DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/25/1950
33 Stanford Orchard, Warnham, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 3RF

DESCRIPTION:
Conversion of existing garage within sheltered housing to form site manager's office with associated works.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/24/0035	Application to confirm use of flat as Sheltered Residential Accommodation (Lawful Development Certificate - Proposed).	Application Permitted on 13.03.2024

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

33 Stanford Orchard is a two-storey building situated centrally within the Built-Up Area Boundary of Warnham. The site lies within a sheltered retirement estate, on the edge of the Warnham Conservation Area. The ground floor of the building comprises three garages, with sheltered residential accommodation on the first floor.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

This application seeks planning consent for the conversion of one of the existing ground floor garages, to form a site manager's office. The associated external fenestration changes, include the installation of a window and pedestrian door to the western elevation. No further changes to the building's footprint, height, massing or roof form are proposed.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 18 - Retirement Housing and Specialist Care
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities

Warnham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017-2031
Policy W1: Built-Up Area Boundary

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):
Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy

Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 25: Parking
Strategic Policy 27: Inclusive Communities, Health and Wellbeing
Policy 42: Retirement Housing and Specialist Care

Supplementary Planning Guidance:
Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Warnham Parish Design Statement

Planning Advice Notes:
Shaping Development in Horsham District
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

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:
HDC Conservation: No Objection. The proposed development would not result in harm to the special character of the conservation area.

Representations:
1 letter of representation has been received from one address, providing a neutral response to the application on the following grounds:

- Concern regarding potential noise disturbance from office use and any associated alarm systems affecting nearby residents.

One letter of representation has been received from one address, supporting the application on the following grounds:

- The proposal would be an improvement, meaning the site manager will be more visible, accessible and responsive to matters on the estate.
- The existing first-floor office arrangement is unsatisfactory and remote from the site, which causes frustration, which the proposal would help address.

Parish Comments:
None received

Member Comments:
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

Principle of Development:

Policy 18 of the HDPF supports development that provides or supports retirement housing and specialist care accommodation in accessible locations and where it contributes positively to the functioning of such schemes.

Policy 42 of the HDPF supports development that promotes inclusive and adaptable communities and responds to the needs of a range of occupiers and users, including an ageing population and those with additional needs.

Warnham is identified as a medium village, and the site is within the defined built-up area, forming part of an established retirement housing scheme. The proposed conversion of an existing garage to form an ancillary site manager's office is of an appropriate nature and scale, would support the operation of the retirement housing scheme and would assist in meeting the needs of older residents. The proposal would not result in an intensification of use or harm to the character of the settlement and is therefore considered acceptable in principle in accordance with Policies 3, 18 and 42 of the HDPF.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF promote development that is of a high-quality design, which is sympathetic to the character and distinctiveness of the site and surroundings. The landscape character of the area should be protected, conserved and enhanced, with proposals contributing to a sense of place through appropriate scale, massing and appearance.

Policy 34 of the HDPF states that development should be reinforce the special character of the historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form and design; and should make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area. Proposals should preserve and ensure clear legibility of locally distinctive vernacular building forms and their settings, features, fabric and materials.

The proposal involves no changes to the building's footprint, height or roof form. The only external alterations to facilitate the proposal would comprise the insertion of a window and door at ground floor level on the west elevation, which is largely concealed from the wider area. The proposed materials would match those of the existing building, including a white uPVC door and window with brick lintels. The existing garage door would be retained, with an internal wall constructed behind to provide insulation.

Given the minor nature of the alterations, the proposal is considered appropriate to the character and appearance of the existing building and would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area or the wider area. The visual impact of the proposal is therefore considered acceptable and in accordance with the above policies.

Amenity Impacts:

Policy 33 of the HDPF continues that development shall be required to ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land.

The site is located within the built-up area boundary and is situated within a dense and predominantly residential environment. The proposed use of the building as a small site manager's office, including ancillary bathroom, is considered appropriate to this context and would not give rise to unacceptable impacts in terms of overlooking, or loss of privacy, with the potential for harmful levels of noise or

disturbance considered to be limited. As such, the development is considered to accord with Policy 33 of the HDPF.

Water Neutrality:

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality.

On 31st October 2025 Natural England formally withdrew the 2021 Position Statement, citing a package of measures that they were satisfied would safeguard the Arun Valley sites. Principal amongst these measures is a reduction in the Southern Water abstraction licence 'by March 2026'. However, given the licence change has not yet taken place Horsham District Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, cannot yet be certain that new development will not result in adverse impacts on the Arun Valley sites.

To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000 litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching. Natural England standing advice dated 10 November 2025 raises no objection to using these savings to enable development to come forward. The standing advice clarifies that it functions as Natural England's formal response pursuant to Regulation 63(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to all relevant planning applications which seek to achieve water neutrality using the above Southern Water savings.

Officers have undertaken an Appropriate Assessment which demonstrates that the anticipated increase in mains water consumption from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day.

Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby complying with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

The Applicant has demonstrated that the development is exempt from the requirement to achieve a minimum 10% BNG by reason of:

- The development qualifies as 'de minimis' under Regulation 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Conclusions:

The proposal is considered to accord with the relevant local and national planning policies and is 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 to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the approved plans and application form.

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).

4 **Regulatory Condition**: The office hereby permitted shall be used in connection with the use of the site (as identified in blue and red on the approved plans) as sheltered residential accommodation. The office shall not be occupied independently or used for any other purpose(s) without the express consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The establishment of an additional independent unit of accommodation 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).

NOTE TO APPLICANT
Biodiversity Net Gain Condition
Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the "biodiversity gain condition" which means development granted by this notice must not begin unless:

(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

Under Regulations 4, 5, 7 & 8 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 the statutory biodiversity gain condition required by Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which:

1. does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (a hedgerow habitat or watercourse habitat identified for the purposes of the biodiversity metric);

2. is the subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015;

3. is undertaken solely or mainly for the purpose of fulfilling, in whole or in part, the biodiversity gain planning condition which applies in relation to another development (In determining whether a development is undertaken solely or mainly for this purpose, no account is to be taken of any facility for the public to access or to use the site for educational or recreational purposes, if that access or use is permitted without the payment of a fee);

4. consists of no more than 9 dwellings, is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares and consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding ("Self-build or custom housebuilding" has the same meaning as in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended)).

In addition, the Biodiversity Gain Plan Condition does not apply to applications for major development made before 12 February 2024, or non-major development made before 2 April 2024.

Based on the information submitted in the planning application documents, the Planning Authority considers that this permission is exempt from biodiversity net gain, and as such does not require approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun.

Statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements
There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These can be found at Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 74-003-20240214 of the Planning Practice Guidance, which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain.

Irreplaceable habitat
If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans.

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/25/1950
(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 & Block plan	Location Plans	001 PL2	03.12.2025
Elevation & Floor plan	Existing Floor Plans and Elevations	002 PL2	03.12.2025
Elevation & Floor plan	Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations	003 PL2	03.12.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Sam Nye Date: 28/01/2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial Guy Everest Date: 28.01.2026