



PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Planning Committee North

BY: Development Manager

DATE: 01 August 2017

DEVELOPMENT: Change of Use from a former Ambulance Station (Sui Generis) to Use Class D1 plus two external storage containers

SITE: Horsham Ambulance Station Hurst Road Horsham West Sussex RH12 2DN

WARD: Horsham Park

APPLICATION: DC/17/0967

APPLICANT: **Name:** Horsham District Council **Address:** Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham ,West Sussex, RH12 1RL

REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA: The application has been made by or on behalf of the Council.

RECOMMENDATION: Grant Planning Permission

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

To consider the planning application.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

- 1.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the existing building from an Ambulance Station (sui generis) to a D1 use. It is proposed that the building will be used by 2no theatre groups who currently use (the soon to be re-developed) Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre. As part of the proposed change of use, some internal alterations are proposed including the creation of rehearsal space, a workshop and storage areas for Theatrical props, changing rooms, wardrobes, new accessible toilet, changing rooms, kitchen area and toilets, with partition walls added as required.
- 1.2 The premises will be used primarily for rehearsals, stage props construction and associated storage to serve the needs of the 2no theatre groups and not for public performances. Externally, a new fire escape door will be inserted to the north-eastern elevation, providing a direct exit from the large rehearsal room to be formed, which is currently the main ambulance garage, out into the car park area.
- 1.3 It is also proposed to provide 2no external storage containers to be positioned to the rear corners of the host building. The proposed containers would be second-hand, conventional styled transportation type containers which would measure 6.096m (L) x 2.45m (W) x 2.59m (H) (20ft L x 8ft W x 8.5ft H). The proposed containers would be mainly screened from views from the front of the building owing to the positioning of existing fencing and the existing building itself.

- 1.4 The proposal has been amended during the course of the application. It was initially proposed to provide one larger external storage container measuring approximately 12.19m in length. However this has been replaced with two smaller containers, as detailed above, due to logistical reasons.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 1.5 The application site is a detached single storey building which was formally Horsham Ambulance Station until this service was moved to Crawley. The application site was used by SECambus temporarily as a base for calls in Horsham and the surrounding area. The site benefits from a large car park and a small grassed area to the rear as well as a temporary portacabin type structure which is now used as the response post.
- 1.6 The application site is located on the south-western side of Hurst Road and accessed from the north-east and the surrounding area consists of predominately commercial/community services including WSCC Fire Station, the Law Courts, Sussex Police Station and Central Sussex College. To the north-eastern side of Hurst Lane there are residential properties and Horsham Hospital is located to the north-west.

2. INTRODUCTION

STATUTORY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The following Policies are considered to be relevant to the assessment of this application:

2.2 **National Planning Policy Framework:**

- NPPF1 - Building a strong, competitive economy
- NPPF2 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- NPPF4 - Promoting sustainable transport
- NPPF8 - Promoting healthy communities
- NPPF14 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

2.3 **Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF 2015)**

- HDPF5 - Strategic Policy: Horsham Town
- HDPF11 - Tourism and Cultural Facilities
- HDPF13 - Town Centre Uses
- HDPF25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- HDPF33 - Development Principles
- HDPF39 - Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision
- HDPF40 - Sustainable Transport
- HDPF41 - Parking
- HDPF42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities
- HDPF43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

RELEVANT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2.5 **Neighbourhood Plan**

Status – Horsham District Council has approved the designation of Horsham Blueprint as a Neighbourhood Forum as of June 2015.

2.6 **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

Horsham Town Design Statement

2.7 PLANNING HISTORY AND RELEVANT APPLICATIONS

HU/599/71	Extension to fire station (From old Planning History)	Application Permitted on 21.12.1971
HU/335/01	Single-storey extension and internal alterations Site: Ambulance Station Hurst Road Horsham	Application Permitted on 22.10.2001
DC/16/1107	Erection of portable building to provide an Ambulance Community Response Post	Application Permitted on 12.08.2016

3. OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS

3.1 When 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

3.2 **Denne NC Parish Council** – No objection.

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

3.3 **HDC Head of Community and Culture** - Fully supports this application from a community and culture perspective. This change of use provides continuity of provision for 2 important community organisations, one of which supports a number of other drama groups throughout the district.

3.4 **HDC Environmental Health** – No objection in principle, conditions recommended.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

3.5 **WSCC Highways** – Use is temporary and 16 parking spaces are available. No objection

3.6 **Sussex Police** – No objection.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

3.7 No representations have been received.

4. HOW THE PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION WILL PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS

4.1 Article 8 (Right to respect of a Private and Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 are relevant to this application, Consideration of Human rights forms part of the planning assessment below.

5. HOW THE PROPOSAL WILL HELP TO REDUCE CRIME AND DISORDER

5.1 It is not considered that the development would be likely to have any significant impact on crime and disorder.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENTS

- 6.1 The main issues are the principle of the development in the location and the effect of the development on;
- The impact on the locality
 - The amenities of the occupiers of adjoining properties
 - The existing parking and traffic conditions in the area

Change of use

- 6.2 The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the existing building from an Ambulance station (sui generis) to a D1 use. It is proposed that the building will be specifically used by two theatres groups for practice only but not as a theatre.
- 6.3 The existing building was vacated by the Ambulance Authority in May 2017 who up until the transfer of the full Ambulance Service to facilities in Crawley, were using the premises as a temporary base/response point for calls out in Horsham and the surrounding area. The facility has since relocated to a small portacabin on the site and there are no policies within the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) which would seek to retain the existing sui generis use. On this basis the change of use is considered acceptable in principle.
- 6.4 The proposal would facilitate use of the premises by theatre groups, providing rehearsal space, a workshop and associated storage areas. There would be no performances taking place on the site and the proposal would fall within Use Class D1, a non-residential use, which encompasses a number of community uses. Policies 42 and 43 of the HDPF seek to create inclusive communities and support the provision of new or improved community facilities or services, particularly where they meet the identified needs of local communities. The proposed use would be supported by these policies and would bring a vacant building back into meaningful use, with the applicant responding to a recognised need for such accommodation within this part of the District.
- 6.5 As such, it is considered that the use of this building for the proposed use would help to create a socially inclusive and adaptable environment which supports leisure and recreation in the District, in accordance with Policy 42 and 43 of The Horsham District Planning Framework.

The effect of the development on the amenities of the occupiers of adjoining properties

- 6.6 Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework requires proposals to be of a high standard of design, relate sympathetically with the built surroundings and character of the surrounding area; also of particular relevance in respect of the development would be its impact upon both private neighbour amenities and the visual amenities of the area and to have appropriate access and parking arrangements.
- 6.7 Details submitted with the application state that the vacant building will be used by the theatre groups primarily in the evenings and with occasional use during the daytime. While no specific hours have been proposed, taking into account the non-residential makeup of the vicinity and the 24 hour operations of the Fire Station and Police Station which are in close proximity, it is considered that the use of the premises during the evenings would be acceptable. As such, it is not considered necessary to attach a condition which relates to hours of operation.

- 6.8 Notwithstanding the above points discussed regarding the use of the premises and hours of operation, the D1 use class includes a wider range of 'Non-residential Institution' uses such as creches, day nurseries and public halls which could attract a larger number of people to the site and may be operated differently to the way the theatre groups will use the premises. As such, it is considered necessary to attach a condition restricting the use of this building to be used by the 2no theatre groups in question only as necessary and by no other use within Use Class D1.

The effect of the development on the existing parking and traffic conditions in the area

- 6.9 The former Horsham Ambulance station is close to public transport links including both trains and buses from points nearby. The premises currently benefits from 16no car parking spaces. Following consultation with WSCC Highways who confirmed that they had no objection to the proposal, it is considered that there would not be any parking or transport issues associated with the change of use of this building to be used by the theatre groups.

Conclusion

- 6.10 Overall, the proposed change of use of the existing building to D1 use is considered to be acceptable and does not raise any concerns in terms of the aims identified within the HDPF. The proposal would be in accordance with policies 11, 33, 40, 41, 42 and 43 and is therefore recommended for approval.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions -

- 1 A list of the approved plans
- 2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall be begun 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:** Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order amending or revoking and/or re-enacting that Order), the premises shall only be used as theatre rehearsal space, with associated ancillary uses, and for no other purposes whatsoever, including performances (and including those uses falling within Class D1 as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: Any alternative use of the premises within Class D1 would raise amenity and highway considerations which would need to be considered through a planning application under Policies 33 and 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 4 **Regulatory Condition:** The existing bi-folding 'garage' doors shall only be used/opened for loading and unloading and shall be kept shut at all other times.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of nearby properties and their occupiers in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 5 **Regulatory Condition:** The playing of live or recorded music or generation of other amplified sound shall be restricted as to be inaudible at nearby premises.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of nearby properties and their occupiers in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Background Papers: DC/17/0967