

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Internal Reconfiguration to Provide One Additional Self-Contained One-Bedroom Residential Unit

**Whittaker House
1 Leppard Walk
East Grinstead**

1. INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application seeking permission for the internal reconfiguration of part of the ground floor of Whittaker House to facilitate the creation of one additional self-contained one-bedroom residential unit.

The application follows the refusal of planning application DM/26/0432 and the subsequent submission of an appeal against that decision.

The revised proposal has been prepared specifically in response to the concerns identified by Mid Sussex District Council during determination of the previous application.

Whilst the Applicant maintains that the previous proposal was acceptable in planning terms, the revised scheme seeks to positively address the concerns raised by the Local Planning Authority through the introduction of a revised internal layout which reduces the accommodation from a two-bedroom dwelling to a one-bedroom dwelling whilst retaining the same overall floorspace.

The proposal remains entirely within the existing building envelope and does not involve any increase in footprint, height, scale or massing. No external alterations are proposed, and the appearance of the building remains unchanged.

The proposal therefore represents a modest refinement of an approved and completed residential development within a highly sustainable town centre location.

2. SITE AND PLANNING CONTEXT

Whittaker House occupies a sustainable location within East Grinstead town centre and forms part of a completed residential development which replaced the former Tower Car Sales site.

The principle of residential development has been firmly established through previous planning permissions and implementation of the approved scheme.

Residents benefit from immediate access to shops, services, employment opportunities, public transport facilities and community infrastructure, reducing reliance upon private vehicle use and supporting sustainable patterns of development.

The proposal does not seek to revisit the principle of residential use at the site.

Instead, the application relates solely to the efficient use of internal floorspace within an existing residential building.

3. DESIGN APPROACH

The approved redevelopment established the scale, form, appearance and architectural character of the building.

Those principles remain unchanged.

The proposal has been designed to retain the architectural integrity of the approved development whilst making more efficient use of internal accommodation.

No alterations are proposed to:

- Building footprint;
- Height;
- Massing;
- External appearance;
- Materials;
- Fenestration;
- Landscaping;
- Site layout; or
- Access arrangements.

As a result, the completed development will remain visually identical to the approved scheme.

The proposal therefore preserves the character and appearance of the building and the wider area.

4. AMOUNT AND LAYOUT

The proposal introduces one additional self-contained residential dwelling through internal reconfiguration only.

Importantly, the revised proposal differs from the previously refused scheme in a number of significant respects.

The previous proposal sought permission for an additional two-bedroom dwelling.

Following consideration of the Council's concerns, the accommodation has been redesigned to provide a one-bedroom dwelling whilst retaining the same overall floorspace.

The revised arrangement reduces occupancy levels and provides a more generous and flexible internal layout.

The removal of the second bedroom creates improved living accommodation and results in a more balanced relationship between floorspace and occupation.

The revised proposal therefore provides a materially improved standard of accommodation compared with the previously submitted scheme.

The proposal also incorporates enhanced cycle storage provision and dedicated external storage facilities to serve the dwelling.

5. SCALE AND APPEARANCE

There are no changes to the scale or appearance of the approved building.

The proposal is entirely internal in nature and does not alter the external form of the development in any way.

The building will therefore continue to sit comfortably within its surroundings and will remain visually indistinguishable from the approved scheme.

The design quality previously accepted by the Local Planning Authority is fully retained.

6. ACCESS

Existing vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements remain unchanged.

The proposal benefits from the same access arrangements as the approved development and continues to provide safe and convenient access for residents and visitors.

The site occupies a highly sustainable location with excellent access to public transport, employment opportunities, retail facilities and community services.

The proposal therefore continues to support sustainable travel choices and reduced reliance upon private vehicles.

Inclusive access arrangements remain unchanged, and the development will continue to comply with relevant Building Regulations requirements.

7. RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The proposal gives rise to no adverse impact upon neighbouring properties.

As no external alterations are proposed there will be:

- No additional overlooking;
- No loss of privacy;
- No loss of daylight or sunlight;
- No increase in building mass;
- No change in outlook.

The proposal therefore preserves existing residential amenity.

The revised internal layout has been specifically designed to improve the quality of accommodation previously proposed.

By reducing the accommodation from a two-bedroom dwelling to a one-bedroom dwelling whilst retaining the same floorspace, the proposal provides a more spacious and functional living environment.

Future occupiers will benefit from a practical internal arrangement, dedicated living space, appropriate facilities and direct access to the services and infrastructure available within East Grinstead town centre.

The proposal therefore provides a satisfactory standard of residential accommodation.

8. RESPONSE TO THE PREVIOUS REFUSAL

The revised proposal has been prepared following refusal of application DM/26/0432 and directly addresses the concerns raised by the Local Planning Authority.

The principal design change is the reduction of the accommodation from a two-bedroom dwelling to a one-bedroom dwelling.

This change significantly reduces occupancy levels and provides a materially improved standard of accommodation.

The proposal also includes enhanced cycle storage provision and dedicated external storage facilities.

The revised scheme therefore responds positively to the concerns previously identified and represents a clear improvement over the scheme considered under application DM/26/0432.

Furthermore, the Applicant has confirmed a willingness to address the technical matters relating to mitigation and infrastructure contributions identified within the previous refusal.

The revised proposal should therefore be assessed on its own merits as a materially different and improved scheme.

9. SUSTAINABILITY

The proposal represents a highly sustainable form of development.

The development makes efficient use of previously developed land and existing building fabric without requiring demolition, extensions or additional land take.

The site occupies a highly sustainable town centre location where future residents can access employment, services, facilities and public transport without reliance upon private vehicles.

The proposal also contributes towards housing delivery through the creation of an additional dwelling within an existing completed building.

The development therefore aligns closely with national and local planning objectives relating to sustainable development and efficient use of land.

10. CONCLUSION

The proposal seeks permission for the internal reconfiguration of part of the ground floor of Whittaker House to provide one additional self-contained one-bedroom residential unit.

The revised scheme has been prepared in response to the concerns identified by the Local Planning Authority during determination of application DM/26/0432 and represents a material improvement over the previously submitted proposal.

The development remains entirely within the existing building envelope and results in no changes to the external appearance, scale, massing or character of the building.

The revised layout provides a more generous and functional form of accommodation, reduces occupancy levels and enhances the overall quality of the development.

The proposal makes efficient use of previously developed land within a highly sustainable town centre location and gives rise to no material planning harm.

Accordingly, the development represents a sustainable and policy-compliant form of development for which planning permission should be granted.