

# Horsham District Council

TO:	Development Management Committee (North)
BY:	Development Manager
DATE:	6 December 2016
DEVELOPMENT:	Cessation of commercial uses, removal of associated commercial buildings and the erection of three 4 bedroom houses together with garages and landscaping
SITE:	Gate Lodge Stane Street Slinfold Horsham
WARD:	Itchingfield, Slinfold and Warnham
APPLICATION:	DC/16/2200
APPLICANT:	Mr Sam Baker

**REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA**: The application if permitted would represent a departure from the Development Plan as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and more than 5 representations have been received of a contrary view to the Officer recommendation.

**RECOMMENDATION**: To refuse planning permission.

# 1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

To consider the planning application.

- 1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION
- 1.1.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the cessation of the commercial uses on the site, the removal of the associated buildings and the construction of three, detached dwellings with garaging and landscaping.
- 1.1.2 Planning permission was granted for the cessation of the commercial uses, the removal of the associated commercial buildings and the erection of three small bungalows on land to the north of Gate Lodge under application reference DC/15/0911 (considered by Committee on 15 July 2015 and 8 September 2015).
- 1.1.3 The proposal seeks to construct three, four bedroom, two storey detached dwellings with double garages, associated car parking and amenity space. Each dwelling will provide a kitchen with a dining room, living room, utility room, WC and integral double garage on the ground floor and four bedrooms (one ensuite) and a bathroom on the first floor. The accommodation will be arranged in an 'L' shape with a single storey double garage measuring 5.6 metres to its ridge sited at a right angle to the main accommodation which is

some 7.5 metres in height. The dwellings at their longest and widest points are some 15 metres by 13 metres.

- 1.1.4 The existing access and driveway off the A29 are to be retained and utilised, and extended to provide access to all properties. A total of four car parking spaces are to be provided for each dwellings; two in the garage and two on the driveway, with space within the garage also being provided for the storage of bicycles and bins.
- 1.1.5 Two of the dwellings will be located on the site previously granted permission for the construction of the three small bungalows, with the third dwelling proposed on land partially in a former commercial use and partially domestic curtilage associated with Gate Lodge. It should be noted that a further (fourth) dwelling is proposed to be constructed to the immediate rear of Gate Lodge (ref DC/16/2201).

## 1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 1.2.1 The application site lies to the west of the A29, approximately 860m (as the crow flies) from the built-up area boundary of Slinfold. Walking into the village of Slinfold would involve walking along the A24 to join the Downs Link; a walk of approximately 1.2km to the edge of the village.
- 1.2.2 The site measures approximately 0.24 hectares and slopes slightly uphill from the A29. The site is well hidden from public view due to the mature planting that exists around its boundary. A number of buildings and structures exist on the site, including a single storey timber building being used as a shed and office with associated car parking area and a large shed and car port with an associated hard surface. There is an existing internal road which runs east to west through the site given access to these buildings.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 STATUTORY BACKGROUND

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2.2 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICY
- 2.2.1 The following sections of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), hereinafter referred to as the 'Framework', are relevant to the consideration of this application (Note: This list is not exhaustive and other paragraphs of the Framework are referred to where necessary within the contents of the report):
  - Section 4: Promoting sustainable transport
  - Section 6: Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
  - Section 7: Requiring good design
  - Section 10: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
  - Section 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 2.2.2 National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 (NPPG).
- 2.3 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICY
- 2.3.1 Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) the following policies are of particular relevance:

Policy 1 – Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development Policy 2 – Strategic Policy: Strategic Development

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- Policy 3 Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
- Policy 4 Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
- Policy 15 Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
- Policy 16 Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs
- Policy 25 Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 26 Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
- Policy 31 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32 Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33 Development Principles
- Policy 35 Strategic Policy: Climate Change
- Policy 37 Sustainable Construction
- Policy 39 Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision
- Policy 40 Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41 Parking

#### 2.4 RELEVANT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 2.4.1 The Parish of Slinfold was designated as a Neighbourhood Development Plan Area on 20 May 2014. A pre-submission version of the draft Slinfold Neighbourhood Plan was consulted on between 25 April 2016 and 6 June 2016.
- 2.5 PLANNING HISTORY

SF/3/73	Proposed erection of private dwelling	REF
SF/50/90	Change of use of dwelling to offices and erection of building for b1 use (outline)	REF
SF/2/92	Change of use of dwelling to offices & erection of building for b1 use (outline)	REF
DC/15/0911	Cessation of commercial uses, removal of associated commercial buildings and the erection of three small bungalows on land to the north of Gate Lodge	PER
DC/16/0614	Non Material Amendment to previously approved application DC/15/0911 (Cessation of commercial uses, removal of associated commercial buildings and the erection of three small bungalows on land to the north of Gate Lodge). Modest extension on the western side of the property, the replacement of the lounge window with double swing doors and moving the whole dwelling two metres to the west in order to increase the distance to the boundary to improve wheelchair access around the property.	REF
DC/16/2201	Construction of 1 no. 4 bedroom house together with garage and landscaping	PCO

## 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 <a href="http://www.horsham.gov.uk">www.horsham.gov.uk</a>.

## 3.2 INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

- 3.2.1 **Drainage Engineer** No drainage information has been submitted to make any appropriate comment or observations. Therefore drainage conditions should be applied before any works commence on site, that show full details of the measures to dispose of both foul and surface water
- 3.2.2 <u>Environmental Health</u> Recommends conditions in respect of land contamination, site clearance, control of noise and dust, importation of soil or other fill material, hours of demolition and construction work and no exterior floodlighting.
- 3.2.3 <u>Ecology Consultant</u> Further assessment of the current site ecology and potential impacts from the proposed works to notable and protected species within the red line application and the associated zone of influence for the work is required. The current level of ecological information submitted is insufficient to allow an adequate assessment of ecological impacts upon protected species against relevant planning policies.
- 3.2.4 **Arboricultural Officer** No objection.
- 3.3 OUTSIDE AGENCIES
- 3.3.1 <u>Southern Water</u> No objections and advise the Environment Agency should be consulted directly regarding the use of private wastewater treatment works or septic tank drainage which disposes of effluent to sub-soil irrigation. The application details for this development indicate that the proposed means of surface water drainage for the site is via a watercourse. The Council's technical staff and the relevant authority for land drainage consent should comment on the adequacy of the proposal to discharge surface water to the local watercourse.
- 3.3.2 **WSCC Highways** The local highway authority does not consider that the proposal for three dwellings would have 'severe' impact on the operation of the Highway network, therefore is not contrary to the NPPF (paragraph 32), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal. Conditions in respect of vehicle parking and turning, visibility splays and cycle storage are recommended.
- 3.3.3 <u>WSCC Countryside Access Ranger</u> Public Right of Way (PROW) Footpath 1367 runs to the north of and contiguous with the development's boundary. Any alteration to, or replacement of, the existing boundary with the PROW or the erection of new fence lines, must be done in consultation with WSCC's PROW Team to ensure the legal width of the footpath is maintained and there is no unlawful encroachment. Access along the PROW by contractor's vehicles, deliveries or plant is only lawful if the applicant can prove they have a vehicular right. If the footpath's surface is considered damaged as a result of the development then the applicant will be required to make good the surface to a standard satisfactory to WSCC's PROW Team. Should any building works, demolition or construction encroach upon the PROW then a Temporary Path Closure Order may be required, for which an application must be made to WSCC's PROW Team.
- 3.4 PARISH COUNCIL
- 3.4.1 Slinfold Parish Council no objection.
- 3.5 MEMBER COMMENTS
- 3.5.1 No comments received.

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## 3.6 PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

- 3.6.1 Nine letters/emails of support have been received which raise the following comments:
  - Principle of residential development has been established
  - The site is not in the open countryside
  - Proposal will help with the housing supply in Slinfold and the wider area
  - Gate Lodge, which is a large property, will be freed up
  - The site is close to the two main employment sites in Slinfold
  - There is a reliable bus service along the A29
  - Good visibility onto the A29
  - Adequate parking and secure storage for cycles proposed
  - Proposal in keeping with surrounding area
  - New dwellings will not be seen from the A29
  - Scheme makes good use of the site
  - Landscaping in keeping with the area
  - No overlooking issues

# 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 key issues for consideration in relation to this proposal are:
  - The principle of the development
  - Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area
  - Affordable housing and infrastructure contributions
  - Highway impacts
  - Ecology
  - Impact on trees

## Principle of development

- 6.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that this should run through both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 6.3 The application site lies in the countryside outside of the identified built-up area of any settlement. Given this location, the initial principle of the proposal moves to be considered in the context of paragraph 55 of the NPPF and policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF).
- 6.4 Policy 2 of the HDPF is an overarching policy that covers location and amount of development in terms of economy, housing, retail and infrastructure. It sets out the spatial strategy to 2031, which seeks to influence development in order to maintain the District's

unique rural character, whilst ensuring that the needs of the community are met through sustainable growth and suitable access to services and local employment.

- 6.5 Policy 3 seeks to locate appropriate development, including infilling, redevelopment and conversion within built-up area boundaries, with a focus on brownfield land. As the site is outside of the built-up area boundary of a town or village it would not meet the requirements of Policy 3 of the HDPF.
- 6.6 Whereas Policy 3 provides guidance on the scale of development within settlement boundaries, Policy 4 confirms that growth outside of settlements outside of the defined built up area boundaries will be considered only when set criteria is met.
- 6.7 The site is some 830 metres from the built up area boundary of Slinfold (as the crow flies) and some 1.2 kilometres (as the crow flies) from the village centre and the services and facilities that Slinfold provides. Policy 40 of the HDPF which relates to sustainable transport seeks to ensure that development proposals promote a re-balancing in favour of non-car modes as a means of access to jobs, homes services and facilities. Consistent with this paragraph 35 of the NPPF suggests that development should be located and designed where practical to (amongst other criteria) give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities. Given the location of the site, the distance to the limited services and facilities that Slinfold has to offer and the means of accessing the village by foot/cycle, it is highly likely that future residents of the properties will be reliant on the use of private car to access services and facilities. The site is not therefore considered to be in a sustainable location.
- 6.8 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that new isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances. Consistent with this, Policy 26 states that any development should be essential to its countryside location and should support the needs of agriculture or forestry, enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste, provide for quiet informal recreational use or enable the sustainable development of rural areas. The proposed development of the site for residential purposes would not constitute a development which is essential to this countryside location, neither is it considered that the proposal would contribute to existing rural enterprises, activities or recreational opportunities. The proposal does not involve the conversion of existing rural buildings and seeks to demolish the existing buildings on the site to facilitate the construction of three new dwellings.
- 6.9 Whilst permission was granted on part of the site under application reference DC/15/0911 for the cessation of the commercial use, the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of three bungalows, the scheme the subject of this application includes an additional area beyond that previously granted for residential use, part of which is residential curtilage associated with Gate Lodge. Application DC/15/0911 was considered under the policies contained within the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and the General Development Control Policies documents and at that time the Council could not demonstrate a five year housing land supply. Development proposals were assessed more flexibly and the proposal was considered to utilise a previously developed site. However as discussed above, the strategic approach of the now adopted HDPF is very clear in that it seeks to concentrate development within the main settlements of the District, where there is the best concentration of services and facilities to support new development. This strategy was examined through the Examination in Public and was found to be sound and the plan was adopted in November 2015.
- 6.10 Therefore, whilst extant permission exists for the construction of three small bungalows on part of the site the subject of this current application, one of the new proposed dwellings will be constructed on land outside of this area and it is therefore considered that the current proposal for the construction of three four bedroom dwellings on the site as now

proposed is not in accordance with policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF Development Plan and thus is not acceptable in principle.

6.11 It should be noted that in addition to the applications set out above, a non-material amendment was submitted to alter one of the three dwellings previously granted consent on the site. The alterations proposed included a modest extension on the western side of the property, the replacement of the lounge window with double swing doors and moving the whole dwelling two metres to the west in order to increase the distance to the boundary to improve wheelchair access around the property. The application was refused on the grounds that the proposed changes would materially alter the character and appearance of the proposed development and it is considered that the proposed works would represent a level of change greater than can be considered as a non-material amendment.

#### Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area

- 6.12 The application site is situated in a rural location, where development is sporadic and organic in form. Section 7 of the NPPF provides guidance relating to design and states that good design is a "key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people." It also notes in paragraph 64 that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
- 6.13 Policy 25 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that development proposals protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics and mains settlement separation. Policy 26 requires proposals to be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location, and not lead either individually or cumulatively to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects and/or conserver and/or enhances the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located. Policy 32 requires developments to be of a high quality and inclusive design based on a clear understanding of the context for development. Policy 33 relates to Development Principles and requires development, amongst other matters, to recognise any constraints that exist, to not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding occupiers, to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout, are locally distinctive, favour the retention of important landscape and natural features and create safe environments.
- 6.14 As advised, the current scheme proposes the construction of three dwellings on land to the rear of Gate Lodge. An additional application (DC/16/2201) has been submitted for a further dwelling on the land to the rear of the existing residential property which could result in a total of four properties. The dwellings proposed are significantly larger in both their footprint, scale and massing than those previously granted permission on part of the site. Whilst the site in terms of its size may be of a sufficient size to accommodate the four dwellings proposed in a more urban location, the proposed construction of residential properties in this rural location would have an adverse impact on the rural character and appearance of the area, by reason of the number of dwellings proposed, their size and scale, and their relationship with site boundaries. The scheme as submitted is considered to represent a contrived and cramped overdevelopment of the site which would be out of keeping with the character of the immediate area which is rural in nature and is predominately characterised by detached dwellings set within large plots. The construction of four dwellings within the rear garden area of the existing property would represent a form of development which would be detrimental to the rural character and appearance of the area.
- 6.15 It is therefore considered that the proposal, by reason of the number of dwellings proposed, their size and scale, and their relationship with site boundaries, represents a contrived,

cramped overdevelopment of the site which would be out of keeping with the character of the area and would represent a form of development which would be detrimental to the rural character and appearance of the area. The proposal therefore conflicts with paragraph 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and policies 25, 26, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015.

## Highway safety

- 6.16 The applicant for the previous application for three small dwellings (DC/15/0911) promoted the site on the basis that the loss of the existing commercial uses would significantly reduce the number of vehicular movements coming to and going from the site. Whilst it was accepted that a reduction in traffic movements, would be likely following the cessation of the existing commercial uses, the introduction of a residential use in this location would inevitably lead to additional domestic journeys in the vicinity. Whilst the implementation of the proposed scheme would be likely to have some overall benefit in terms of highway usage, the County Highways Authority advised in respect of the previous application that the site does not have a poor highway safety record and therefore this perceived benefit should only be afforded limited weight.
- 6.17 In respect of the current application, the Highway Authority has advised that the residential use at the site has been agreed and it would not wish to raise any highway grounds for refusal to this comparable proposal. It is advised that visibility splays at the existing access point, as demonstrated under DC/15/0911, should be secured as part of this scheme via condition and that these were previously shown as 2.4m by 128m to the south and 2.4m by 132m to the north. The applicant should ensure that the entrance at the point of access onto Stane Street remains as hard bound material, on land within the applicant's control; not within the publicly maintained highway, to ensure that gravel does not overspill on to the highway.
- 6.18 In conclusion, the Local Highway Authority does not consider that the proposal for three dwellings would have a 'severe' impact on the operation of the highway network and therefore is not contrary to paragraph 32 of the NPPF and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

## Contamination

6.19 The site, due to its past uses, is likely to be subject to contamination. The Council's Public Health and Licensing department have however advised that this element can be dealt with by the imposition of a condition requiring a scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site, including the identification and removal of asbestos containing materials, to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

#### Trees

6.20 Policy 25 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that development proposals protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics and mains settlement separation. Policy 26 requires proposals to be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location, and not lead either individually or cumulatively to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects and/or conserves and/or enhances the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located including the pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features. Policy 31 requires development to demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure and states that proposals that result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss, and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained.

6.21 Whilst no tree survey or tree constraints plan has been submitted with the application, the Council's Arboriculturalist has advised that he has no objections to the application. A number of trees have been removed on the site and those that are to remain are either not of sufficient amenity value to warrant protection through a tree preservation order or will not be adversely impacted upon by the development.

## Ecology

- 6.22 Whilst a preliminary ecological appraisal has been submitted dated September 2016, the Council's Ecology Consultant has advised that further assessment of the current site ecology and potential impacts from the proposed works to notable and protected species within the red line application and the associated zone of influence for the work is required.
- 6.23 The assessment will need to determine whether notable and/ or protected species may be impacted and if so, the measures that will be required to avoid, mitigate or compensate for such impacts. The assessment will also need to identify whether any further protected species surveys are required to fully inform the application. The current level of ecological information submitted is insufficient to allow an adequate assessment of ecological impacts upon protected species against relevant planning policies. Whilst no such concerns over the level of information provided with the previous application was raised, the current application proposes the redevelopment of a larger area of land than that previously proposed including areas of the existing domestic curtilage associated with Gate Lodge.
- 6.24 Circular 06/2005 identifies that the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat, and therefore that it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed application, is established before the planning permission is granted. Policy 31 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that proposals maintain or enhance the existing network of green infrastructure and do not result in the loss of existing green infrastructure unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss, and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained. The policy goes on to require development proposals to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and create and manage new habitats where appropriate.
- 6.25 It is therefore considered that insufficient information has been submitted with the application to demonstrate that the proposed development can take place without harm to any protected species which may reside or forage within the site. In the absence of this information it has not been possible to demonstrate that the proposal would comply with the provisions of Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## Conclusion

6.26 The application site is located outside of the defined built up area boundary. The strategic approach of the HDPF is very clear in that it seeks to concentrate development within the main settlements of the District, where there is the best concentration of services and facilities to support new development. Whilst part of the site has been granted consent for residential development and therefore there is extant permission for the construction of three small single storey dwellings, the scheme the subject of this application seeks to develop land not previously considered. The site has not been allocated for development in a neighbourhood plan or the Local Plan and is not essential to its countryside location. It is therefore considered that the proposal does not comply with policies 1, 2, 3, 4, 26 and 40 of the HDPF and paragraph 55 of the NPPF.

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- 6.27 The principle of residential development on part of the site has been accepted as a result of the approval of application DC/15/0911 which proposed the construction of three small bungalows on the site. However, the current application proposes the construction of three larger, two storey dwellings on the site, which by reason of the number of dwellings proposed, their size and scale, and their relationship with site boundaries, represents a contrived, cramped overdevelopment of the site which would be detrimental to the rural character and appearance of the area. The proposal therefore conflicts with paragraph 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and policies 25, 26, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015.
- 6.28 In addition, further information is required to demonstrate that the proposed development can be implemented without harm to any protected species which may reside or forage within the site. In the absence of this information it has not been possible to demonstrate that the proposal would comply with the provisions of Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## 7. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 It is recommended that planning permission is refused for the following reasons;
  - The proposed development would be located outside of a built-up area boundary on a site not allocated for development within the Horsham District Planning Framework or in an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan. The proposed development would therefore be inconsistent with the overarching strategy for development set out within the Horsham District Planning Framework. The proposed development is therefore contrary to policies 1, 2, 3, 4, 26 and 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and to the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).
  - 2. The site lies within a rural location outside the limits of any existing settlement and does not constitute a use considered essential to such a countryside location. The proposal would therefore conflict with Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and with policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015.
  - 3. The proposal, by reason of the number of dwellings proposed, their size and scale, and their relationship with site boundaries, represents a contrived, cramped overdevelopment of the site which would be detrimental to the rural character and appearance of the area. The proposal therefore conflicts with paragraph 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and policies 25, 26, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015.
  - 4. Insufficient information has been submitted with the application to demonstrate that the proposed development can take place without harm to any protected species which may reside or forage within the site. In the absence of this information it has not been possible to demonstrate that the proposal would comply with the provisions of Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Background Papers: DC/16/2200 DC/16/2201 DC/15/0911