



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/1052

Alexandra House, 11 Queen Street, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 5AA

DESCRIPTION:

Change of use from ground floor studio flat (Class C3) to retail unit (Class E).

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/25/0215	Prior notification for change of use from office to residential to form three dwellings.	Prior Approval Required and PERMITTED on 16.04.2025
DC/26/0548	Conversion of existing building to form 2no. residential dwellings in conjunction with refurbishment of existing Class E Unit fronting Queen Street. (Lawful Development Certificate - Proposed).	Withdrawn Application on 05.06.2026

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

This application relates to Alexandra House, 11 Queen Street, Horsham, which comprises a small unit to the front of the ground floor of the building, measuring 37sqm. The rear unit of the ground floor and first floor units are occupied by residential dwellings, forming 3 flats. The site lies within the defined Built-Up Area Boundary of Horsham, and within the Horsham Town Centre Primary Shopping Area. The building is locally listed, though not within the Horsham Conservation Area. The surrounding area is varied in type and character but is typical of a town centre setting, comprising a mix of retail, commercial, office, and residential uses.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use from a ground floor studio flat, Class C3, to a retail unit, Class E(a). There are no external alterations proposed, with the application solely relating to the proposed change of use. Whilst not retrospective at point of submission, it is noted during the Officer's site visit that the coffee shop has since occupied the premises and is trading, known as 'Little Gwyns'.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development

Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development

Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy

Policy 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 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs
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 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 39 - Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036

Policy HB1: Location of Development
Policy HB3: Character of Development
Policy HB4: Design of Development
Policy HB6: Retaining and Enhancing the Vitality and Viability of Horsham Town Centre
Policy HB9: Protecting Existing and Encouraging New Commercial Premises and Land
Policy HB10: Green and Blue Infrastructure and Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain

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 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
Strategic Policy 23: Infrastructure Provision
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Policy 28: Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation
Strategic Policy 29: New Employment
Strategic Policy 35: Town Centre Hierarchy and Sequential Approach
Strategic Policy 36: Town Centre Uses
Strategic Policy 37: Housing Provision
Strategic Policy 38: Meeting Local Housing Needs

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Planning Advice Notes:

Shaping Development in Horsham District
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

HDC Conservation: No Objection

11 Queen Street is recognised as a locally listed building and was formally the Alexandra Inn which was closed in 1972. The application relates solely to the change of use of part of the ground floor. The proposed use would reflect the active frontage on this part of Queen Street and would not result in harm to the local historic interest of the building. No objection would therefore be raised.

HDC Environmental Health: No comments received

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

WSCC Highways: No Objection

Considering the small scale of the development, and the sites sustainable location. The Local Highway Authority does not consider that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

None received

Parish Comments:

Horsham Town Council: No Objection

Member Comments:

None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

Policy 2 of the HDPF seeks to maintain the district's distinctive rural character while meeting community needs through sustainable growth and appropriate access to services and local employment. To achieve this, development is focused in and around the Key Settlement of Horsham, recognising and developing Horsham town's role as the primary town for the District. The policy also seeks to identify and safeguard existing sites of important employment use through flexible policies and the designation of Key Employment Areas, while supporting the rural economy to enable people to work closer to where they live.

Policy 3 states that development will be permitted within towns and villages that have defined built-up area boundaries. Horsham is identified as a large settlement with a wide range of employment opportunities, services, and facilities, supported by strong social networks and good rail and bus accessibility, reinforcing its role as the district's primary focus for growth.

Policy 5 states to promote the prosperity of Horsham town and maintain and strengthen its role as the primary economic and cultural centre in the District, and the wider economic area. Development will be allowed within the built-up area of Horsham where it: contributes to the provision of a range of services and facilities including those in arts, heritage and leisure that make the town self-sustaining and contributes to the economy of the town to support a vibrant high street and town centre that meets local and business demands as well as supporting the wider economy, including the provision of a wide range of employment and retaining and enhancing its unique retail mix to meet both independent and national retailers requirements.

Policy 7, Economic Growth, seeks to ensure sustainable employment development within Horsham District through the redevelopment, regeneration, intensification, and smart growth of existing employment sites. The policy supports the formation and expansion of small, start-up, and move-on businesses, by encouraging the provision of small business units through development proposals. It also emphasises the retention of Key Employment Areas for employment uses and promotes sustainable local employment growth through Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Policy 9 states the provision of small, start-up and move-on business units will be supported to enable them to reach their fullest potential.

Policy 12, Vitality and Viability of Existing Retail Centres, promotes the encouragement of activities in town and village centres so they continue to be the prime focus for community life in the district by: maintaining a diverse range and choice of suitable uses including retail, leisure, entertainment, sports and recreation, arts, culture, business and commercial uses as well as residential use.

Policy 13, Town Centre Uses, states proposals for main town centre uses will be allowed within the defined town and village centre boundary, provided that:

1. Proposals are of an appropriate scale to the centres;
2. The proposal will complement the vitality and viability of the centre;
3. The proposal is accessible, relates to and is well connected to the defined Frontage(s) and Primary Shopping Area(s) of the centre where these exist; and
4. The proposal will improve the character, quality and function of the centre as a whole.

Policy HB6 of the HBBNP, states there is a need to maintain the economic health, vitality and viability of the Town Centre, in balance with residential development and infrastructure. Therefore, mixed use development proposals, including employment, office, retail, community, cultural, tourism and residential uses, will normally be supported within the Town Centre. The temporary change of use of vacant premises to pop-up shops will be encouraged within the primary and secondary shopping areas. In the secondary shop frontage areas, development proposals that foster small, local business activity in the town centre will be supported.

Policy HB9 of the HBBNP, states proposals to provide start-up business space will be supported. Proposals that support or enhance existing businesses delivering a net gain in employment in sustainable locations and enabling businesses to grow will be supported.

The application site lies within the defined Built-Up Area Boundary of Horsham (Policy 3) and within the Horsham Town Centre Primary Shopping Area (Policy 13). The application seeks full planning consent for the change of use from a Class C3 Use, to a Class E use. The use will consist of a small-scale coffee shop, offering a primarily walk-in service with limited internal seating.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposal would result in the loss of a single residential unit, the loss is modest in scale and would not materially impact the Council's housing supply. Prior to permission being granted for the change the use of this unit into residential occupation, reference DC/25/0215, the premises had been within a Class E Use.

The development would enable the continued occupation of the premises by a small business within Horsham Town Centre, supporting economic growth, local employment opportunities and the vitality and viability of the town centre. The proposal would therefore comply with the aims of Policies 5, 7, 9, 12 and 13 of the HDPF and HB6 and 9 of the HBBNP, which seeks to support town centre activity, economic development and the provision of small business units. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle and compliant with the above policies.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land. This reflects the requirements of national Policy P3 (Living conditions and pollution).

The site is located within a town centre location, on a street which comprises a mix of uses, including retail, commercial and business premises, as well as residential uses. The Council's Environmental Health Team have raised no comments in relation to the proposed development. It is noted that there is a potential noise impact on the occupants of the residential flat on the ground floor and at first floor level, being in close proximity to a Class E Use. Given the site's location, residential uses situated above commercial premises is commonly established arrangement in the vicinity. Given the proposed opening hours, which are to be restricted by condition to daytime hours and no evening openings, restrictions on the premises remaining within a Class E E(a), E(c), E(g)(i) Use, and the small limited scale and operation of the café, these measures suitably control impacts on the residential amenity. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and national Policy P3.

Highways Impacts:

Policy 40 of the HDPF deals with sustainable transport and seeks new developments to provide safe and suitable access for all vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, horses riders, public transport, and the delivery of goods. Policy 41 which relates to parking requires adequate parking and facilities to be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users.

The application site is located on Queen Street and does not benefit from off street parking. Queen Street itself and the surrounding roads do not offer unrestricted parking, however, there is very limited bay parking both on Queen Street and Queensway, offering short stay parking. The closest public car park, is Piries Place, located approximately 194 metres to the northwest. However, in line with West Sussex County Council's consultation response, in their role as the Local Highways Authority, the site is in sustainable location, well connected to Horsham Town Centre. Those visiting the café will likely be combining their visit alongside visiting other locations in the area. The surrounding area is made up of multiple uses, most notably retail, commercial and residential, in which the surrounding area is all linked throughout by paved and street lit footways. Visiting the premises on foot is a desirable option for future customers, with regular bus routes in operation along Queen Street/ Brighton Road, which offer services to Henfield, Haywards Heath, Pease Pottage and Brighton. The LHA consider that this context alleviates the reliance on the use of a private car.

Considering the small scale of the development, and the sites sustainable location, the LHA does not consider that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in severe cumulative adverse impacts on the operation of the transport network, whilst also considering the sustainable modes of transport available to future occupiers. As such, the proposed development is not

contrary to Paragraph 4, under Policy TR6 of the NPPF (2026), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

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 Policy N6 of the NPPF.

Other Matters:

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed. Off-site gains (on unregistered sites) and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

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

- The development qualifies as 'de minimis' under Regulation 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Conclusions:

The proposal, in a suitable and sustainable location, would allow the continued operation of a small business within Horsham Town Centre and Horsham Town Centre Primary Shopping Area, supporting economic growth, providing local employment opportunities and supporting the vitality and viability of the town centre. With the use strictly controlled by means of conditions relating to opening hours and use, the development would not lead to harmful impacts on residential amenity or give rise to unacceptable highways impacts. The development is therefore considered to accord with the relevant local and national planning policies and is recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

- 2 **Regulatory Condition:** Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020) (or any order amending or revoking and/or re-enacting these Orders), the premises hereby permitted shall be used for Class E(a), E(c), E(g)(i) only, and for no other purposes whatsoever, without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: Changes of use as permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order or Use Classes Order 1987 are not considered appropriate in this case due to the close proximity of neighbouring residential properties, under Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 3 **Regulatory Condition:** The premises shall not be open for trade or business except between the hours of 07:00 – 17:00 Monday to Saturday, and 08:00 to 16:00 on Sundays.

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

NOTE TO APPLICANT

Biodiversity Net Gain Condition

Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the "biodiversity gain condition" which means development granted by this notice must not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

Under Regulations 4, 5, 7 & 8 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 the statutory biodiversity gain condition required by Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which:

1. does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (a hedgerow habitat or watercourse habitat identified for the purposes of the biodiversity metric);

2. is the subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015;
3. is undertaken solely or mainly for the purpose of fulfilling, in whole or in part, the biodiversity gain planning condition which applies in relation to another development (In determining whether a development is undertaken solely or mainly for this purpose, no account is to be taken of any facility for the public to access or to use the site for educational or recreational purposes, if that access or use is permitted without the payment of a fee);
4. consists of no more than 9 dwellings, is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares, and consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding ("Self-build or custom housebuilding" has the same meaning as in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended)).

In addition, the Biodiversity Gain Plan Condition does not apply to applications for major development made before 12 February 2024, or non-major development made before 2 April 2024.

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.

Statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These can be found at Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 74-003-20240214 of the Planning Practice Guidance, which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>.

Irreplaceable habitat

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans.

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/26/1052

(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
Elevation & Floor plan	Existing Plans and Elevations	SPR002 / P / 02 P1	22.06.2026
Location & Block plan	Site Location and Block Plans	SPR002 / P / 01 P1	22.06.2026
Elevation & Floor plan	Proposed Plans and Elevations	SPR002 / P / 03 P1	22.06.2026
Design & Access Statement		NONE	22.06.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Sam Nye Date: 08/09/2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial Tamara Dale Date: 09.09.2026