

Planning & Heritage Statement

Change of use of hotel to 6no. residential units

Random Hall Hotel, Stane Street, Slinfold

Prepared by

WPS Planning

Planning Statement
Random Hall



Prepared by:	Doug Wright
Date:	January 2026
Project Number:	172/2025

Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA	1
3.0 PLANNING HISTORY OF THE SITE	2
4.0 THE PROPOSAL	2
5.0 PLANNING POLICY	3
6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT	5
7.0 CONCLUSION	11

APPENDICES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application seeking permission for the change of use of the Random Hall Hotel from its lawful hotel use (Use Class C1) to 6no. residential units (Use Class C3). The application follows detailed pre-application engagement with Horsham District Council and responds directly to the matters raised within the Council's written pre-application advice dated 28 October 2025.
- 1.2 The statement describes the site and its surroundings, the relevant planning history, and the proposed development. It provides a detailed planning assessment against the National Planning Policy Framework, the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework, and relevant emerging Local Plan policies. Particular emphasis is placed on the loss of the hotel use, the heritage significance of the Grade II listed building, the extensive marketing undertaken, and the demonstrable decline in business viability.
- 1.3 This Planning Statement should be read alongside the supporting appendices submitted with the application. Appendix A provides a policy-led marketing summary addressing the loss of the hotel use. Appendix B sets out the detailed marketing chronology and outcomes. Appendix C provides confidential viability and accounts evidence demonstrating the sustained decline in financial performance of the business and the increasing risk to business continuity. Together, these appendices form the evidential basis for the proposed change of use and respond directly to the issues identified at pre-application stage.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site comprises a substantial two-storey timber-framed building of 16th-century origin, listed at Grade II, together with later historic additions. The building currently operates as a hotel providing 14 guest bedrooms, a manager's flat, restaurant, bar, lounge and function room. The site also includes a large surfaced car park and external amenity areas historically associated with the hospitality use.

- 2.2 The site lies on the western side of Stane Street, outside the defined settlement boundary of Slinfold, and is therefore within the countryside for the purposes of local planning policy. The surrounding area is characterised by dispersed rural development, individual dwellings and small clusters of buildings, reflecting the historic pattern of development along this former Roman road.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The site benefits from an extensive planning history including multiple permissions and listed building consents associated with extensions, internal alterations and the evolution of the hotel business. Of particular relevance are historic permissions confirming residential occupation within the building and the long-standing acceptance of residential use as part of the site's functional history. This planning background demonstrates the building's adaptability over time and its historic origins as a dwelling.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The proposal seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the entire building from hotel use (Use Class C1) to a 6no. residential units (Use Class C3) with associate parking.
- 4.2 No external alterations are proposed other than minor heritage repair works where required. Internal alterations are limited, sensitive and reversible, designed to preserve the historic fabric, plan form and architectural detailing of the listed building. Importantly, the proposal does not involve subdivision of the building; instead, it returns the building to residential use, closely reflecting its original historic function and ensuring the lowest level of intervention.
- 4.3 Existing access arrangements are retained and the former hotel car park is rationalised to serve domestic parking and private amenity space. The justification for the proposed change of use is set out in detail within the Planning Assessment and is supported by the marketing evidence in Appendices A and B and the viability and accounts evidence in Appendix C.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that this should run through both plan-making and decision-taking. In terms of the determination of planning applications this should mean the approval of developments that accord with the development plan without delay, and that where the development plan is silent or relevant policies are out of date, that permission be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or policies of the NPPF indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 Sustainable development is seen within the NPPF as having three roles, namely an economic, social and environmental role which should be a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking.
- 5.3 The following sections within the NPPF are important factors in the assessment of the proposal:
- Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
 - Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
 - Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
 - Section 11 – Making effective use of land
 - Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
 - Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Local Plan

- 5.4 In terms of the local planning policy context for the Site, the adopted Development Plan for the Horsham District is composed of the following relevant documents:
- Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) – Adopted November 2015.

- Policy 1 - Sustainable Development
- Policy 2 – Strategic Development
- Policy 3 – Development Hierarchy
- Policy 4 – Settlement Expansion
- Policy 15 - Housing Provision
- Policy 26 – Countryside Protection
- Policy 32 – The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33 – Development Principles
- Policy 34 - Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
- Policy 41 – Parking
- Policy 43 – Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation
- Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19)
 - Policy 1 - Sustainable Development
 - Policy 2 - Development Hierarchy
 - Policy 8 – Sustainable Design and Construction
 - Policy 15 – Settlement Coalescence
 - Policy 19 - Development Quality
 - Policy 20 – Development Principles
 - Policy 24 – Sustainable Transport
 - Policy 25 – Parking
 - Policy 28 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation
- Slinfold Neighbourhood Plan (2014-2031)
 - Policy 3 – Green Infrastructure
 - Policy 5 – Development Principles
 - Policy 6 – Housing Mix
 - Policy 12 – Economy and Enterprise

6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, stating that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It recognises that development in rural areas should be supported where it makes effective use of existing buildings and where it contributes to the vitality and sustainability of rural communities, including through appropriate reuse of rural buildings. The Framework also confirms that development should be plan-led, but that policies should be applied flexibly where proposals deliver sustainable outcomes without giving rise to harm.
- 6.2 The Horsham District Planning Framework seeks to protect the rural character of the countryside while allowing development that is appropriate to its location. Policy 26 confirms that development outside built-up area boundaries will be supported where it relates to the reuse of existing buildings and does not result in inappropriate encroachment into the countryside. The policy recognises that not all development in the countryside is harmful in principle and that the reuse of existing buildings can represent a sustainable form of development where landscape character and openness are preserved.
- 6.3 The proposal does not introduce new built development within the countryside and does not result in the creation of a new isolated dwellings in policy terms. Instead, it reuses an existing substantial building and returns the listed building to its historic residential function. The Council's pre-application advice confirms that such a change of use would not constitute the creation of a new residential use in the countryside, subject to appropriate justification. The proposal therefore accords with Policy 26.
- 6.4 The proposal represents a sustainable form of development through the reuse of an existing building, the avoidance of new construction, and the securing of a long-term viable use for a designated heritage asset. It balances economic

realism, social considerations and environmental protection, consistent with the core principles of the NPPF.

Loss of Hotel / Commercial Use, Marketing and Viability

- 6.5 The NPPF seeks to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where they contribute to the social or economic well-being of an area. However, it also recognises that planning decisions must be realistic and proportionate, and that existing uses should not be artificially protected where there is clear evidence that they are no longer viable or capable of being sustained in the long term. The Framework supports economic adaptability and acknowledges that the continued use of land and buildings must respond to changing circumstances and demonstrable market conditions.
- 6.6 Policy 43 of the HDPF resists the loss of community, leisure and cultural facilities, including visitor accommodation, unless it can be demonstrated that continued use is no longer feasible. The policy sets out clear criteria for assessing feasibility, including evidence of appropriate marketing, demand for the use, the quality and usability of the facility, and the likelihood of a suitable future occupier coming forward. Where this evidence demonstrates that retention of the use is not realistic, the policy allows for alternative uses to be considered.
- 6.7 The assessment of the loss of the existing hotel use is informed by detailed marketing and viability evidence submitted with the application. Appendix A provides a policy-focused marketing summary, Appendix B sets out the full chronology of marketing activity and enquiries, and Appendix C presents confidential viability and accounts evidence. These documents collectively demonstrate that continued operation of the hotel is no longer feasible and that there is no reasonable prospect of the use being retained.
- 6.8 The marketing evidence demonstrates prolonged and appropriate exposure of the property to the market through specialist commercial agents, including GPS and subsequently Batchellor Monkhouse. Appendix B confirms that marketing

has taken place over several years, encompassing different market conditions, and that despite this exposure no viable purchaser or operator has been secured. Since April 2025 the property has been marketed with no viewings, reinforcing the absence of current demand.

- 6.9 Appendices A and B demonstrate that enquiries received have either been speculative, reliant on non-standard arrangements such as lease-to-purchase or part-ownership, or have fallen away due to structural constraints relating to scale, external amenity space and required capital investment. These outcomes do not represent a realistic prospect of retaining the hotel use and instead underline the lack of market demand capable of sustaining the business as a going concern.
- 6.10 The viability position is independently corroborated by the accounts submitted at Appendix C. These demonstrate a sustained and material decline in profitability, alongside a reduction in turnover between 2024 and 2025. The evidence also shows significant finance costs and reduced headroom, increasing the risk of mortgage covenant breach and potential mortgage recall. This establishes a credible risk to business continuity and confirms that the existing use is no longer feasible in the medium to long term.
- 6.11 While the importance of visitor accommodation is acknowledged, planning policy does not require indefinite marketing where the evidence already demonstrates no reasonable prospect of retention. When read together, Appendices A, B and C provide a coherent and proportionate evidence base that continued hotel use is not realistically deliverable.

Heritage Significance and Impact

- 6.12 The NPPF places great weight on the conservation of designated heritage assets and requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected by a proposal, including the contribution made by its setting. The Framework makes clear that the objective of heritage policy is not to prevent change, but to manage it in a way that sustains and enhances significance. It

explicitly recognises the importance of putting heritage assets to viable uses consistent with their conservation, and confirms that where harm is identified, this should be weighed against public benefits, including the securing of an asset's optimum viable use.

- 6.13 Policy 34 requires development proposals affecting heritage assets to conserve their significance and secure their long-term future. The policy recognises that heritage assets must remain in active and viable use in order to be properly maintained, and supports proposals that deliver sustainable uses consistent with a building's historic character. The emphasis is placed on ensuring that historic buildings are not placed at risk through vacancy or neglect, and that change is managed in a way that sustains significance rather than undermining it.
- 6.14 Random Hall is a Grade II listed building of significant architectural and historic interest, originating from the 16th century with later additions reflecting its evolution from a private dwelling to an inn and later a hotel. Its significance derives from its age, timber-framed construction, historic plan form, traditional materials and its contribution to the historic rural landscape along Stane Street.
- 6.15 The proposed change of use is inherently heritage-led. It enables the building to be brought back into residential use through the creation of six sensitively designed residential units, allowing continued occupation and maintenance while respecting the historic character of the building. The internal layout has been carefully considered to minimise intervention in historic fabric and to avoid excessive subdivision or intrusive alterations. This approach reduces long-term pressure on the building while enabling a sustainable pattern of occupation that ensures its future conservation.
- 6.16 The proposed internal work would involve modern additions to the existing building, which service the existing use as a hotel with reconfiguration within the modern additions to the hotel, where existing stud walls existing. The only change to the original part of the listed building would involve the creation of a new internal staircase, this would be sensitively achieved.

- 6.17 The Conservation Officer has confirmed at pre-application stage that the principle of change of use is acceptable in heritage terms. The proposal therefore preserves the building's special architectural and historic interest and its setting.
- 6.18 The heritage assessment must be read in conjunction with Appendices A, B and C. These demonstrate that the existing hotel use is no longer viable and that, without a deliverable alternative, the building would be at genuine risk of vacancy and deterioration. In this context, the proposed residential use represents the optimum viable use of the heritage asset, securing its long-term conservation through continued occupation, maintenance and investment.

Residential Amenity

- 6.19 The NPPF places strong emphasis on achieving high-quality design and ensuring that development creates places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. It requires development to function well, add to the overall quality of an area, and avoid unacceptable impacts arising from noise, overlooking, dominance or disturbance. Good design is described as a key aspect of sustainable development and should respond positively to local character and context.
- 6.20 Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF require development to be well designed and to protect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Proposals must avoid unacceptable impacts such as loss of privacy, excessive noise or disturbance, and should be designed to integrate successfully with their surroundings. The policies emphasise that development should function appropriately for its intended use and should not give rise to adverse impacts that would outweigh its benefits.
- 6.21 The change of use from hotel to six residential units will significantly reduce noise, traffic, deliveries and general disturbance when compared with the lawful hotel use, particularly where hotel operations include events or functions. Residential occupation will generate a more predictable and lower level of

activity than a hospitality use, thereby improving the living conditions of neighbouring residents. The proposal therefore represents an improvement in residential amenity while providing an appropriate level of accommodation within the existing building.

Highway Safety and Parking

- 6.22 The NPPF requires development proposals to provide safe and suitable access for all users and confirms that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or where the residual cumulative impacts would be severe. The Framework supports development that reduces unnecessary travel and promotes patterns of movement that are safe and appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposal.
- 6.23 Policy 41 of the HDPF requires adequate parking provision to be made to meet the needs of a development, while ensuring highway safety and protecting residential amenity. The policy seeks to balance functional parking requirements with good design and confirms that parking provision should be proportionate to the proposed use and its likely level of activity.
- 6.24 The site benefits from an existing access and substantial parking provision formerly serving the hotel. The proposal includes the provision of fourteen parking spaces within the main parking area to serve the six residential units. This level of parking is appropriate to the scale and mix of accommodation proposed and represents a significant reduction in vehicle movements compared with the existing hotel use. The proposal therefore accords with adopted parking standards and highway safety requirements while making efficient use of the existing parking infrastructure.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal seeks planning permission for the change of use of Random Hall Hotel from hotel (C1) to 6no. residential units (C3). The application is supported by full plans and robust evidence and responds directly to the matters raised within Horsham District Council's pre-application advice.
- 7.2 The principle of the proposal is acceptable. The site lies within the countryside; however the proposal does not introduce new build development and does not create a new isolated dwelling in policy terms. Instead, it reuses an existing substantial building and returns the listed building to its historic residential function. The Council's pre-application advice confirms that this distinction is important and that the change of use would not be creating a new residential use in the countryside in the same way as a new dwelling, subject to appropriate supporting evidence.
- 7.3 The application provides that evidence. It demonstrates that the continued operation of the hotel is no longer feasible and that the loss of visitor accommodation is justified. Extensive marketing has been undertaken through specialist commercial agents over several years, resulting in only intermittent interest, no viable purchaser/operator, and repeated feedback identifying structural constraints for hospitality and events uses. The marketing evidence is summarised within Appendix B and is supported by the recent absence of viewings since April 2025 despite active marketing.
- 7.4 Crucially, the viability evidence in Appendix C independently corroborates the lack of a realistic long-term future for the hotel use. The filed accounts demonstrate a sustained decline in profitability over four consecutive years, with profit reducing from £94,663 (June 2022) to £33,276 (June 2025), alongside a reduction in turnover between 2024 and 2025. The accounts also show material finance costs and reduced headroom, which, as confirmed by the applicant, places the business at genuine risk of breaching mortgage covenant terms and potential mortgage recall. In planning terms, this is not hypothetical; it

establishes a credible and realistic risk of business failure, with consequent risks of vacancy.

- 7.5 Heritage considerations weigh strongly in favour of the proposal. Random Hall is a Grade II listed building and the application has been prepared to secure its long-term conservation through viable use. The Conservation Officer has confirmed that the principle of change of use is acceptable in heritage terms.
- 7.6 The proposal involves no external alterations and only limited, sensitive and reversible internal works, thereby preserving the building's special architectural and historic interest and ensuring that its setting and appearance along Stane Street remain unchanged. The proposal therefore accords with the statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building and its setting and aligns with local and national heritage policy objectives. Importantly, the residential use represents the optimum viable use of the asset, securing ongoing occupation, maintenance and investment, and avoiding the risk of deterioration associated with vacancy.
- 7.7 The proposal also results in clear amenity and highways benefits. Residential use will not generate an increase in vehicle movements, deliveries, noise and disturbance than a hotel use, particularly where hotel operations include event activity. The existing access and parking arrangements are more than adequate for residential use and there are no adverse impacts on highway safety or local amenity.
- 7.8 Taken together, the proposal is policy compliant, justified by marketing and viability evidence, and delivers substantial heritage and sustainability benefits through securing the long-term future of a Grade II listed building. For these reasons, the application should be approved.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Marketing Summary and Policy Justification

Loss of Hotel / Visitor Accommodation (Use Class C1)

APPENDIX B – Detailed Marketing Record and Chronology

Evidence of Market Exposure, Enquiries, Viewings and Outcomes

APPENDIX C – Viability and Financial Evidence (*Confidential*)

Accounts, Profit Trend Analysis and Business Continuity Risk