



Variation of Condition 1 and removal of Condition 5 of DC/24/0511 to vary plan numbers to introduce an integrated solar roof system and make changes to the approved site layout and landscaping, and to remove the requirements in relation to water neutrality and to make minor consequential amendments to conditions 9,10,11 and 14.

Wood Grange,
Henfield Road,
Cowfold,
West Sussex
RH13 8DT

Planning Statement

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This statement accompanies an application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary Condition 1 (approved plans) of planning permission DC/24/0511, to remove Condition 5 (water neutrality), and to make minor consequential amendments to other conditions.

The proposed amendments are limited in scope and do not materially alter the nature, scale or impacts of the approved development. Instead, they deliver demonstrable environmental, design, heritage and biodiversity benefits while reflecting an updated regulatory context in relation to water neutrality

SITE AND PLANNING BACKGROUND

The site comprises Wood Grange and associated land at Henfield Road, Cowfold. Planning permission DC/24/0511 granted consent for:

- Conversion of the Lodge to 2No 2-bedroom flats;
- Erection of 2No detached 3-bedroom dwellings;
- Erection of a detached garage building with office above; and
- Associated landscaping works.

The approved development was carefully designed to respect the character and setting of Wood Grange, a listed building, and to deliver high-quality residential accommodation within a sensitive heritage context.

SCOPE OF THE SECTION 73 APPLICATION

The Section 73 application seeks:

- Variation of Condition 1 to amend the approved drawings to allow for:
 - Introduction of an integrated solar roof system to the new dwellings and flats
 - Revised landscaping proposals including private amenity areas, enhanced communal gardens and a natural pond
- Removal of Condition 5 (water neutrality requirement); and
- Consequential amendments to other conditions referencing approved drawings.

The amendments are modest and proportionate and do not undermine the planning rationale of the original consent.

INTEGRATED SOLAR ROOF

The amended scheme incorporates a building-integrated photovoltaic (BIPV) roof system manufactured by Roofit Solar. Unlike conventional bolt-on photovoltaic panels, the proposed system is integrated within the metal standing-seam roof covering and forms part of the roof construction itself.

The integrated system replicates the appearance of a high-quality metal roof. The solar cells are flush with the roof surface and are not visually distinguishable from typical viewing distances. The roof form, seam pattern and colour will match the approved metal roof specification.

As such, the proposals do not introduce visual clutter or incongruous elements and preserve the architectural coherence of the approved design.

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires decision-makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings.



The integrated solar roof represents a sensitive and design-led response that avoids the intrusive appearance often associated with traditional rooftop photovoltaic arrays. The proposals therefore preserve the setting and significance of Wood Grange.

The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and the emerging Horsham Local Plan support the incorporation of renewable and low-carbon technologies in new development where this can be achieved without unacceptable impacts.

The NPPF (2024) emphasises the importance of transitioning to a low-carbon future and encourages planning authorities to support renewable energy proposals.

The integrated solar roof will generate on-site renewable electricity, reducing operational carbon emissions and reliance on grid electricity. This represents a tangible environmental benefit and enhances the sustainability credentials of the approved development.

LANDSCAPE AND SITE LAYOUT CHANGES

The application proposes amendments to the landscaping and garden layouts of the new dwellings. The approved plans included for gardens to the south of the new dwellings separated by close board fencing. From each other and from Wood Grange to the west.

The amended proposal adopts a different approach with private amenity space provided for both dwellings to the south but separated by natural hedging curving around the garden space so as to soften its impact. Beyond this will be a communal garden area shared by both dwellings as well as Wood Grange which will incorporate Native tree, shrub and wildflower planting and a natural pond.

In summary, the amended landscaping proposals include:

- Private south-facing amenity spaces adjacent to each dwelling;
- Enhanced communal landscaped gardens;
- A natural pond within the communal garden;
- Native tree, shrub and wildflower planting; and
- Ecological enhancement features.

The proposed pond will create a new wetland habitat, supporting amphibians, invertebrates and bird species. The enhanced planting will increase habitat diversity and ecological connectivity all whilst maintaining private amenity space for all the dwellings on site.

These measures deliver clear biodiversity gains and align with the objectives of HDPF Policy 31 and emerging Local Plan policies relating to green infrastructure and biodiversity.



REMOVAL OF CONDITION 5 – WATER NEUTRALITY

Condition 5 required the development to secure water neutrality through either the Sussex North Offsetting Water Scheme or a site-specific mitigation strategy.

In October 2025, Natural England withdrew its Water Neutrality Position Statement for the Sussex North Water Supply Zone. As a result, water neutrality is no longer treated as a material planning consideration requiring pre-commencement mitigation in this area.

In light of the withdrawal of the statutory position, Condition 5 is no longer necessary, reasonable or relevant to the development. Its removal is therefore justified under the tests for planning conditions set out in the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance.

CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO CONDITIONS

A number of conditions in the original decision notice refer to specific approved drawings.

These conditions are:

- Condition 9
- Condition 10
- Condition 11
- Condition 14

These references will be updated to reflect the amended drawing numbers submitted with this Section 73 application. These amendments are purely consequential and do not alter the substance of the original conditions.

CONCLUSION

The proposed amendments are minor and proportionate, delivering enhanced sustainability, biodiversity and design quality while preserving the setting of the listed building.

The removal of Condition 5 reflects an updated regulatory context and ensures that the decision notice remains accurate, reasonable and enforceable.

Overall, the proposals accord with the development plan and material considerations. There are no adverse impacts that would justify refusal of the Section 73 application. On the contrary, the amendments provide clear planning benefits.

It is therefore respectfully requested that Horsham District Council grants the Section 73 application to vary Condition 1, remove Condition 5 and approve the consequential amendments to other conditions.

