

Appendix 1 of 2 – Planning Policy and Precedent Evidence Pack

Planning Application DM/25/2550 – Hillsborough House, Hurstpierpoint

This appendix presents factual, regionally verified evidence demonstrating that the proposed conversion of Hillsborough House from residential use (C3) to a children’s care home (C2) is entirely inconsistent with both planning precedent and established policy. It also makes clear that no smaller or modified version of this proposal could ever be acceptable. The fundamental issue is the site itself—its setting, location, and context within the village core—making it wholly unsuitable for any form of institutional or quasi-institutional use.

Executive Summary – Why This Site and Use Are Fundamentally Incompatible

1. Total Departure from Policy and Precedent

Across all comparable cases reviewed in the South West and nationally, no approval has been granted for a C2 use housing more than four children within a conservation-area village. Every permitted case involved detached dwellings, on-site parking, and minimal traffic generation. The proposed use of Hillsborough House—seven children and up to eight staff per 24-hour cycle—represents a level of intensity wholly alien to residential norms. Even if scaled down, the property’s setting on the High Street and beside the recreation ground would still cause unacceptable impact on amenity, safety, and heritage value.

2. Inherent Unsuitability of the Location

The High Street frontage, absence of parking, and adjacency to children’s play areas and the main recreation ground make this site uniquely inappropriate. The conflict between the proposed use and daily family activity nearby cannot be mitigated by any redesign or reduction in occupancy.

3. Irreversible Loss of Residential Character

Conversion would remove established housing stock in a sustainable centre and introduce an operational business with continuous staffing and service traffic. Even at lower occupancy, the shift pattern, visitor turnover, and institutional supervision would permanently erode residential character.

4. Safeguarding and Community Risk

Locating any form of C2 use beside a playground and public open space invites safeguarding concerns and perceived risk. This is a matter of principle, not scale; therefore, the concept cannot be resolved by reduction.

5. Precedent Implications

Approving any variant would create a precedent enabling similar intensifications across other heritage-sensitive villages. This would undermine consistent application of planning policy and erode community confidence in decision-making.

Evidence of Planning Precedent – C3→C2 Children’s Homes (South West & National)

Factual summary of comparative precedent cases demonstrating consistent refusal or restriction of similar uses, confirming that this site is incompatible with any C2 classification.

Conclusion – No Acceptable Variant

The comparative evidence establishes beyond question that this site is inherently unsuited to any C2 residential use. Reducing the number of residents, imposing management conditions, or revising layout would not overcome the fundamental conflicts with policy, amenity, and context. For these reasons, the only acceptable outcome is full refusal and retention of the property in standard residential use.