DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/24/1774
Rowfold House, Coneyhurst Road, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9DD

DESCRIPTION:
Erection of a single storey rear extension, replacing existing conservatory and store.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

BL/14/92	Conversion into 2 dwellings Site: Rowfold House Rowfold Grange Billingshurst	Application Refused on 08.04.1992
BL/65/77	Garage and d.i.y. workshop (From old Planning History)	Application Permitted on 01.11.1977
BL/45/77	Two windows and one door to south elevation (lot 2) (From old Planning History)	Application Permitted on 27.07.1977

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 28 - Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
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

Billingshurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019 – 2031
Bill 2 - Housing Design and Character

Billingshurst Parish Design Statement

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):
Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 19: Development Quality
Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
Policy 45: Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
Policy 46: Ancillary Accommodation

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:
Ecology: No Objection, conditions recommended.

NatureSpace (Great Crested Newts Consultants): No Objection.

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.

Parish Council:
Billingshurst Parish Council: No Objection

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 site ‘Rowfold House’ forms the south-eastern wing of Rowfold Grange, a substantial country house that has historically been subdivided into four properties, Rowfold [Grange], Rowfold Place, Rowfold House, and Garden Cottage. The application site is accessed from the east side of Coneyhurst Road. The site is a countryside location. ‘Rowfold House’ has its own large plot to the south and southeast which gently slopes from the dwelling to the southeast to meet the access driveway along its Southern Boundary.

A tall boundary hedge forms the west boundary of the garden curtilage providing boundary screening from the attached neighbouring ‘Rowfold Place’ to the west. The dwellings architectural character reflects its former role as a country house, with large sash windows, generous ceiling heights and architectural detailing. The buildings materiality is stone with a pitched slate roof. The subdivided dwellings forming part of the former Rowfold Grange are similar in vernacular but have been altered and extended over time in a variety of styles.

This application seeks permission to erect a single-storey extension to the southern elevation, to replace an existing lean-to glazed upvc conservatory and flat roofed timber structure storeroom along the shared boundary with ‘Rowfold Place’. There are also proposed new external steps from the extension down to the existing patio/garden to deal with the existing level changes between internal and external floor levels

Character and Appearance

Policy 28 of the HDPF relates to house extensions and outbuildings in the countryside, stating that extensions should not be disproportionate to the size of the existing dwelling, and should be in keeping with the scale and character of the existing dwelling. The policy also states that the cumulative impact of existing extensions will be taken into account.

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, where practicable, should reflect the scale and local vernacular of the surrounding buildings and use materials that are in keeping with those in existing buildings in the immediate locality.

The proposal would be a clearly subservient addition and is considered to be of a design, form and scale which is considered 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.

While the extension would be clearly visible from the neighbouring property the additional height and projection is considered modest and would not be of a scale which would result in unacceptable harm to amenity. The neighbouring property would continue to benefit from a sizeable curtilage with an outlook which would continue to receive acceptable levels of light and outlook.

The shared boundary with Rowfold Place features a tall brick wall which is sloped to match the profile of the existing conservatory roof form. The proposal seeks to level this off to remove the sloped section, creating a uniform height above which clerestory windows would be sited. These windows would be above eye level and would not therefore create any intrusive views over the neighbouring property and related curtilage, with domestic lighting not considered to create potential for harmful disturbance. The relationship between the extension and neighbouring property would not therefore be expected to result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity.

It is therefore considered that the siting and layout of the proposed extension and the resulting relationship with adjoining properties would be sufficient to prevent any unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity.

Ecology

The site lies approximately 6.8km east of The Mens Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and 11.7km east of Ebernoe Common SAC and therefore lies within the 12km Wider Conservation Area for both of these SACs (Sussex Bat Special Area of Conservation Planning and Landscape Scale Enhancement Protocol). The qualifying feature for the SAC is Barbastelle bats, but there are no records for this species within 2km of the site (Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBIS) - accessed under licence and MAGIC maps). There are approximately 45 records for bats within 2km of site, including Serotine, Common Pipistrelle, Myotis species and Brown Long-eared bat, (SxBIS – accessed under licence). The sites lies approximately 8.9km north of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar site.

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (Phillips Ecology, August 2024). This assessment notes that the dwelling has negligible bat roost potential, and it is agreed that

no further surveys are required. The submitted plans do not indicate any removal of vegetation, and no severance of flight lines of foraging or commuting bats from the SAC and habitat connectivity within the site would result. It is therefore considered that the proposal would have no adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC or on protected species.

The siting of the development is considered such that there would be no likely impact on great crested newts or their habitats.

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 180 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**: All mitigation and enhancement measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (Phillips Ecology, August 2024), as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination. This includes the non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for bats in Section 5.2.1 of the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (Phillips Ecology, August 2024), which avoids impacts on European Protected Species.

Reason: To conserve and enhance protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and Policy 31 of the Horsham Development Framework.

4 **Regulatory Condition**: The materials and finishes of the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the approved plans and on the application forms.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail 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/24/1774

(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
Location & Site plan	Existing	BA240 - 01 - 001	18.11.2024
Site plan	Existing Partial	BA240 - 01 - 002	18.11.2024
Floor plan	Existing roof	BA240 - 01 - 003	18.11.2024
Elevation plan	Existing	BA240 - 01 - 004	18.11.2024
Site plan	Proposed	BA240 - 03 - 001	18.11.2024
Site plan	Proposed Partial	BA240 - 03 - 002	18.11.2024
Floor plan	Proposed roof	BA240 - 03 - 003	18.11.2024
Elevation plan	Proposed	BA240 - 03 - 004	18.11.2024
Supporting Statement	Preliminary bat roost assessment	NONE	18.11.2024
Supporting Docs	Application Form	NONE	18.11.2024

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Steve Astles Date: 06.01.2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial Guy Everest Date: 13.01.2025