

# DMA BUILDING DESIGNS

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**Alexandra House, 11 Queen Street, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 5AA**



## **1. Introduction**

This statement supports a planning application for the change of use of the ground floor front unit from a studio flat (Use Class C3) to a small-scale coffee shop (Use Class E).

The site forms part of a building that benefits from a lawful development certificate for conversion from office to residential use, which has been partially implemented.

## **2. Site Context and Background**

This application relates to a ground floor front unit with an approximate floorspace of 37 m<sup>2</sup>, originally approved as a studio flat. Two residential units have already been converted within the building from office to residential use under a lawful development certificate.

## **3. Description of Development**

The proposal represents a material change of use requiring planning permission.

It involves changing the ground floor front unit from residential (Use Class C3) to a coffee shop (Use Class E).

In summary:

### **Existing Use**

Residential (Use Class C3) – studio flat approved under prior approval (Class O) and partially implemented.

### **Proposed Use**

Coffee shop (Use Class E). Small-scale/modest, primarily walk-in coffee shop with limited seating and a focus on daytime operation. The remainder of the building will remain in residential use. The proposal would create an active street frontage, improving vitality compared to a passive residential frontage.

## **4. Existing and Proposed Floor Space**

Existing: 37 m<sup>2</sup> (residential). Proposed: 37 m<sup>2</sup> (Class E – coffee shop).

## **5. Appropriateness of Proposed Use**

The coffee shop is small-scale, with limited seating. Impacts on neighbouring amenity are expected to be minimal.

## **6. Loss of Residential Unit**

The loss of the unit is limited in planning terms:

- Small size (37 m<sup>2</sup>)
- Modest contribution to housing supply
- Ground floor location with constrained amenity

## **7. Hours of Opening**

Monday to Saturday: 07:00 – 17:00. Sunday: 08:00 – 16:00. No late evening opening is proposed

## **8. Assessment Summary**

A coffee shop provides far more than refreshments, it serves as a vital social space for members of the community, particularly those who may otherwise have little or no social interaction. For elderly individuals and those living alone it can provide a welcoming and accessible environment where simple, everyday interactions can take place, even if they are brief conversations with staff or visitors it can help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation. It can therefore help foster a sense of care and community awareness. This makes it a valuable asset to the community.

The proposal represents a modest, material change of use. The proposed coffee shop is modest in scale, with limited seating and low-intensity use, and is not expected to result in significant impacts on neighbouring amenity. The development will provide an active frontage with only minimal loss of residential floorspace. We therefore hope the application can be supported.