development of a single dwelling, on its own, separate from any other dwelling already built or proposed nearby, would engage the policy. This would be hard to reconcile with the Government’s aim, as policy-maker, to “promote sustainable development in rural areas. It is clear therefore that the *Bramshill* judgement confirms the following in relation to isolated homes in the countryside: that the correct interpretation of “isolated homes in the countryside” requires the decision maker to consider whether the development would be physically isolated, in the sense of being isolated from “a settlement”

rather than being isolated from “other dwellings”, and that the question of what is a “settlement” and whether the development would be “isolated” from a settlement, are both matters of planning judgment for the decision-maker on the facts of the particular case.

Taking into account the Bramshill judgement the site at Lock House is clearly an isolated home in the countryside given it is not located in close proximity to an existing settlement. It is clear that the location would result in isolated homes in the countryside and therefore Paragraph 84 of the NPPF should be triggered. The proposal for Lock House meets various criteria in paragraph 84:

- b. The development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset;
- c. The development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting – Much of the space comprising the proposed house 3 is redundant and unused and not heated.
- d. The development would involve the sub-division of an existing residential building

Precedent Case: The appeal decision at Lock Farm, Partridge Green (APP/Z3825/W/18/3203048), a site in close proximity to Lock House, concluded in para 17 that “given the distance to Partridge Green and separation from other residential development, the appeal site is in an isolated position.” The proposal is therefore consistent with Paragraph 84 of the NPPF

Sustainable Development: The planning system’s purpose is to promote sustainable development, as outlined in Paragraph 8 of the NPPF, which covers the economic, social, and environmental roles of development. These roles involve contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, and protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment

Housing Supply: Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is triggered where a local authority cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. Horsham District Council currently falls short, with a supply of only 2.9 years. This makes the need for new development, particularly smaller and medium-sized housing schemes, even more pressing, as recognised in Paragraph 69 of the NPPF.

Horsham District Planning Framework 2015

The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), adopted in September 2015, provides the primary planning policy framework for development in the Horsham District area.

Housing Land Supply and District Performance: The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) 2022/23 evaluated Horsham District’s delivery of housing and performance against its target housing requirement, with figures assessed as of 31 March 2023. The report includes the latest housing trajectory and the five-year housing land supply calculation. Following updates to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2023, the housing target set by the government for the district increased to 911 dwellings per annum. However, Horsham District Council can only demonstrate 59% of its required five-year housing land supply, equating to just 2.9 years, significantly below the government target. For the 2022/23 monitoring year, only 396 net dwellings were completed, which falls substantially short of the 911 dwellings per annum target set by the government. This shortfall emphasises the pressing need for new housing development to address the district’s deficit in housing provision, especially smaller-scale, high-quality housing that contributes to

the overall supply. The proposed development at Lock House, which includes heritage-sensitive residential units, will contribute positively to the district's housing needs.

Policy 34: In this policy, the Council acknowledges that Heritage Assets are an irreplaceable resource, and it commits to sustaining and enhancing the historic environment through positive management of development affecting such assets. Lock House, as a designated heritage asset, has been proven through an extensive period of marketing to be functionally redundant in its current use as a single dwelling. To ensure its preservation, it must be adapted for a sustainable purpose. Therefore, the Council's proactive management of the proposed development is essential to safeguard the future of this heritage asset. Policy 34 further stipulates that any application will be required to:

1. Make reference to the significance of the Asset. The significance is explained in this planning statement and the Heritage Impact Assessment together with Historic England's listing for the asset and a review of all historical records including at the West Sussex Records Office.
2. Reflect the current best practice guidance produced by Historic England. This is done in this statement and the Heritage report.
3. Reinforce the special character of the districts historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form and design and the use of traditional materials and techniques. The design has evolved as explained in the Heritage Impact Assessment to ensure this objective is met.
4. Preserve, and ensure clear legibility of locally distinctive vernacular forms and their settings, features, fabric and materials. The application is one that is necessary to see the preservation of the heritage asset ensuring long term preservation.
5. Secure the viable and sustainable future of heritage assets through continued preservation by uses that are consistent with the significance of the heritage asset. This application is one based upon the optimum viable use for the heritage asset remaining in residential use.
6. Retain and improve the setting of heritage assets. The setting of the heritage asset is not harmed by the proposed development as analysed in the heritage impact assessment and landscape impact assessment. The achievement of a viable future for the heritage asset without segmentation of its parkland setting will enable the long-term preservation and improvement of the setting.

Lock House, a heritage asset, has been extensively marketed, and evidence has demonstrated that its current use as a single dwelling is no longer viable. Therefore, in line with Policy 34, the conversion of Lock House to a sustainable and appropriate residential use will safeguard the future of the asset, ensuring its preservation for generations to come. The proposed scheme for Lock House fully adheres to the principles outlined in Policy 34, aiming to safeguard the building's historical significance while providing a viable and sustainable use that enhances its value within the district. By converting the property to 3 residential units, the development offers an optimal solution that secures the ongoing preservation of Lock House, contributing to both the housing supply and the heritage landscape of the district.

APP/Z3825/W/25/3359623 & APP/Z3825/Y/25/3359626: – appeal allowed on the basis the Inspector had not found any conflict with policies of the HDPF in relation to the conversion of Lock House to 5no. dwellings and conversion of the existing garage block with flat to a single dwelling. As a result, the proposal would comply with the development plan as a

whole. The Inspector had not found any material considerations that indicated he should conclude other than in accordance with the development plan. The Inspector specifically stated:

1. A wall is proposed to divide the corridor between the main part of the house, which will become unit 2, and what is proposed to become unit 3 at ground floor level, with the staircase moved into the corridor behind. A doorway will be closed at first floor level. Although physically modest and original features can be retained, these changes would affect the links between different parts of the building, particularly the polite rooms that would be within unit 2 and the servants' areas in what would become units 3-4. There would be other changes to the layout, including removal of the existing staircase, but these would be modest. Patio doors would replace windows in the proposed kitchen and living rooms on the ground floor, which would not materially affect the understanding of the building as a country house. Overall, the division to separate units 2 and 3 would affect the hierarchy between the polite and service areas of the country house.[para 12]
2. In addition, the subdivision of the garden would be likely to result in more residential paraphernalia relating to the individual new units. However, the manner in which the garden would be divided means that this only affects the parts closest to the house. The relationship to the wider parkland that serves the house would be retained. Nevertheless, division between the private areas and provision of individual paraphernalia for the different units would harm the understanding of the building as a country house to some extent.[para 15]
3. For these reasons, I conclude that the subdivision of the house and immediate surrounds to provide five dwellings would affect the hierarchy of spaces within and immediately surrounding the building, such that it would harm features of special architectural and historic interest that the building possesses.[para 17]
4. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises at Paragraph 212 that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Accordingly, while less than the 'substantial harm' referred to in Paragraph 214 of the NPPF, the harm to the listed building is nevertheless a matter of considerable importance and weight.[Para 18]
5. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF establishes that, where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. In this case, the building has been marketed as a single dwelling, which would be its optimum use given its significance as a country house. However, that has been unsuccessful. Given the extensive period of marketing, it is clear that use of the building as a single dwelling is not viable. I note that the conversion to 3 dwellings under planning permission reference DC/25/0037 would also affect the relationship of the polite and service areas, perhaps to a lesser extent. Nevertheless and on balance, I consider that the proposed subdivision would result in the optimum viable use of the building. [para 19]

6. In addition, the development would result in the creation of four additional dwellings. The Council indicate they are only able to provided 2.9 years supply of dwellings in comparison to the policy requirement in the NPPF to provide 5 years supply. The proposal would result in 5 additional dwellings or 2 taking account of planning permission reference DC/25/0037. Whilst the number of additional dwellings in this case is modest, this is, nevertheless, a public benefit of significant weight.[para 20]
7. For these reasons, I conclude that the combination of securing the optimum viable use of the building along with the addition of houses toward meeting the need for housing in the area results in public benefits sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm I have found to the significance of the heritage asset.[para 21]
8. Taking all the above into account, I conclude that the conversion of a single dwelling to 5no. dwellings and conversion of the existing garage block with flat to single dwelling would comply with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and the NPPF. These seek to sustain and enhance the historic environment including securing the viable and sustainable future of heritage assets through preservation by uses that are consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.[para 22].

Conclusion

The proposed sub-division of House 2 into 2 more manageable units achieves a more viable future for the heritage asset and the optimum viable use.

The proposed sub-division works are minimal and do not effect the historic fabric of the property or its setting or immediate landscape. The works were considered by the Planning Inspector to be modest.

The Country House experience with the division between service areas and polite areas is better revealed within house 2b (the central west wing) by bringing the original kitchens with their 1940s tiling back into use as the kitchens for the house together with the silver safe and scullery as well as the 2 small staff bedrooms with 1900s fireplace. House 2b also retains the original 1930s art deco vitrolite bathrooms.

In addition to safeguarding the heritage asset, this proposal aligns with national and local planning policy, addressing the urgent housing needs of Horsham District by contributing to the under-delivered housing supply. Furthermore, the scheme ensures that the development is sustainable, water-neutral, and flood-resilient, with a reduced traffic impact and no significant biodiversity loss.

In conclusion, this proposal provides the optimum viable use of Lock House, preserving its historical significance while delivering much-needed housing. It offers a balanced, sensitive, and sustainable solution that aligns with both heritage protection and housing policies, ensuring the long-term preservation and vitality of this important historical asset.