



Planning, Design & Access Statement

Conversion of the existing building into three self-contained flats
and associated works

Wood Grange Lodge, Cowfold RH13 8DT

August 2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Manorwood have been instructed to prepare a full planning application for our client. The application follows a previous consent on the site for the conversion of the building to 2 x 2 bed flats along with 2 new dwellings and a garage building permitted under DC/24/0511. This application seeks consent for an amended internal layout to the approved flats to create 3 flats comprising 1 x 2 bed flat and 2 x 2 bed flats.
- 1.2 The applications are accompanied by a Heritage Statement, prepared by Natalie Aldrich IHBC, PCIfA, of Manorwood. This includes a Significance Assessment identifying the significance of the heritage assets and an Impact Assessment which considers the potential impact of the proposal to the significance of the heritage assets and their settings.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 Wood Grange Lodge is situated within the settlement of Cowfold and occupies a generous residential plot formerly associated with Wood Grange. The building is detached and comprises a nineteenth-century lodge with later extensions and alterations. It is surrounded by established landscaping and mature trees and benefits from an existing vehicular access and ample external space for parking and private amenity areas. The existing site area is 514m².
- 2.2 The surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of detached dwellings set within spacious plots, with mature planting making a significant contribution to the character of the locality.
- 2.3 Wood Grange Lodge was originally part of Noah's Ark School's classroom and part of the Noah's Ark Café after the school closure. Following the demotion of the Noah's Ark Café the building was extended to create garages and later converted into the 811 Music Studios.
- 2.4 Wood Grange is a statutory listed building designated in November 1980. The listing reads:

WOOD GRANGE Location Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8DT District Horsham (District Authority)

Date Listed 28th November 1980

List Entry No 1193000

Grade II

Description C18. Two storeys. Originally 5 windows. Stuccoed. Tiled roof. The 2 outer window-bays have been replaced in C19 by large 3-light bays. Glazing bars otherwise intact. Porch with Doric columns surmounted by ball caps. Doorway with thin rectangular fanlight.

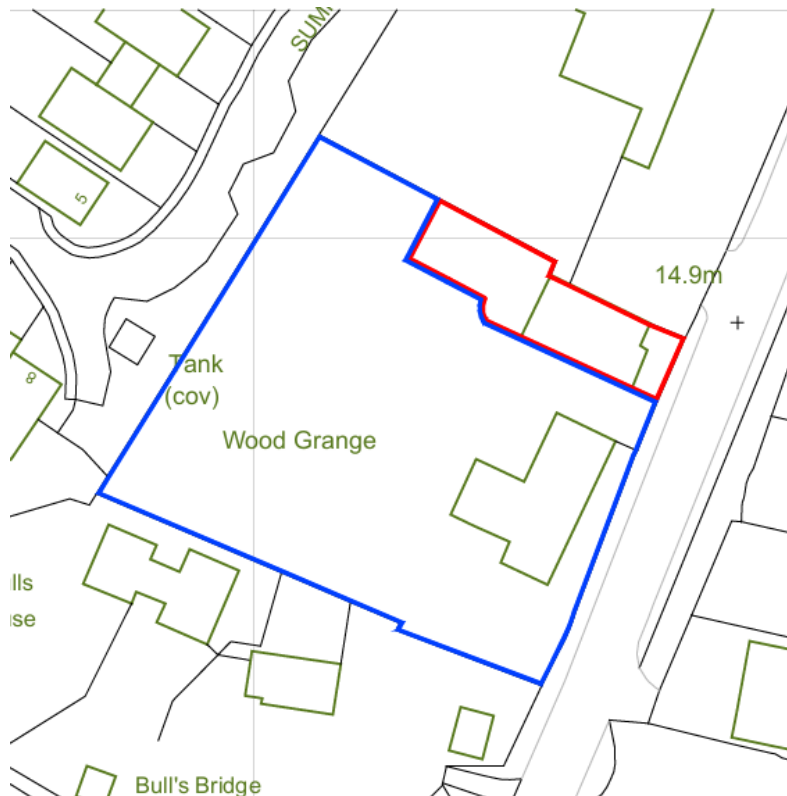


Figure 1 – Location of site

3. Background & Relevant Planning History

3.1 The table below shows the planning history relating to the site which is discussed in further detail below.

Planning Reference	Proposal	Decision
DC/24/0511	Conversion of Lodge to 2No 2-bedroom flats and associated alterations. Erection of 2No. detached 3 bedroom dwellings, and erection of a detached garage building with office above. Associated landscape works.	Approved

4. Proposal

- 4.1 The proposal seeks permission to convert the existing building into three self-contained flats comprising a mix of one and two-bedroom accommodation.
- 4.2 The submitted plans demonstrate that each flat provides:
- Well-proportioned accommodation;
 - Independent access;
 - Appropriate internal circulation;
 - Adequate natural light and ventilation;
 - Private or shared external amenity space;
 - Dedicated refuse and cycle storage facilities.
- 4.3 The external appearance of the building remains substantially as previously approved, with alterations limited to those necessary to accommodate the revised layout. Existing landscaping is retained wherever possible and supplemented where appropriate.
- 4.4 Vehicle parking is provided within the existing site, with sufficient manoeuvring space to enable vehicles to enter and leave in a forward gear.

5. Planning Policy

- 5.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 and Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

- 4: Achieving Sustainable Development
- 14: Achieving Well Designed Places
- 19: Conserving the Natural Environment
- 20: Conserving the Historic Environment

Horsham District Council

- 5.2 The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) was adopted by Horsham District Council on the 27th November 2015. The key policies of relevance to the DAS are outlined on the following pages.
- Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
 - Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
 - Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
 - Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
 - Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Need
 - Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
 - Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Horsham Local Plan Review

- 5.3 Horsham District Council formally submitted its Horsham District Local Plan 2023–2040 for independent examination to the Planning Inspectorate on July 2024, and initial hearing sessions were held in December 2024. However, the examining Inspector raised significant concerns about soundness and legal compliance, including whether the Council had properly discharged the Duty to Co-operate and how development constraints such as water neutrality were addressed, leading to a pause of the examination and cancellation of further hearings. In April 2025 the Inspector issued an interim findings letter recommending that the Council consider withdrawing the Plan and prepare a new one, and the Council has been reviewing these findings and engaging with the Inspector on whether the examination can be resumed. Most recently, Horsham has formally requested the re-opening of the examination in light of changes in evidence and policy context, and an exploratory/procedural meeting with the Inspector to discuss the next steps for progressing the Local Plan.

Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note [2025]

- 5.4 The Council is presently unable to demonstrate a 5-year land housing supply, with the Council's latest Authority Monitoring Report (April 2025) acknowledging a 5-year land housing supply of 1 years.
- 5.5 In the context of the Authority's inability to demonstrate a 5-year land housing supply and delays to the emerging local plan, HDC has published the 'Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note' (SD PAN) document to clarify the approach that it will pursue in respect of spatial matters in the circumstance that existing and emerging policy is attributed greatly reduced weight. The provisions of this document represent a material consideration. This document updates the previously issued Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD) document.

6. Principle of Development

- 6.1 The principle of converting Wood Grange Lodge into multiple residential units has already been established through the grant of planning permission DC/24/0511, which approved the conversion of the existing dwelling into two self-contained flats. This application does not seek to introduce a new land use but rather proposes a modest intensification of the previously approved scheme by reconfiguring the internal layout to provide three residential flats. The proposal represents an efficient and sustainable use of an existing residential building within the built-up area of Cowfold, making effective use of the existing building stock without extending its footprint or materially altering its external appearance. The development will deliver an additional dwelling to contribute towards the district's housing supply whilst preserving the character and appearance of the property and its surroundings.
- 6.2 Wood Grange Lodge remains in residential use and the proposal continues that lawful use in a form that reflects current planning objectives to optimise the use of existing buildings in sustainable locations. The scheme has been carefully designed to provide high-quality accommodation with adequate private amenity space, parking, refuse storage and cycle storage, whilst maintaining appropriate levels of residential amenity for neighbouring occupiers. The conversion requires only limited external alterations and retains the architectural character of the building, ensuring that any significance arising from its nineteenth-century origins as a non-designated heritage asset is preserved. As Wood Grange Lodge is not a statutory listed building and is not curtilage listed, having been separated from the Grade II listed Wood Grange prior to its designation in 1980, the proposal does not result in harm to designated heritage assets or their significance.
- 6.3 The proposal accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and the policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework by promoting the efficient use of land, supporting the delivery of additional housing within an existing settlement, and securing the long-term viable use of an existing building. Given that the principle of residential conversion has already been accepted under the extant planning permission, the revised proposal for three flats represents a logical and appropriate evolution of the approved scheme and is considered acceptable in principle.

7. Heritage Considerations

- 7.1 Wood Grange Lodge is not a statutory listed building. Although the building incorporates a nineteenth-century section, which may result in it being regarded as a non-designated heritage asset, it is not protected by statutory listing.
- 7.2 Historically, Wood Grange Lodge was associated through ownership and use with the Grade II Listed Wood Grange. However, documentary evidence confirms that the Lodge and Wood Grange were legally separated into two independent residential properties before Wood Grange was designated as a listed building in November 1980. Consequently, Wood Grange Lodge is not curtilage listed and does not benefit from statutory protection by association.
- 7.3 The proposed development has been carefully designed to preserve the architectural character of the existing building. The majority of works comprise internal alterations with only limited external changes required to facilitate the conversion. The approved elevational treatment is retained, ensuring the building's historic appearance and contribution to the local streetscape remain unaffected.
- 7.4 In accordance with the NPPF, the proposal conserves the significance of any potential non-designated heritage interest through the continued viable residential use of the building and sensitive design.

8. Design

- 8.1 The proposal respects the scale, massing and architectural form of the existing building. As the majority of alterations are internal, the appearance of the Lodge remains largely unchanged from both the previously approved scheme and the existing building.
- 8.2 The conversion preserves the established character of the site and maintains the spacious landscaped setting that contributes positively to the surrounding area.
- 8.3 No significant increase in built form is proposed, and the development integrates comfortably within its existing plot.

9. Drainage & Flood Risk

- 9.1 The proposed drainage system is to use existing mains as proposed under the previous proposal.
- 9.2 There is no known flood risk on the site which is located in Flood Zone 1 (the lowest risk of flooding).

10. Ecology and Biodiversity

- 10.1 This statement is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment conducted by Sylvatica Ecology Ltd.
- 10.2 Mitigation and working method recommendations set out in accompanying report, no negative residual ecological impacts are predicted, either in isolation or cumulatively.
- 10.3 The site is exempt from biodiversity net gain as the site is under 0.2 hectares as per the new regulations introduced on the 6th August. The total site area is 514m².

11. Residential Amenity

- 11.1 The proposal has been designed to ensure a high standard of accommodation for future occupants whilst safeguarding the amenities of neighbouring residents.
- 11.2 The increase from two to three dwellings results in only a modest increase in activity associated with the site. Given the size of the building and generous site area, the proposal will not result in unacceptable overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing or overbearing impacts.
- 11.3 Each apartment benefits from adequate daylight, outlook and external amenity space consistent with good residential design principles.

12. Highways and Parking

- 12.1 The development utilises the existing access arrangements previously accepted under planning permission DC/24/0511.
- 12.2 The submitted site layout demonstrates that sufficient off-street parking can be accommodated together with appropriate turning space. The modest increase of one additional dwelling is unlikely to generate a material increase in traffic movements or adversely affect highway safety.
- 12.3 The proposal therefore complies with the parking and access requirements of Horsham District Council.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1 The proposed conversion of Wood Grange Lodge into three self-contained residential flats represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development that makes efficient use of an existing residential building within the settlement of Cowfold. The principle of converting the property into multiple residential units has already been established through the grant of planning permission DC/24/0511, and this application seeks only a modest amendment to the proposed flats to increase the number of units from two to three through internal reconfiguration, with minimal changes to the external appearance of the building.
- 13.2 The proposal has been carefully designed to preserve the character and appearance of Wood Grange Lodge while securing its continued viable residential use. Although the building incorporates a nineteenth-century section and may be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset, it is not a statutory listed building and is not curtilage listed, having been legally separated from the Grade II Listed Wood Grange prior to its designation in 1980. The development therefore preserves any heritage significance associated with the building and does not result in harm to the setting or significance of the adjacent listed building.
- 13.3 The submitted plans demonstrate that the proposed flats will provide a high standard of accommodation, with appropriate levels of private amenity space, parking, cycle and refuse storage, and landscaping. The proposal will not give rise to unacceptable impacts on neighbouring residential amenity, the character of the surrounding area, or highway safety. Furthermore, it makes a modest but valuable contribution towards the supply of housing by delivering an additional dwelling through the re-use of an existing building, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.
- 13.4 Overall, the proposal accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework by supporting the efficient use of land, conserving local character, respecting heritage considerations, and delivering well-designed residential accommodation. In light of these considerations, it is respectfully submitted that the proposed development is acceptable in planning terms, and planning permission is therefore sought for the conversion of Wood Grange Lodge into three self-contained residential flats.