Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/25/0906
17 Saxon Road, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3FP

DESCRIPTION:
Conversion of existing outbuilding into habitable living space.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

None Relevant

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking

Steyning Neighbourhood Plan:
SNDP3 - Contribution to Character

Parish Design Statement:

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:

Natural England: Standing Advice:-
It cannot be concluded that existing abstraction within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone is not having an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites. Developments within Sussex North must therefore must not add to this impact and one way of achieving this is to demonstrate water neutrality. The definition of water neutrality is the use of water in the supply area before the development is the same or lower after the development is in place.

To achieve this Natural England is working in partnership with all the relevant authorities to secure water neutrality collectively through a water neutrality strategy. Whilst the strategy is evolving, Natural England advises that decisions on planning applications should await its completion. However, if there

are applications which a planning authority deems critical to proceed in the absence of the strategy, then Natural England advises that any application needs to demonstrate water neutrality.

Southern Water: No Comment - standard information provided

Parish Comments:
Steyning Parish Council – No objection

Representations:
One letter of representation received objecting to the planning application. The comments raise concerns about the impact of the proposed change of use of an existing building. The neighbour notes that the building is already situated very close to their boundary and appears to exceed the permitted height of 2.5 metres. While they have not experienced any issues with its current use as an office and gym, they are concerned that converting it into a habitable space could result in a significant loss of general amenity. Specifically, they fear increased noise levels over extended periods, which may affect their ability to enjoy their garden. Additional concerns include the potential for overdevelopment and adverse effects on privacy, light, and noise levels. Although the neighbour expresses sympathy for the applicant's needs, they do not support the proposed use in the building's current location.

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:

The application has been assessed on the basis of the submitted details, together with the planning history of the site and adjoining properties, available images and photographs supplied by the agent. These details were considered sufficient to allow the application to be properly considered and determined.

Character and Appearance

Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) seek to ensure that development is of a high quality of design which respects the character of the local area. The existing outbuilding was constructed in 2020/21 and sits to the rear of the dwelling at 17 Saxon Road. The proposed works involve an internal conversion to form habitable living space, with no external alterations of significance proposed that would materially alter the built form, scale or visual presence of the structure.

Given the modest scale of the outbuilding, its siting within the residential plot, and its clear subservience to the host dwelling, the proposal is considered to assimilate appropriately with the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. The development would not result in visual harm to the street scene or wider locality. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF, and Policy SNDP3 of the Steyning Neighbourhood Plan,

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) supports development that does not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of nearby occupiers or land users.

The proposed conversion of the existing outbuilding to ancillary living accommodation would not alter the building's footprint, height, or proximity to neighbouring boundaries. It remains within the curtilage of the host dwelling and retains its existing physical relationship with surrounding properties. As such, the proposal would not give rise to any harmful overbearing, overshadowing, or overlooking impacts.

One letter of representation was received from a neighbouring occupier, raising concerns about the potential loss of amenity resulting from the change of use. The neighbour notes the building's close proximity to their boundary and questions whether its height exceeds the permitted 2.5 metres. While no issues have arisen from its current use as an office and gym, they express concern that its use as habitable accommodation could lead to increased and prolonged noise, affecting their enjoyment of their garden. Additional concerns include potential overdevelopment and impacts on privacy, light, and noise.

However, the case officer's site visit confirmed that there is a reasonable degree of separation between the proposed ancillary building and the neighbouring dwelling. An existing outbuilding on the neighbouring property, located directly on the boundary, provides a physical buffer that would help mitigate any potential noise concerns. Furthermore, mature vegetation along the side boundaries contributes to screening and separation, reducing the likelihood of adverse impacts on privacy or outlook.

Given the ancillary nature of the proposed use and the context of the site, the level of activity associated with the annexe is not considered to exceed what could reasonably be expected within a residential plot of this size. The proposal is therefore not anticipated to result in any significant increase in noise, disturbance, or loss of amenity.

In conclusion, the development would not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and is considered to comply with Policy 33 of the HDPF.

Water Neutrality

There is no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development would result in a more intensive occupation of the dwelling necessitating an increased consumption of water that would result in a significant impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The grant of planning permission would not therefore adversely affect the integrity of these sites or otherwise conflict with policy 31 of the HDPF, NPPF paragraph 193 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

The submitted Water Neutrality Statement confirms that the outbuilding already contains bathroom and sink facilities that have been in continuous use since prior to the introduction of the water neutrality requirements. No additional water-using features are proposed, and cooking facilities will not be installed due to the care needs of the applicant's father. As such, the unit will function as an ancillary bedroom and living space linked to the host dwelling, with meals and facilities shared.

On this basis, it is considered that the proposal would not increase overall water consumption at the site and would not give rise to additional demand on the water supply. The development is therefore consistent with Policy 31 of the HDPF, and the requirements of the Habitats Regulations.

Biodiversity Net Gain

In accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, all householder applications are current exempt from the statutory requirement to demonstrate a 10% net gain in biodiversity.

Conclusion

The proposed conversion of the existing outbuilding into ancillary habitable accommodation is considered acceptable in principle. The development would respect the character and appearance of

the site and surrounding area, would not result in harm to neighbouring amenity, and would not lead to an increase in water consumption within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

Subject to a condition ensuring that the accommodation remains ancillary to the host dwelling and is not used as a separate unit of accommodation, the proposal is compliant with the relevant policies of the HDPF, and the Steyning Neighbourhood Plan.

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 **Regulatory Condition**: The accommodation hereby permitted shall be used solely for purposes ancillary to the occupation and enjoyment of 17 Saxon Road, Steyning (as identified on the approved plans), and shall not be used as a separate unit of accommodation, or for any commercial purposes or for any other purpose(s)/use(s).

Reason: The establishment of an additional independent unit of accommodation, additional living accommodation, commercial use or any other use(s) would give rise to an over-intensive use of the site and lead to an unsatisfactory relationship between independent units of living accommodation contrary to Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT
Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/25/0906
Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan		NONE	30.05.2025
Roof plan		A 497-5	30.05.2025
Elevation plan		A 497-6	21.06.2025
Location & Block plan		A 497-7	30.05.2025
Supporting Statement	Planning	A 497-1	30.05.2025
Supporting Docs	Water Neutrality	A 497-2	30.05.2025
Floor plan	Existing	A 497-3	30.05.2025
Floor plan	Proposed	A 497-4	30.05.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial	Shazia Penne	Date:	27.08.2028
Authorising Officer sign/initial	RHERMITAGE	Date:	05.09.2025