

Planning Statement

PLANNING STATEMENT

Section 73 Application to Vary Condition 4

Site Address: Oakfield, 1 Peters Close, Cripplegate Lane, Southwater, West Sussex

Planning Reference: DC/21/0323

3. Existing Use and Ancillary Nature of the Business

The building is occupied and operated solely by the owners and occupiers of the main dwelling, Oakfield, as part of a family-run bridal, prom and bespoke dress business which has evolved gradually from a home-based enterprise.

The first-floor accommodation comprises a consultation and fitting room together with a WC and modest refreshment facilities. The kitchenette is limited to the preparation of tea, coffee and light refreshments for visiting clients and does not function as a separate residential unit or independent commercial premises.

The business operates strictly on an appointment-only basis and serves a relatively small client base, averaging approximately 10 client visits per week between the hours of 10:00 and 19:00. Appointments are arranged in advance and are generally staggered throughout the week, ensuring that visitor activity remains controlled and limited.

As demand for the business has increased, the ground floor garage space has been utilised for the storage and display of dresses, accessories and associated stock. Whilst the approved garage accommodation is no longer used exclusively for vehicle storage, the building remains physically and functionally linked to the main dwelling and continues to support a business operated exclusively by the residents of Oakfield.

The scale of the operation remains modest and differs significantly from a standalone commercial premises. There is no unrestricted public access, no walk-in trade, no external display areas, no commercial signage and no dedicated staffing beyond the household occupants. The use therefore remains closely connected to and subordinate to the residential occupation of the property.

5. Impact on Residential Amenity and Character of the Area

The current use has operated at a very low intensity and has not generated any material harm to neighbouring residential amenity.

Client attendance is limited by the appointment-only nature of the business, resulting in a controlled and predictable level of activity. The average of approximately 10 client appointments per week equates to a level of movement that is significantly lower than many small commercial operations and is not considered excessive within a residential setting.

No external alterations have been undertaken which materially alter the appearance of the building from that approved under planning permission DC/21/0323. The principal garage doors remain in place and the building continues to present itself as a domestic outbuilding within the residential curtilage. Consequently, there is no visual impact upon the street scene or wider character of the area.

Furthermore:

- No external storage takes place on the site.
- No amplified music or commercial activities are undertaken externally.
- The use does not generate significant deliveries or collections.
- No additional employees attend the premises.
- No commercial signage has been erected.

As such, the use does not detract from the residential character of the area and delivers no identifiable adverse impacts in terms of noise, disturbance, overlooking, visual intrusion or general amenity.

6. Parking and Highway Safety

The change in use of the ground floor area has not resulted in any adverse parking or highway implications.

The property benefits from a substantial private driveway and parking area capable of accommodating in excess of four vehicles within the site. Given the appointment-only nature of the business, visitor parking demand is typically limited to a single vehicle at any given time.

The level of traffic generated by approximately 10 appointments per week is minimal and has not resulted in any parking overspill onto the public highway. The site therefore continues to provide adequate parking provision to serve both the residential use and the ancillary business activity.

It is considered that the development complies with the objectives of local planning policy relating to parking provision, highway safety and sustainable development.

7. Planning Balance and Conclusion

This application seeks to regularise the use of the approved garage building through a variation of Condition 4 pursuant to Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The proposal retains the physical form and appearance of the building previously approved under planning permission DC/21/0323 and does not involve any material alterations to the external elevations. The use operates at a low intensity, remains under the control of the occupants of the main dwelling and continues to be functionally and operationally linked to the residential occupation of the site.

The use generates limited vehicle movements, benefits from ample on-site parking provision and has not resulted in any demonstrable harm to neighbouring amenity, highway safety or the character of the surrounding area.

The business provides an important source of income for the household whilst remaining proportionate in scale and clearly subordinate to the primary residential use of Oakfield. It is therefore considered that the continued use of the building represents a sustainable and appropriate form of home-working that aligns with the objectives of both local and national planning policy by supporting small rural businesses without causing unacceptable planning harm.

In light of the above, it is respectfully requested that Horsham District Council grants consent to vary Condition 4 and regularise the continued ancillary use of the building in association with the family-run bridal, prom and bespoke dress business operated from Oakfield.