Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/25/0912
12 Hedgelands, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9XS

DESCRIPTION:
Conversion of garage into habitable living space.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:
None

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 41 - Parking

Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031
Policy Bill 1 - Billingshurst built-up area boundary
Policy Bill 2 - Housing design and character

Parish Design Statement:
Design Statement for the Parish of Billingshurst

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.

WSCC Highways: No Objection
The LHA does not consider that this 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 (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Parish Comments:
Neutral response, saw no cause for objection to the plans as submitted.

Representations:
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:

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 HDPF seek to ensure that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

Policy Bill 2 of the Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan states that development proposals should be guided by the Billingshurst Parish Design Statement and should reflect the scale and local vernacular of the surrounding buildings, and use materials that are in keeping with those used in existing buildings in the immediate locality.

12 Hedgelands is a semi-detached dwelling in the built-up boundary of Billingshurst. It is situated on a privately maintained road neighbouring open green space. The garage is set separate from the dwelling and slightly back, therefore the driveway provides the space for 2 off-street parking.

The proposed conversion will allow for the garage to be used as a garden room, with space for an exercise bike. The proposal also includes the erection of an internal wall for the creation of a cycle storage. This will be accessed via a side door which leads to an existing gate on the driveway. The proposal also includes the installation of x2 roof lights and door to the rear elevation, as well as a double sliding door to the side.

With the exception of the windows and doors, the proposed materials are to match that of the existing. The garage door will remain in place but will not be in use.

The proposal would be a clearly subservient addition and is considered to be of a design, form and scale which is appropriate to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, and which would not harm the character or appearance of the wider area. It is therefore considered that the visual impact of the proposal is acceptable and would accord with the above policies.

Impact on Neighbouring 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.

The proposal site from the outside will remain as the existing. There are no proposed external changes to the front of the property.

It is considered that the proposed garage conversion and the resulting relationship with neighbouring properties would be sufficient to prevent any unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity.

Impact on Parking

Parking - Policy 41 states at 11.9 that 'This policy seeks to find the right balance between ensuring that adequate parking is provided to support new development whilst ensuring that it is suitably located and does not conflict with other uses'.

WSCC Highways made comments confirming that although the garage will be converted, there is still adequate parking on the existing drive for the space of 2 cars. Any overspill parking as result of the loss of the garage parking space could be accommodated on-street.

The proposal also incorporates a cycle store within the conversion, ensuring that secure and covered cycle storage is retained and encouraging sustainable transport options.

The proposed conversion of the garage is therefore considered not to have an adverse impact on highway use. It is therefore considered that the highways impact of the proposal is acceptable and would accord with the above policies.

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.

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 proposal is considered to comply 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 **Regulatory Condition**: The materials and finishes of all new external walls, windows and roofs of the development hereby permitted shall match in type, colour and texture those of the existing building.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with 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/25/0912

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Elevation & Floor plan	Existing, Block and Location	1001-01	15.08.2025
Elevation & Floor plan	Proposed, Block and Location	1001-02	15.08.2025
Supporting Statement	Planning	NONE	15.08.2025
Photos		NONE	02.06.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Meg Bayliss Date: 02/10/2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 07.10.2025