



PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Planning Committee

BY: Head of Development and Building Control

DATE: 16 March 2021

DEVELOPMENT: Conversion of ancillary building to a self-contained commercial unit (Class E) with new shopfront and door and alterations to existing floor levels and window and door openings.

SITE: 29 School Hill Storrington Pulborough West Sussex RH20 4NA

WARD: Storrington and Washington

APPLICATION: DC/20/2519

APPLICANT: **Name:** Mr and Mrs Page **Address:** Bramblewood Newhouse Lane
Storrington Pulborough West Sussex RH20 3HQ

REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA: By request of Storrington and Sullington Parish Council

RECOMMENDATION: To approve planning permission subject to appropriate conditions

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 conversion of the existing building to a commercial unit (Class E). It is the intention of the applicant to use this building as a green grocers or small office.
- 1.2 The conversion would involve the internal floor level being reduced so that it matches street level, with external works to block-up two existing openings to the eastern elevation, and the introduction of a new shop frontage to the western elevation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 1.3 The application site is located to the west of School Hill, within the designated built-up area and Conservation Area of Storrington.
- 1.4 The site comprises a two storey end of terrace dwelling to the east, with a detached outbuilding located to the west. Due to the slope of the land, the outbuilding is located on lower ground than the host dwelling and the surrounding residential properties.

- 1.5 The public highway of Mill Parade is located immediately to the west of the building, with a public car park located across the road. The site is bound by close boarded fencing and flint walling.
- 1.6 The application site is located adjacent to the defined Village Centre of Storrington, and in close proximity to a number of units subject of the Primary Retail Frontage designation, located to the south and west.

2. INTRODUCTION

STATUTORY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

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

2.3 National Planning Policy Framework

2.4 Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF 2015)

- Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
- Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
- Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
- Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
- Policy 9 - Employment Development
- Policy 12 - Strategic Policy: Vitality and Viability of Existing Retail Centres
- Policy 13 - Town Centre Uses
- Policy 14 - Shop Fronts and Advertisements
- Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
- Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33 - Development Principles
- Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
- Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
- Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
- Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
- Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41 - Parking
- Policy 42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities

RELEVANT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2.5 Neighbourhood Plan:

Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031

- Policy 1 - A Spatial Plan for the Parishes
- Policy 6 - Development in Storrington Village Centre
- Policy 14 – Design

2.6 Parish Design Statement:

Storrington and Sullington Parish Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY AND RELEVANT APPLICATIONS

DC/07/0172	Demolition of existing old school building and construction of 1 x 1 bed dwelling	Application	Refused	on 19.03.2007
SR/30/50	Conversion of outbuildings. (From old Planning History)	Application	Refused	on 08.11.1950
DC/08/0786	Conversion of the old school house at the rear into a 1-bed dwelling	Application	Refused	on 28.05.2008
DC/10/1150	Internal alterations to existing garden structure, extension and alteration of existing door (Certificate of Lawful Development - Proposed)	Application	Refused	on 11.08.2010

3. OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 Where 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

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

- 3.2 **HDC Conservation:** Support. There are several outbuildings facing onto Mill Parade at the rear of the nineteenth century dwellings on School Hill. Some of these have been converted to garages and may well have been cart sheds in the past. The outbuilding at the rear of no.29 is an attractively proportioned building and may have been a workshop or service building associated with the occupier's profession in the nineteenth century. The evidence of a chimney suggests something more than just an outhouse or storage building. The proposal to convert the building into a shop will ensure it is maintained and repaired in the future and that it continues to complement the character of the conservation area. The application is supported subject to conditions.
- 3.3 **HDC Environmental Health:** Comment. Use class E covers a range of uses not all of which would be appropriate given the immediate proximity of adjoining residential occupiers. While the small size of the unit will mean any impacts will be limited, it is still the case that uses other than retail or consulting rooms could impact the amenity of adjoining occupiers. Controls are likely to be needed on hours of operation, installation of external plant and storage of waste.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

- 3.4 **WSCC Highways:** Comment. The site is located on Mill Lane, an unclassified road subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph. WSCC in its role as Local Highway Authority (LHA) raises no highway safety concerns for this application. The LHA does not anticipate that the proposed nil car parking provision would result in a severe highway safety concern, nor give rise to any parking capacity issues. The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 109), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

3.5 **Storrington and Sullington Parish Council:** Objection for the following reasons:

- Proposed alterations would strip the building of its historic features
- Pedestrian access unsafe
- Demolition works have begun
- Risk from excavation works
- No information regarding opening hours
- No need for commercial site
- No connection to other commercial sites
- Shopfront is not an improvement
- Not an appropriate location for the commercial unit

3.6 8 letters of objection were received from 5 separate households, and these can be summarised as follows:

- Overlooking and loss of privacy
- Parking outside of the unit
- Not in keeping with the character of the houses
- Noise and disturbance
- Additional footfall to the building
- Odour and nuisance
- Impact of construction
- Loading and unloading due to location of car park and access to dwellings
- Disable access
- Not in keeping with the streetscene
- Impact on the character of the Conservation Area

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 application seeks full planning permission for the conversion of the existing outbuilding to a commercial unit (Class E). It is the intention of the applicant to use this building as a green grocers or small office.

Principle of Development

6.2 Policy 12 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) recognises the development hierarchy for the District's town and village centres, and establishes Storrington as a Secondary Centre. The hierarchy of retail centres will be supported and enhanced through the promotion and encouragement of activities in town and village centres so they continue to be the prime focus for community life in the District. This will be encouraged through, among others, maintaining a diverse range and choice of suitable uses, respect for historic character and good urban design principles, and a convenient, cohesive and concentrated

primary area with a high proportion of retail uses. Policy 13 of the HDPF outlines that main town centre uses will be encouraged within the defined areas of village centres. Proposals for main town centre uses will be allowed within the defined town and village centre boundary, provided that: proposals are of an appropriate scale to the centres; the proposal will complement the vitality and viability of the centre, the proposal is accessible, relates to and is well connected to the defined Frontages and Primary Shopping Areas of the centre where they existing, and the proposal will improve the character, quality and function of the centre as a whole.

- 6.3 It is recognised that the Parish Council and a number of other objectors have raised concern with the proposed commercial unit. These concerns include the need for a commercial unit in the location, and its proximity away from other commercial units.
- 6.4 The spatial strategy supports development for commercial uses within defined Town and Village Centres where development is considered most sustainable. The application site is located outside of the defined Village Centre of Storrington, and as such is considered to be an out of centre location. It is however recognised that the defined Village Centre boundary is located immediately to the west of the application site, so that the proposal would be located in close proximity to the centre.
- 6.5 Policy 13 of the HDPF states that proposals for small scale retail development outside of the defined town and village centre will be allowed where it will not significantly undermine the vitality and viability of the nearest defined retail frontage or town and village centre.
- 6.6 The proposal would result in a small commercial unit immediately adjacent to the defined village centre, and in close walking distance to a number of other retail and commercial units as well as the public car park serving the centre. Given this relationship, and the small size of the proposed unit, it is not considered that the proposal would undermine the vitality and viability of the nearest defined Village Centre, and given its proximity has the potential to support the diversity and offer.
- 6.7 On the balance of these considerations, it is considered that the proposal has the capacity to support the defined Village Centre and contribute to the wider economy. The proposal would therefore result in economic and social benefits to the local community, and is therefore considered acceptable in principle.

Design and Appearance

- 6.8 Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves and enhances the townscape character from inappropriate development. Proposal should take into account townscape characteristics, with development seeking to provide an attractive, functional and accessible environment that complements the locally distinctive character of the district. In addition, Policy 34 of the HDPF states that development should be reinforce the special character of the historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form and design; and should make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area.
- 6.9 Policy 14 of the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan states that the scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials of all development proposals, including alterations to existing buildings, will be required to reflect the architectural and historic character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape.
- 6.10 Concerns have been raised by the Parish Council and interested parties regarding the impact the proposal would have on the character of the street scene and the character of the existing building.

- 6.11 The proposed development would result in external alterations to the building, including the installation of a shop front to the western elevation (comprising a window and door) and the infill of 2no. doors to the eastern elevation. Internal alterations to the building would reduce the floor level so that it meets the external floor level of Mill Parade.
- 6.12 The proposal is considered to maintain the overall character and proportion of the existing building, and is considered to be of a form and material that would reflect and reinforce the special character of the wider area, with conditions recommended relating to the submission of details of the replacement windows and shop front to ensure that the significance of the designated heritage asset, and the character, appearance and integrity of the building, is not prejudiced, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policies 25, 32, 33, and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).
- 6.13 The current proposal does not indicate any signage for the proposed use. As such, an informative is to be added stating that advertisement consent may be required for any external signage.

Heritage Impacts

- 6.14 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF sets out 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. 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.'
- 6.15 This follows the requirements of s.66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which sets out that 'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.' In applying s.66, the identification of harm to a listed building or its setting carries significant importance and weight in the planning balance.
- 6.16 Policy 34 of the HDPF states that development should be reinforce the special character of the historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form and design; and should make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area. Proposals should preserve and ensure clear legibility of locally distinctive vernacular building forms and their settings, features, fabric and materials.
- 6.17 The Parish Council has raised concerns with the removal of historic features to the building, as well as the design of the shopfront. The Applicant has outlined that the proposal would rebuild and restore the historic features, principally the chimney, and no objection to this has been raised by the Design and Conservation Officer. The proposed works are considered to retain the character and features of the historic building, and are considered to appropriately reflect the special character of the Conservation Area.
- 6.18 There are several outbuildings facing onto Mill Parade, at the rear of the nineteenth century dwellings on School Hill. Following consultation with the Design and Conservation Officer, the subject outbuilding is considered to be an attractively proportioned building and may have been a workshop or service building associated with the occupier's profession in the nineteenth century. The proposed conversion would ensure the building is maintained and repaired in the future, and that it continues to complement the character of the Conservation Area. The proposed development is therefore considered to reinforce the special character of the historic environment and make a positive contribution to the distinctiveness of the area, in accordance with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Amenity Impacts

- 6.19 Policy 32 of the HDPF states that development will be expected to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe, and adaptable environment that contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves. Policy 33 of the HDPF continues that development shall be required to ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land.
- 6.20 The application site comprises an outbuilding located to the rear of 29 School Hill Lane, which is accessible from Mill Parade. The site is surrounded by residential development, with the public car park and commercial parade of retail shops located to the south-west. Given this spatial context, it is recognised that the site is located within a relatively active area comprising a mix of residential and commercial uses.
- 6.21 It is however recognised that Class E commercial uses incorporate a number of uses that have the potential to result in additional noise, activity, and odour. Such impacts could affect the amenities of nearby residential properties and users of land.
- 6.22 The proposed unit would measure to an overall area of 23sqm, with the Applicant outlining that the likely use would be retail as a greengrocer. Given the modest size of the building, and when considered against the general character of the area, it is not considered that the proposal would result in a significant level of activity to justify a reason for refusal. It is however recognised that a number of the uses within Class E, particularly use for a day nursery, hot food takeaway, gym or for light industrial purposes, could increase noise, activity and odour. Given the proximity to residential receptors, such uses are not considered appropriate and a condition restricting permitted use to Class E, except those uses mentioned, is considered necessary. This would limit the use of the premises to a retail use, offices or for financial services. Furthermore, conditions restricting the hours of opening and deliveries would be imposed to limit potential conflict.
- 6.23 It is recognised that the proposed commercial unit would back on to the amenity space of 29 School Hill, with a number of windows opening into this yard area. The amenity space is currently divided by a timber fence, but this is proposed to be removed as part of the development. While the unit would be located on lower ground to the residential dwelling, which would mitigate the perception of overlooking, there are some concerns that the proposed conversion would result in overlooking to the host dwelling. It is however recognised that the plans submitted indicate that the unit would remain in the same ownership as 29 School Hill, and while this ownership may not be retained in the future, it would act to mitigate some of the impact. In order to overcome concerns regarding overlooking, it is considered reasonable and necessary to impose a condition requiring that the windows to the southern elevation of the rear projection and the window to the western elevation both be obscure glazed and non-opening below 1.7m. This would reduce the perception of overlooking and, on the balance of these considerations, it is considered that the proposal would not result in sufficient harm to the nearby residential property to justify a reason for refusal.
- 6.24 Subject to the conditions as discussed above, it is considered that the proposal would not result in significant harm to the amenities or sensitivities of neighbouring properties, in accordance with Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Highways Impacts

- 6.25 Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF promote development that provides safe and adequate access, suitable for all users.
- 6.26 The proposed development seeks a nil provision for parking, with intended users considered likely to walk to the site or utilise the public car park immediately to the west of the site. The

application site is located within a sustainable location, and in close proximity to a number of public transport modes, as well as the public car park serving the village centre.

- 6.27 Following consultation with WSCC Highways, it is recognised that any vehicular parking would have to be accommodated on-street or within the nearby public car park. While on-street parking is limited in the area, there are comprehensive parking restriction in place prohibiting vehicles from parking in places that could be detrimental to highway safety.
- 6.28 Given the nature and size of the proposed commercial unit, it is likely that any visits would be coupled with other trips to the retail centre. It is not therefore considered that the proposal would materially intensify vehicular movements or introduce a significant pressure on parking provision surrounding the site.
- 6.29 It is recognised that a number of objections have raised concerns with deliveries to the site. Mill Parade benefits from sufficient width to accommodate any necessary deliveries, with unloading also possible along School Lane. In addition, the site's proximity to the public car park would also provide space for unloading and loading. As such, it is considered that there would be sufficient and adequate areas to accommodate any delivery requirements.
- 6.30 It is recognised that the Parish have raised concerns regarding the safety of the access given its proximity to the public highway. While noted that the shopfront entrance would be open to Mill Parade, there is a pavement edge that would enable customers to wait off the road before crossing. This is considered to reduce the conflict between customers and vehicles.
- 6.31 On the balance of these considerations, it is not therefore considered that the nil parking provision would result in a severe highway safety concern or give rise to parking capacity issues. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policies 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Other Matters

- 6.32 The Parish Council have raised concerns regarding the potential impact the excavation works would have to surrounding land, and particularly the potential for subsidence. Any works would be subject of Building Regulations, with any structural works requiring sign-off by a qualified Building Surveyor. It is therefore considered that there are appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure the structural integrity of the building.
- 6.33 It is noted that the development site is tight to the boundaries of the property, and would not therefore allow for outside refuse/recycling storage for the proposed premises. It is therefore likely this will need to be stored within the building until collected. A condition is requested to ensure details relating to refuse and recycling are adequately controlled.

Conclusion

- 6.34 Whilst this is a small building, there is potential for it to be used as an office or a small retail unit without detriment to the surrounding area. The proposed development would contribute to the diversity and viability of the village and is considered to be acceptable in principle. The proposal would retain the special character of the building and would relate sympathetically to the historic character of the designated Conservation Area, and subject to conditions restricting use and deliveries to the site, it is not considered that the proposal will result in harm to the amenities and sensitivities of neighbouring properties or the safety and function of the public highway network. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with all relevant local and national planning policies.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The application is recommended for approval subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

- 2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall begin 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 **Pre-Commencement Condition:** 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: Drawings to a scale not smaller than 1:5 fully describing:

- i) replacement windows.

These drawings must show:

- materials
- cross section of frame, transom, mullions, glazing bars, etc.
- method of opening
- method of glazing

- ii) shopfront

These drawings must show:

- materials
- decorative/protective finish
- cross section of architrave, fascia, frame, transom, mullions, etc.
- formation of opening including structural support

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the significance of the designated heritage asset, and the character, appearance and integrity of the building, is not prejudiced, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and to comply with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 4 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** The building hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the windows to the western elevation and the window on the southern elevation of the western projection (as shown on Plan nb00801.02b) have been fitted with obscured glazing. No part of those windows that are less than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which it is installed shall be capable of being opened. Once installed the obscured glazing and non-openable parts of those windows shall be retained permanently thereafter.

Reason: To protect the privacy of adjacent occupiers in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 5 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** No building hereby permitted shall be first occupied (or use hereby permitted commenced) unless and until provision for the storage of refuse/recycling has been made for that building (or use) in accordance with details that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These facilities shall thereafter be retained for use at all times.

Reason: To ensure the adequate provision of recycling facilities in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 6 **Regulatory Condition:** No works for the implementation of the development hereby approved shall take place outside of 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 hours to 13:00 hours on Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or public Holidays

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

- 7 **Regulatory Condition:** The retail/commercial unit hereby permitted shall be used for purposes falling within Class E (except for those uses falling within (b), (d), (f) and (g)(iii) of Class E) 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) only.

Reason: Changes of use as permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order or Use Classes Order 1987 are not considered appropriate in this case due to the proximity to neighbouring properties and the economic benefit the approved use provides under Policies 12, 13 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 8 **Regulatory Condition:** The premises shall not be open for trade or business except between the hours of 09:00 and 17:30 Monday to Saturday and at no times on Sundays, Public Holidays, and Bank Holidays.

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

- 9 **Regulatory Condition:** Deliveries to the retail/commercial unit, collection of trade waste and any form of dispatch shall be limited to 09.00 - 17.00 Monday to Friday, 09.00 - 13.00 Saturdays and no activity on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

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

- 10 **Regulatory Condition:** The building hereby approved shall not be extended or altered in any way other than with the permission of the Local Planning Authority by way of a formal application.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 11 **Regulatory Condition:** No external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed other than with the permission of the Local Planning Authority by way of formal application.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 12 **Regulatory Condition:** The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on drawing no. nb00801.02b unless details of alternative materials have been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to development above ground floor slab level commencing.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 13 **Regulatory Condition:** All new and replacement rainwater goods shall be cast iron or cast aluminium or cast effect plastic.

Reason: To ensure that the significance of the designated heritage asset, and the character, appearance and integrity of the building, is not prejudiced, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and to comply with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Note to Applicant:

The Applicant is advised that any external signage to the shopfront may require separate Advertisement Consent.

Background Papers: DC/20/2519