Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 17 September 2025

by AJ Steen BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th January 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/Z3825/W/25/3359623
Lock House, Lock Lane, Partridge Green, Horsham RH13 8EG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr Nicholas Sutton against the decision of Horsham District Council.
- The application Ref is DC/24/1667.
- The development proposed is internal and external alterations to listed building to change from a single dwelling to 5 No. dwellings and conversion of the existing garage block with flat to single dwelling.

Appeal B Ref: APP/Z3825/Y/25/3359626
Lock House, Lock Lane, Partridge Green, Horsham RH13 8EG

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
- The appeal is made by Mr Nicholas Sutton against the decision of Horsham District Council.
- The application Ref is DC/24/1668.
- The works proposed are internal and external alterations to listed building to change from a single dwelling to 5 No. dwellings and conversion of the existing garage block with flat to single dwelling.

Decisions

Appeal A

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for internal and external alterations to listed building to change from a single dwelling to 5 No. dwellings and conversion of the existing garage block with flat to single dwelling at Lock House, Lock Lane, Partridge Green, RH13 8EG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/24/1667, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Appeal B

2. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for internal and external alterations to listed building to change from a single dwelling to 5 No. dwellings and conversion of the existing garage block with flat to single dwelling at Lock House, Lock Lane, Partridge Green, RH13 8EG in accordance with the terms of the application Ref DC/24/1668 and the plans submitted with it subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

3. In determining these appeals involving a listed building or its setting I have had special regard to sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

4. Reference has been made to planning consent having been granted on an application under reference DC/25/0037. I have limited information on that permission although understand that it relates to conversion of Lock House into 3 dwellings and conversion of the garage block with flat into a dwelling. This proposal needs to be considered on its own merits but I will take that into account as necessary in coming to my decision.

Main Issues

5. The main issue in both appeals is whether the proposed works would preserve the Grade II listed building known as Lock House or its setting or any features of special architectural and historic interest which it possesses.

6. An additional main issue on appeal A is the effect of the development on the Arun Valley Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and Ramsar sites.

Reasons

Listed building

7. Lock House is a substantial country house dating from around 1900 near the settlement of Partridge Green. It is of a vernacular revival style constructed in red brick with a hipped tiled roof and a number of clustered brick chimneystacks over two storeys with rooms in the attic. The house underwent significant reconstruction in around 1940 designed by Maple & Co., furniture designers. This included provision of high-quality interiors of that period that have largely been retained in the building. It was further altered and extended in the 1970's when it began use as a convent before being converted back to a single dwellinghouse in the early 2000's. The house is set within a large area of parkland with a number of outbuildings.

8. The significance of the listed building derives from its vernacular revival country house appearance in its parkland setting and internal finishes, particularly in relation to the parts of the house subject of reconstruction in around 1940.

9. The proposal would make minimal changes to the listed building. Whilst the internal finishes that are so important to its significance as a heritage asset are proposed to be retained, it would be subdivided such that the relationship between different parts of the building will alter. It would cease to be possible to move through the whole building, particularly between the original polite, family areas of the house and the areas provided for those who served them. This would affect the hierarchy of spaces within the building.

10. Whilst that is the case, the proposals indicate limited physical change with the layout largely remaining. Provision of unit 1 would result in subdivision of what is currently a large family room. The upper floor would divide the existing space to provide bedrooms and bathrooms but this is already separate from the remainder of the building. Additional doors would open to the side of the building, breaking up the existing blank wall. This unit uses space added in the 1970s when the building became a convent and, as a result, these changes will not affect the understanding of the building as a country house.

11. It is understood that within unit 2, the wall between the proposed kitchen and dining room to be removed will reinstate the original relationship between the two rooms. As such, this will also not affect the understanding of the building as a country house.

12. A wall is proposed to divide the corridor between the main part of the house, which will become unit 2, and what is proposed to become unit 3 at ground floor level, with the staircase moved into the corridor behind. A doorway will be closed at first floor level. Although physically modest and original features can be retained, these changes would affect the links between different parts of the building, particularly the polite rooms that would be within unit 2 and the servants' areas in what would become units 3-4. There would be other changes to the layout, including removal of the existing staircase, but these would be modest. Patio doors would replace windows in the proposed kitchen and living rooms on the ground floor, which would not materially affect the understanding of the building as a country house. Overall, the division to separate units 2 and 3 would affect the hierarchy between the polite and service areas of the country house.

13. Unit 4 would be a modest unit located to the rear of the house. At ground floor, the doorway linking to the remainder of the house would be closed. The upper floor would be subdivided and the link to the rest of the house dating from 2003 would be closed. Overall, the changes to provide this unit would be modest and would have a limited effect on the relationship between the polite and service areas of the building.

14. Unit 5 would be formed out of the swimming pool extension that was built in 2007. Given its age and relationship to the remainder of the house, it would not affect the understanding of Lock House as a country house.

15. In addition, the subdivision of the garden would be likely to result in more residential paraphernalia relating to the individual new units. However, the manner in which the garden would be divided means that this only affects the parts closest to the house. The relationship to the wider parkland that serves the house would be retained. Nevertheless, division between the private areas and provision of individual paraphernalia for the different units would harm the understanding of the building as a country house to some extent.

16. The proposal includes the conversion of the existing garage block with flat to a single dwelling. This is a modest building to the front of Lock House that previously contained garages at ground floor and a flat above. It is separated from Lock House with some mature planting that restricts views between the buildings and of the buildings together. It is currently being converted into a dwelling, I understand in accordance with planning permission reference DC/25/0037. Whilst its function as garages serving Lock House would be removed, the nature of its conversion means that it would remain subservient to the main house and retain elements of the existing appearance. For these reasons, its conversion would not affect the setting of Lock House as a large country house within a parkland setting.

17. For these reasons, I conclude that the subdivision of the house and immediate surrounds to provide five dwellings would affect the hierarchy of spaces within and immediately surrounding the building, such that it would harm features of special architectural and historic interest that the building possesses. However, conversion of the garage block would not affect the setting of the listed building. The harm arising would be at the lower end of less than substantial harm to the significance of the building as a heritage asset.

18. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises at Paragraph 212 that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Accordingly, while less than the 'substantial harm' referred to in Paragraph 214 of the NPPF, the harm to the listed building is nevertheless a matter of considerable importance and weight.

19. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF establishes that, where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. In this case, the building has been marketed as a single dwelling, which would be its optimum use given its significance as a country house. However, that has been unsuccessful. Given the extensive period of marketing, it is clear that use of the building as a single dwelling is not viable. I note that the conversion to 3 dwellings under planning permission reference DC/25/0037 would also affect the relationship of the polite and service areas, perhaps to a lesser extent. Nevertheless and on balance, I consider that the proposed subdivision would result in the optimum viable use of the building.

20. In addition, the development would result in the creation of four additional dwellings. The Council indicate they are only able to provided 2.9 years supply of dwellings in comparison to the policy requirement in the NPPF to provide 5 years supply. The proposal would result in 5 additional dwellings or 2 taking account of planning permission reference DC/25/0037. Whilst the number of additional dwellings in this case is modest, this is, nevertheless, a public benefit of significant weight.

21. For these reasons, I conclude that the combination of securing the optimum viable use of the building along with the addition of houses toward meeting the need for housing in the area results in public benefits sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm I have found to the significance of the heritage asset.

22. Taking all the above into account, I conclude that the conversion of a single dwelling to 5no. dwellings and conversion of the existing garage block with flat to single dwelling would comply with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and the NPPF. These seek to sustain and enhance the historic environment including securing the viable and sustainable future of heritage assets through preservation by uses that are consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

Arun Valley sites

23. Water supply to this site would be provided from the Sussex North Water Supply Zone (WSZ), an area of serious water stress. Water abstraction within the WSZ affects the water levels and flow in wetland habitats within the River Arun catchment area and downstream of the WSZ. These include the Arun Valley Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Sites (the Arun Valley sites).

24. The Arun Valley sites are a series of wetland meadows, alluvial grazing marsh and former raised peat bog, dissected by a network of ditches. The variation in soils and water supply lead to a wide range of ecological conditions and a rich and diverse flora and fauna. The qualifying features of the protected areas that may be affected by development within the catchment area comprise wildfowl and waterbird assemblages, including Bewick's swan, shoveler, teal and wigeon; wetland invertebrates, as well as a range of rare flora, including duckweed, water-cress, milfoils, dropworts and pondweeds.

25. The proposal would not be directly connected with or necessary to the management of the protected sites. Natural England suggest that additional development in the area is likely to affect the integrity of the Arun Valley sites. This effect would be through water abstraction to meet the needs of residents of development, including at the appeal site. That would lead to changes in water level and flow in the Arun Valley sites. It is necessary to consider any effects on a precautionary basis. The effects would arise from development either alone or in combination with other projects, such as other housing development in the area.

26. The appellant suggests that the development would be water neutral. This is based on their calculations that occupancy of the existing building and the proposed development would not lead to an increase in the amount of water used at the site based on their Water Neutrality Statement. The Council dispute the baseline is correct. Nevertheless, they have suggested a condition has been used elsewhere that would allow further information to be provided to address this issue, including a water neutrality mitigation scheme and the purchase of credits through the Sussex North Offsetting Water Scheme (SNOWS) if it is not agreed that the development would be water neutral.

27. I note that Natural England withdrew its water neutrality position in Arun Valley during the course of the appeal. This relies on a package of resilience measures and proposed licence amendments to be implemented by March 2026. The Council suggest that, in these circumstances, there is not certainty that this will be resolved. From the evidence available, I agree that is the case and will proceed with the appeal on that basis.

28. The Council indicate that a condition requiring compliance with the Building Regulations Part G Optional Technical Standard would be required in order to restrict water use. This was not included in the list of conditions suggested by the Council. Such a condition would not be necessary as this would be adequately dealt with through the condition suggested by the Council relating to water neutrality.

29. For these reasons and in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), as the competent authority it would be necessary for me to carry out an appropriate assessment to determine the extent of those effects, whether they could be avoided or whether mitigation measures could remove or reduce the effects.

Appropriate assessment

30. The appropriate assessment needs to consider the effect of the development on the integrity of the Arun Valley sites and their qualifying features and species. In order to mitigate the effects of the development, it would be necessary to demonstrate water neutrality of the development, i.e. that the amount of water used by the development is the same or lower after the development has taken place as before.

31. The Council indicate that water neutrality can be addressed through the use of an appropriate condition in certain cases and have suggested such a condition in this case (condition 3). Natural England have confirmed they are content with that approach, subject to development being eligible to access the SNOWS.

32. As the development is eligible to access the SNOWS and as this can be secured by condition, I conclude that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley sites.

Conclusion on the effect on Arun Valley sites

33. For the reasons set out in the appropriate assessment, I conclude that the development proposed would comply with Policy 31 of the HDPF, the draft Local Plan and the NPPF that require appropriate mitigation and compensation measures be provided to allow development where there would otherwise be direct or indirect adverse impacts on areas such as the Arun Valley sites.

Conditions

34. To meet legislative requirements, conditions shall be imposed on both consents to address the period for commencement [condition 1]. I shall also impose conditions for the following reasons. In some cases, I have amended the wording of conditions suggested by the Council in the interests of clarity, taking account of Planning Practice Guidance.

35. A condition restricting new pipework being fixed to the external surfaces of the building is necessary to protect the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building, and its significance as a heritage asset [11].

Appeal A

36. I shall impose a condition specifying the relevant drawings as this provides certainty [2].

37. A condition requiring water neutrality is necessary to provide mitigation of likely significant effects on the Arun Valley sites [3]. A condition requiring a Biodiversity Enhancement strategy, along with a condition ensuring the development is undertaken in accordance with the Bat Building Inspection Report and restricting the provision of external lighting, are necessary to protect and enhance ecology in the area [4 & 9-10]. Details of landscaping works, their implementation and protection through a maintenance plan are necessary in order to ensure the development would reflect the landscape character of the area [5-6].

38. Conditions requiring provision of a fast charge electric vehicle charging point and cycle parking are necessary to provide alternative travel to fossil fuel powered vehicles to contribute toward improved air quality and climate change [7-8].

39. A condition requiring development to be undertaken in accordance with the Flood Emergency/Evacuation Plan to protect future occupiers from adverse effects from flooding [12].

40. I have not imposed a condition relating to parking as the Council suggest this is required to ensure provision of parking clear of highways and that the dwellings will be located some distance away from the closest highway. Information on parking layout is provided adequately through the landscape plan. I have not included conditions relating to making good and finishing the building works to match the existing and for new partitions to be scribed around existing ornamental mouldings as these would be satisfactorily covered in appeal B.

Appeal B

41. A condition is necessary for detailed information relating to windows, doors, staircases, drainage routes and insulation and a schedule of architectural features to be

altered is necessary to protect the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building, and its significance as a heritage asset [2].

42. Conditions requiring development works, making good and finishing to match the existing and for new partitions to be scribed around existing ornamental mouldings are necessary to protect the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building, and its significance as a heritage asset [3-4].

43. A condition restricting new pipework being fixed to the external surfaces of the building is not necessary as this would require separate listed building consent.

Conclusions

44. I have not found any conflict with policies of the HDPF in relation to the conversion of Lock House to 5no. dwellings and conversion of the existing garage block with flat to a single dwelling. As a result, the proposal would comply with the development plan as a whole. I have not found any material considerations that indicate I should conclude other than in accordance with the development plan.

45. For the reasons given above the appeals should be allowed.

AJ Steen

INSPECTOR

Appeal A Schedule of Conditions

1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.

2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings:

Drawing No.	Rev.	Title
L89PC/19	C	Proposed north and south elevation
		Proposed landscape plan
		Proposed ground annotated
		Proposed ground 3D
		Proposed ground
		Proposed garage and flat
		Proposed first annotated
		Proposed first 3D
		Proposed first
		Proposed existing and replacement windows
		Proposed east elevation
		Proposed basement 2
		Proposed 2nd floor
		Location Plan
		Emergency access route
		Proposed French doors

3) No development shall commence until either:
   i) Details have been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority confirming that the necessary credits to achieve water neutrality have been secured via the Sussex North Offsetting Water Scheme; or,
   ii) A site-specific water neutrality mitigation scheme has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The site-specific water neutrality mitigation scheme shall include full details of any and all onsite and offsite mitigation and of the means through which they are to be secured.

   The development shall not be first occupied until evidence has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority confirming that the approved site-specific water neutrality mitigation scheme has been fully implemented. The approved mitigation shall thereafter be retained, maintained and operated to the same or better water performance standard.

4) No development above ground floor slab level of any part of the development hereby permitted shall take place until a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for Protected and Priority species has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:
   (a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;
   (b) Detailed designs to achieve stated objectives;
   (c) Locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans;
   (d) Persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures;
   (e) Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).

   The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

5) No part of the development hereby permitted shall be first occupied until full details of all hard and soft landscaping works shall have been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include plans and measures addressing the following:
   (a) Details of all existing trees and planting to be removed and retained
   (b) Details of all proposed trees and planting, including schedules specifying species, planting size, densities and plant numbers and tree pit details
   (c) Details of all hard surfacing materials and finishes

   The approved landscaping scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first planting season following the first occupation of any part of the development. Unless otherwise agreed as part of the approved landscaping, no trees or hedges on the site shall be wilfully damaged or uprooted, felled/removed, topped or lopped without the previous written consent of the Local Planning Authority until 5 years after completion of the development. Any proposed or retained planting, which within a period of 5 years, dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

6) No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a landscape management and maintenance plan (including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, a description of landscape components, management prescriptions, maintenance schedules and accompanying plan delineating areas of responsibility) for all communal landscape areas has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscape areas shall thereafter be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

7) No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a fast charge electric vehicle charging point for that dwelling has been installed. As a minimum, the charge point specification shall be 7kW mode 3 with type 2 connector. The means for charging electric vehicles shall be thereafter retained as such.

8) No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until details of secure and covered cycle parking facilities for the occupants of, and visitors to, the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied or use hereby permitted commenced until the approved cycle parking facilities associated with that dwelling or use have been fully implemented and made available for use. The provision for cycle parking shall thereafter be retained for use at all times.

9) The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the ecological mitigation and enhancement measures set out in Bat Building Inspection Report reference 13324 V2 by Phlorum dated October 2024.

10) No external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed.

11) No new plumbing, pipes, soil stacks, flues, vents, ductwork or the like, shall be fixed to any external face of the building other than as shown on the drawings hereby approved.

12) The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the Flood Emergency/Evacuation Plan reference AEG6137_RH13_Partridge Green_07 by aegaea dated 17.11.2024.

Appeal B Schedule of Conditions

1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.

2) No relevant works shall commence until the following details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works must not be executed other than in complete accordance with these approved details:
   a) Drawings to a scale not smaller than 1:5 fully describing:
      i) new and/or replacement windows, external doors, and new staircases. These drawings must show:
      - materials
      - decorative/protective finish
      - cross section of frame, transom, mullions, glazing bars, etc
      - formation of openings including reveals, heads, sills, arches, lintels, etc
      - method of opening

- method of glazing

b) Drawings to a scale not smaller than 1:20 showing internal drainage routes, noting all necessary cutting, chasing and other alteration to historic fabric.

c) Schedule identifying all doors, doorcases, windows, joinery, panelling, fireplaces and surrounds, decorative plasterwork and other architectural features that are to be altered, relocated, concealed or removed, fully describing the work proposed.

d) Specification and/or drawings fully describing method of incorporating thermal, fire and sound insulation, describing the effect on the appearance and fabric of historic and architectural features.

3) All building works, finishes, and making-good, both internal and external, shall match the relevant existing work in respect of method, detail, and finished appearance. Where new materials are to be used externally, the colour match shall make allowance for future weathering.

4) All new partitions shall be scribed around existing ornamental mouldings.