



APPLICATIONS & APPEALS SERVICES

**78a CHURCH WALK
BURGESS HILL
RH15 9AS**

**SUPPORTING PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS
STATEMENT**

SEPTEMBER 2026

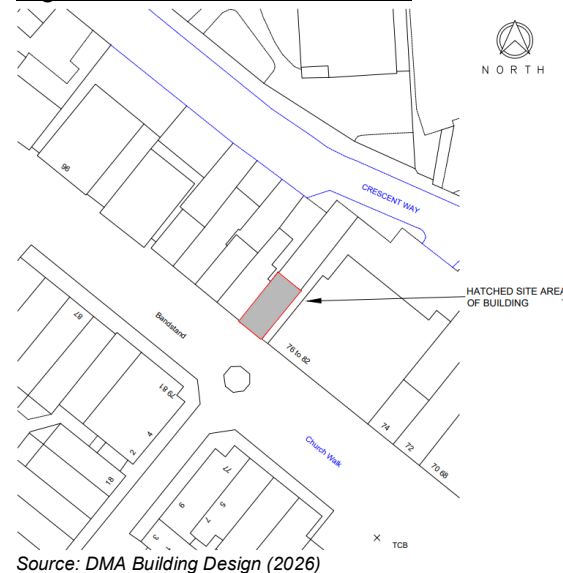


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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Retrospective planning permission is sought for the change of use and conversion of an existing maisonette to form two self-contained one-bedroom flats at 78a Church Walk, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 9AS.

Figure 1.1 - Site Location Plan



- 1.2 This Supporting Statement addresses the design and access issues as well as relevant planning policy, having regard to

the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015. The details of the proposals will be described and appraised having regard to the following aspects:

- **Physical Context** – explains the physical context of the site and its surroundings;
- **Planning Context** – the planning history of the site and broad policy requirements;
- **Use** – the purpose of the proposed dwellings;
- **Amount** – the extent of development on the site;
- **Scale** – the physical size of the development;
- **Layout** – the relationship of the proposed dwellings to neighbouring properties;
- **Appearance** – details of materials, style and impact upon the visual amenities of the area;

- 1.3 The Council is requested to consider this Statement alongside the submitted plans and this demonstration that the proposed development accords with the relevant planning policies and is acceptable in all respects. It is hoped that the Council will support the proposal and grant planning permission.

2. PHYSICAL CONTEXT & PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 The application site is located at 78a Church Walk, within the established town centre of Burgess Hill. Church Walk is a predominantly pedestrianised commercial street characterised by retail and service uses at ground-floor level, with residential and other accommodation on the upper floors, as such, the site is in a highly sustainable location. The property forms part of a continuous terrace of traditional two-storey buildings. Crescent Way lies to the rear.
- 2.2 The residential accommodation at 78a is accessed from Crescent Way via a staircase. This area performs a servicing and access function and contains refuse bins and limited incidental outdoor furniture.
- 2.3 The surrounding area contains a mix of commercial, community and residential uses. The site is therefore well integrated into the existing built-up area and is within convenient walking distance of shops, services, public transport and public parking facilities.

- 2.4 The subdivision of the former maisonette has not involved any material alteration to the external appearance, scale or form of the building. The physical relationship between the property, the adjoining premises and the surrounding public realm remains unchanged.

- 2.5 The below photographs are of the application site:



External View



First Floor Flat Kitchen



First Floor Flat Bedroom



First Floor Flat Living Room



First Floor Flat Bathroom



Ground Floor Flat Living Room



Ground Floor Flat Bedroom



Ground Floor Flat Bathroom and Kitchen

Planning History

- 2.6 The application site lies within the administrative area of Mid Sussex District Council for planning purposes. An inspection of the planning register shows there has been no relevant planning history on the site.

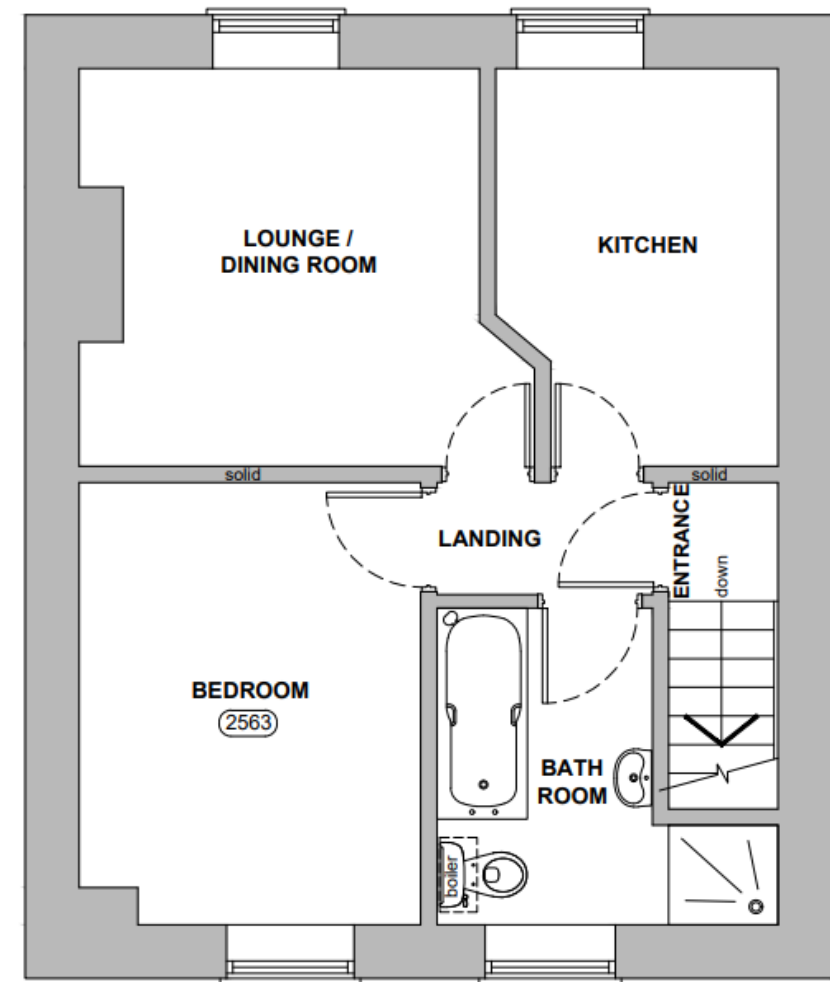
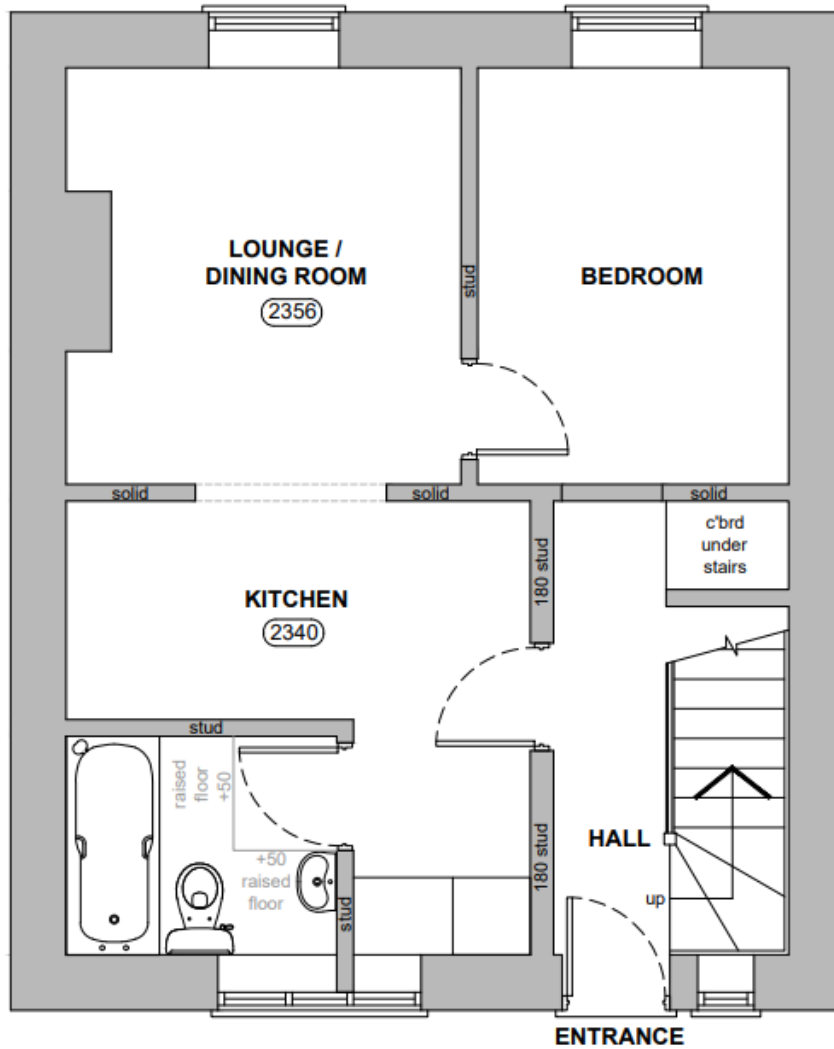
3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Retrospective planning permission is sought for the change of use and subdivision of the former three-bedroom maisonette at 78a Church Walk to form two self-contained one-bedroom flats. The application seeks to regularise the existing residential arrangement; no further building works are proposed.
- 3.2 Prior to the conversion, the accommodation operated as a single maisonette arranged over two floors. The ground floor contained a kitchen, living and dining room, entrance hall and staircase, while the first floor contained three bedrooms and a bathroom.
- 3.3 The converted ground-floor flat has a gross internal area of approximately 33m². It comprises a living and dining room, separate kitchen, one bedroom, bathroom and entrance hall. The flat has its own entrance from the rear of the building.
- 3.4 The converted first-floor flat has a gross internal area of approximately 33.47 m². It comprises a living and dining room,

separate kitchen, one bedroom and bathroom. It is accessed via the retained internal staircase.

- 3.5 The conversion involved alterations to the internal layout, including the introduction of partition walls and the provision of separate kitchen and bathroom facilities. The works were undertaken entirely within the existing building envelope and did not increase its footprint, height or floorspace.
- 3.6 No material changes have been made to the external elevations, roof, fenestration or architectural appearance of the building. The existing access and servicing arrangements are retained. The commercial premises fronting Church Walk are unaffected by the development.

Figure 3.1 – As Converted Floor Plans



Source: DMA Building Design (2026)

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (August 2026)

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in August 2026 and replaced the December 2024 Framework. Paragraph 3 confirms that applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, with the national decision-making policies constituting an important material consideration.
- 4.2 The national decision-making policies of particular relevance to the application are:
- Policy DM4 – Emerging Development Plan Proposals: establishes the weight that may be afforded to emerging development plan policies.
 - Policy DM8 – Unauthorised Development and Enforcement: addresses the consideration of

retrospective applications and intentional unauthorised development.

- Policy S3 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development: requires the presumption in favour of sustainable development to be applied to development proposals.
- Policy S4 – Principle of Development Within Settlements: provides that development within settlements should be approved unless its benefits would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects.
- Policy CC2 – Mitigation of Climate Change: supports development with good access to facilities and the reuse of existing buildings and structures.
- Policy HO7 – Meeting the Need for Homes: requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits of providing homes that contribute towards meeting identified accommodation needs.

- Policy TC2 – Development in Town Centres: affords substantial weight to development that supports town-centre vitality through intensification and residential accommodation.
- Policy L2 – Making Effective Use of Land: affords substantial weight to proposals that make better use of underutilised buildings, including accommodation above shops.
- Policy L3 – Achieving Appropriate Densities: supports the efficient use of land and increased residential densities within settlements.
- Policy DP3 – Key Principles for Well-Designed Places: requires development to respond appropriately to its context and provide liveable, compact and well-integrated places.
- Policies TR3 and TR4 – Sustainable Locations, Access and Parking: support accessible locations and require access, servicing and parking provision to reflect the nature and connectivity of the development.

- Policy P3 – Living Conditions and Pollution: requires healthy living conditions and the protection of occupiers and neighbours from unacceptable effects relating to light, noise and other forms of pollution.

Local Planning Policy

4.3 Planning policy for Mid Sussex is set out in the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 adopted in March 2018. A District Plan Review 2021-2031 was submitted for examination in July 2024 and is currently consulting on its Main Modifications, given the advanced stage of this Plan, and as per Policy DM4(1a) of the NPPF the draft policies in this Plan can be given some weight in the decision-making process.

4.4 The policies of relevance within the plans are set out below and discussed further in sections.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2039

- Policy DP6 - Settlement Hierarchy
- Policy DP26 - Character and Design
- Policy DP27 - Dwelling Space Standards

Mid Sussex District Plan Review 2021-2039

- Policy DPH1 - Housing
- Policy DPH3 - Sustainable Development – Inside the Built-up Area
- Policy DPB1 - Character and Design
- Policy DPH11 - Dwelling Space Standards

5. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

The Principle of Development

- 5.1 Policies S3 and S4 of the NPPF apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and provide that development within settlements should be approved unless its benefits would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects. Policy HO7 requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits of providing additional homes.
- 5.2 Policy TC2 similarly affords substantial weight to residential accommodation and intensification that support town-centre vitality, while Policies L2 and L3 promote the effective use of existing buildings and increased residential densities within settlements.
- 5.3 Policy DP6 of the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan establishes the settlement hierarchy and permits development within defined built-up area boundaries, provided that its nature and scale are appropriate and it does not harm the character or function of the settlement. Burgess Hill is identified as a Category 1 settlement, benefiting from a

comprehensive range of services, facilities, employment opportunities and public transport provision.

- 5.4 Emerging Policy DPH1 seeks to meet the District's identified housing need through existing commitments, allocations and windfall development, including housing created through the conversion of existing buildings. Emerging Policy DPH3 supports development within defined built-up area boundaries where it is appropriate in nature and scale. It recognises that locations with good access to shops, services and public transport may accommodate a greater concentration of development.
- 5.5 The application site lies within the defined built-up area and town centre of Burgess Hill, close to a wide range of services, facilities and public transport connections. The subdivision made more efficient use of existing residential accommodation and provided a net increase of one dwelling without extending or materially altering the building. The modest intensification from one maisonette to two flats was appropriate to this accessible town-centre location and did not harm the character or function of the settlement.

5.6 The conversion was completed in 2020, and both flats have since been let and occupied as separate homes for approximately six years. This established period of residential occupation provides practical evidence that the accommodation has functioned successfully as two self-contained dwellings, each providing the facilities necessary for day-to-day living. The principle of development therefore accorded with Policies DP6, DPH1 and DPH3.

Character, Appearance and Amenity

5.7 Policy DP3 of the NPPF requires development to respond appropriately to its context and support liveable, well-functioning and compact places. Policy P3 requires development to provide healthy living conditions for its occupiers and avoid unacceptable effects on the daylight, privacy and living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

5.8 Policy DP26 of the adopted District Plan requires development to be well designed, reflect the distinctive character of its surroundings, protect valued townscapes and safeguard the amenities of existing and future occupiers. Emerging Policy DPB1 similarly requires development to

respond appropriately to its context, respect the character and scale of surrounding buildings, protect residential amenity and make efficient use of previously developed land, particularly in accessible locations.

5.9 The subdivision was undertaken entirely within the existing building envelope. It did not alter the building's footprint, height, massing, roof, fenestration, materials or external appearance. Consequently, the established character of the building and the wider Church Walk townscape remained unchanged. The existing access, public realm and servicing arrangements were also retained, with no additional built form introduced.

5.10 The development did not introduce any new windows or alter the relationship between the property and adjoining premises. It therefore resulted in no additional overlooking, loss of privacy, visual intrusion or adverse effects on the daylight, sunlight or outlook enjoyed by neighbouring occupiers. The property was already in residential use as a three-bedroom maisonette, and its subdivision into two one-bedroom flats reduced the overall number of bedrooms from three to two. The resulting intensity of occupation was therefore not

materially greater than that associated with the former residential use.

- 5.11 In terms of the amenities of occupiers, each flat provided its own kitchen, living and dining accommodation, bedroom and bathroom. The existing windows provided the principal rooms with natural light, ventilation and outlook. Access to both flats was provided from the established rear access, while the existing refuse and servicing arrangements remained available.
- 5.12 The development therefore made more efficient use of existing residential accommodation in a highly accessible town-centre location without harming the character and appearance of the building, the wider townscape or the amenities of existing and future occupiers. It accordingly complied with the relevant character, design and amenity requirements of Policies DP26 and DPB1.

Space Standards

- 5.13 Policy DP27 of the adopted District Plan applies the nationally described space standards to all new residential development, including dwellings created through subdivision

or conversion. Emerging Policy DPH11 maintains this requirement. Both policies allow an exception where clear evidence demonstrates that the internal form or special features of an existing building prevent full compliance.

- 5.14 The lower and upper flats provide gross internal areas of approximately 33 m² and 33.47 m² respectively and therefore fall below the relevant nationally described space standards. However, the development involved the conversion of an existing maisonette within a fixed building envelope. The dimensions, external walls, access arrangements and window positions of the property materially constrained the layouts that could be achieved. Increasing the size of either flat would require their re-amalgamation or substantial external alterations to the established commercial terrace.
- 5.15 Notwithstanding the numerical shortfall, each flat provides a separate kitchen, living and dining space, bedroom and bathroom. The principal rooms receive natural light and outlook, and the submitted photographs demonstrate that the accommodation is functional and capable of accommodating the furniture and facilities required for everyday occupation.

5.16 In this case, the constraints imposed by the existing building and the functional quality of the completed accommodation constituted exceptional circumstances of the type anticipated by Policies DP27 and DPH11. Subject to the Council accepting this justification, the development accorded with the exception provided within these policies.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This Statement supports a retrospective planning application for the change of use and subdivision of the former three-bedroom maisonette at 78a Church Walk to form two self-contained one-bedroom flats. The application seeks to regularise the existing residential arrangement, and no further building works are proposed.
- 6.2 The development made efficient use of existing residential accommodation within the defined built-up area and town centre of Burgess Hill. It provided a net increase of one dwelling in a highly accessible location, close to shops, services and public transport. The change from one three-bedroom maisonette to two one-bedroom flats represented a modest form of intensification appropriate to this town-centre location. Both flats have functioned successfully as separate homes since their conversion in 2020, supporting the conclusion that they provide practical and usable accommodation.

- 6.3 The subdivision was undertaken wholly within the existing building envelope. It has not altered the building's footprint, height, massing, roof, fenestration, materials or external appearance. The character and appearance of the property and the wider Church Walk townscape therefore remain unchanged. The established rear access and servicing arrangements have also been retained, while the commercial premises fronting Church Walk are unaffected.
- 6.4 The submitted plans and photographs demonstrate that both flats provide functional accommodation capable of supporting everyday occupation. Therefore, despite not meeting the desired space standards a high standard of amenity is provided to the existing occupiers.
- 6.5 Overall, the development provided an additional dwelling through the effective reuse of existing accommodation without additional built form or material harm to the character of the area, neighbouring amenity or the operation of the surrounding premises. Subject to the Council accepting the identified space-standard justification, the development accords with the relevant objectives of national policy, Policies DP6, DP26 and DP27 of the adopted Mid Sussex District

Plan and emerging Policies DPH1, DPH3, DPB1 and DPH11.
Retrospective planning permission should therefore be granted.