

Planning Statement

Retrospective Application for the Internal Reconfiguration to Provide 1no Additional Self-Contained Residential Unit

Site Address:

Whittaker House
1 Leppard Walk
East Grinstead
RH19 3BY

Local Planning Authority:

Mid Sussex District Council

1. Introduction

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

The internal works have now been completed, and this application is therefore submitted to regularise the planning position for the additional unit.

The development relates exclusively to internal alterations within the existing building envelope and has not involved any extensions, external works, or material changes to the appearance, scale, or footprint of the building.

The application builds upon the established residential use of the site, previously authorised under planning permission DM/22/0921, and represents a modest and logical optimisation of internal space consistent with national and local planning objectives.

The proposal therefore constitutes a minor intensification of an approved residential scheme in a highly sustainable town centre location.

2. Site Description and Surroundings

The application site lies within East Grinstead town centre, an area characterised by a diverse mix of residential accommodation, retail premises, commercial uses and community facilities.

The surrounding environment exhibits a typical urban grain with established built form and active street frontage. The site benefits from excellent accessibility to services and infrastructure including public transport, employment opportunities, healthcare facilities and local amenities, all within comfortable walking distance.

Given its central location, the site is well suited to residential occupation and aligns closely with planning objectives encouraging development in sustainable urban areas.

3. Planning History and Fallback Position

Planning permission DM/22/0921 granted consent for redevelopment of the site to provide residential accommodation following its previous use associated with a car sales yard.

That permission established:

- The principle of residential development
- Acceptable residential density
- Access arrangements and servicing
- Refuse and cycle storage provision
- Parking and transport strategy

The approved scheme remains capable of implementation and therefore constitutes a strong fallback position.

The development which is the subject of this application does not alter the external form of the building but simply makes more effective use of internal space.

The proposal therefore represents a modest evolution of the approved residential scheme rather than a departure from it, and the fallback position is a significant material consideration in favour of granting planning permission.

4. Description of Development

The development comprises the internal reconfiguration of part of the ground floor to create one additional self-contained residential dwelling.

The works undertaken include:

- Internal partitioning and layout adjustments
- Installation of kitchen and bathroom facilities
- Formation of living and sleeping accommodation
- Minor internal circulation changes

No external alterations have been undertaken, and the building footprint remains unchanged. Existing infrastructure, including access points, refuse storage, cycle parking and servicing arrangements remain in place and are capable of accommodating the additional unit.

5. Retrospective Nature of the Application

The internal reconfiguration works have already been completed, and the additional residential unit is now in place. This application is therefore submitted in order to regularise the planning position.

Importantly:

- The development has been carried out entirely within the existing building envelope.
- No external alterations have taken place.
- The appearance of the building remains unchanged.
- The established residential use of the site remains unaltered.

The retrospective nature of the application does not give rise to any additional planning impacts, and the development can therefore be assessed on its planning merits in the same manner as a prospective application.

6. Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes sustainable development through:

- Efficient use of land
- Increasing housing supply
- Supporting development in accessible locations
- Delivering well-designed places

Paragraph 124 encourages development which makes optimal use of previously developed land, particularly where proposals do not result in unacceptable impacts on the surrounding area. The proposal aligns closely with these objectives.

Development Plan – Mid Sussex District Plan

Relevant policies include:

- DP1 – Sustainable Economic Development
- DP3 – Town Centres and Retail
- DP4 – Housing
- DP5 – Housing Mix
- DP21 – Transport
- DP22 – Parking
- DP26 – Character and Design
- DP28 – Accessibility

The development accords with the aims of the Development Plan as discussed below.

7. Principle of Development

The principle of residential development on the site has already been firmly established through extant planning permission.

The development represents a modest intensification within an existing residential building and is consistent with planning objectives which seek to make efficient use of land within defined settlements.

Given the sustainable town centre location, absence of physical expansion, and limited scale of change, the development is considered acceptable in principle.

8. Housing Need and Delivery

National planning policy places significant weight on boosting housing supply, including through the delivery of homes on small sites and through urban intensification.

The development delivers an additional home within a sustainable town centre location with excellent access to services and infrastructure.

Whilst modest in scale, the proposal contributes positively towards housing delivery and reflects Government objectives to make efficient use of previously developed land.

9. Efficient Use of Previously Developed Land

The development represents an effective example of making efficient use of existing built form through the optimisation of internal floorspace.

There is:

- No encroachment onto undeveloped land
- No increase in building mass or height
- No alteration to the building footprint
- No change to the urban character of the area

The development therefore aligns with sustainable land use principles promoted within national planning policy.

10. Design and Impact on Character

As the development involves internal alterations only, there are no visual impacts on the building or surrounding streetscape.

The architectural integrity of the building is preserved, and the development remains visually indistinguishable from the previously approved scheme.

The proposal therefore fully complies with Policy DP26 (Character and Design).

11. Residential Amenity

Impact on Neighbours

The completed development has not resulted in any material impacts on neighbouring properties.

There have been:

- No new windows or openings
- No changes in overlooking relationships
- No increase in building height or mass
- No loss of daylight or sunlight

The level of activity associated with one additional unit is modest and entirely consistent with the established residential use of the building.

Living Conditions for Future Occupiers

The additional residential unit provides a suitable standard of accommodation appropriate for a town centre location.

The unit benefits from:

- Adequate internal space
- Natural light
- Functional layout
- Access to existing site infrastructure

The development therefore provides appropriate living conditions for future occupants.

12. Transport and Sustainable Travel

The town centre location ensures excellent access to public transport and services.

Future residents benefit from:

- Proximity to railway services
- Bus connectivity
- Walkable access to shops and amenities
- Existing cycle storage facilities

Given these factors, reliance on private vehicles is expected to be limited and the development aligns with sustainable transport objectives.

13. Parking Considerations

National and local planning policy allow flexibility in parking provision where sites are located in highly accessible locations.

Given the modest scale of the development and the sustainable location of the site, the additional unit is unlikely to generate any significant additional parking demand.

The development therefore accords with Policy DP22.

14. Servicing, Refuse and Cycle Provision

Existing refuse storage and cycle facilities serving the building remain in place and are considered adequate to serve the additional residential unit.

No changes to service arrangements have been required.

15. Environmental Considerations

Given the nature of the development, which relates solely to internal alterations, there are no implications in respect of:

- Flood risk
- Ecology
- Heritage assets
- Landscape
- Air quality
- Noise generation

The development therefore represents a low environmental impact form of development.

16. Planning Balance

The development delivers a number of clear planning benefits including:

- Provision of an additional residential dwelling
- Efficient use of previously developed land
- Support for housing supply in a sustainable town centre location
- No harm to the character of the area
- No adverse impact on neighbouring amenity
- Use of existing infrastructure

There are no adverse impacts of significance arising from the development.

17. Conclusion

The development represents a modest and sustainable form of residential intensification which makes efficient use of existing internal floorspace.

The works have been undertaken entirely within the existing building envelope and have not resulted in any external changes or adverse impacts.

The proposal is consistent with national and local planning policy and results in no harm to character, amenity or infrastructure.

Planning permission is therefore respectfully requested.