

Town & Country Planning Act 1990

Change of use from a single dwelling (C3)
to a boarding house (C2) for Burgess Hill Girls

12 Silverdale Road, Burgess Hill

Burgess Hill Girls

PLANNING STATEMENT

February 2025

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared on behalf of Burgess Hill Girls, the applicant, in respect of a proposal for the change of use of the existing property at 12 Silverdale Road, Burgess Hill from a single dwelling (C3) to a boarding house (C2) to serve the growing boarding needs of the school. The proposal involves no external alterations to the building.
- 1.2 The following documents are submitted in support of the application:
- Planning Statement (this document)
 - Design & Access Statement
 - Photographs
 - Drawings:
 - 21040-HNW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2900- P01 – Existing Exterior Photographs
 - 21040-HNW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1110-PO2 - Site Location Plan (scale 1:1000 at A3)
 - 21040-HNW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1210-P02 - Existing Floor Plans (scale 1:100 at A1)
 - 21040-HNW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2210-P03 – Proposed Floor Plans (scale 1:100 at A1)

2.0 SITE & SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site extends to approximately 0.23 ha and comprises the property at 12 Silverdale Road, Burgess Hill. It is located on the south side of Silverdale Road to the east of Burgess Hill railway station and the town centre. Access to the site is on its northern boundary directly off Silverdale Road.
- 2.2 The site adjoins Burgess Hill Girls school campus which is located to the south and south-west of the site. The property to the west is an existing school boarding house (no.10 Silverdale Road) and the property to the east (no. 14 Silverdale Road) has planning permission for use as a boarding house for the school - see planning history below.
- 2.3 The site is located within an urban environment with detached residential properties with spacious gardens on the northern side of Silverdale Road opposite the site and further to the east. This southern part of Silverdale Road (between Glendale Road and Keymer Road roundabout) has a mix of educational, medical and nursing home uses. The site is close to the town centre of Burgess Hill and lies within the Silverdale Road/Birchwood Grove Road Conservation Area.
- 2.4 In addition to Burgess Hill Girls there is another school (Birchwood Grove County Primary School) within 400m of the site to the south-east. There are also a number of nurseries and care homes in the vicinity of the site.



Aerial Photograph – application site shaded red (courtesy of <https://magic.defra.gov.uk>)

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- 2.5 Burgess Hill Girls is a girls only independent school with some 450 pupils between the ages of 2 and 18 years. The school campus includes a nursery. The campus is bordered by Keymer Road, Ferndale Road, Glendale Road and Silverdale Road. It is currently one of the top performing independent school in Sussex. The school seeks to improve and update its facilities in order to offer the best educational opportunities to its students and to respond to the business requirements.
- 2.6 The application site comprises a detached two storey house (with some accommodation on the second floor) located centrally within the plot. There are generous front and rear garden areas with established trees hedges to the site boundaries. The dwelling is set back from the road frontage with access onto Silverdale Road. There is ample space for parking and manoeuvring of vehicles within the site and there is also a garage. A single storey element extends from the building's eastern elevation – all the existing building's elevations and features are shown on the photographs submitted with the planning application. A single storey ancillary outbuilding is located close to the western boundary of the site.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Planning permission was granted in February 2022 (DM/22/0034) for:
- “Change of use from single dwelling (C3) to boarding house (C2) with staff flat to serve Burgess Hill School for Girls.”*
- 3.2 The permission was not implemented. This current application is a resubmission for exactly the same scheme.
- 3.3 The application site has been the subject of numerous submissions for works to trees all of which have been supported by the District Council. In 2008 permission was granted for a first floor extension to the front of the property and replacement of a garage (application no. 08/01432/FUL).
- 3.4 As referred to above, no. 14 Silverdale Road (also owned by Burgess Hill Girls) was the subject of an application to change its use from residential (C3) to a boarding use (C2) together with single storeys extensions to the building’s east and west elevations, removal of an existing outbuilding new roof lights with the enlargement of an existing dormer window. The proposals provide boarding accommodation for up to 16 pupils with a self-contained staff flat on the ground floor. The application was approved by the Council on 16 April 2021 under reference DM/20/4273.

4.0 THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS

- 4.1 As stated, Burgess Hill Girls is a well-established independent girls' school. It has 450 pupils and provides employment for 120 persons including 62 teachers.
- 4.2 A number of new buildings and facilities have been introduced at the school over the last 10 years or so including new infants school, sports pitches (including all weather pitch and tennis courts) and Little Oaks (pre-school). More recently, an extension to the main school hall has also been provided. These developments have been introduced in response to the school's needs and the planning proposals have been supported by the District Council.
- 4.3 Although the majority of the school pupils are day girls there are now many boarders with an expectation that this will increase to 75+ in the next few years. The existing boarders are accommodated at no's 8 & 10 Silverdale Road which were formerly substantial detached residential properties and subsequently converted for boarding use by the school. No. 14 Silverdale Road has permission for school boarding use and this is likely to be converted for this use later this year. A further boarding house is located on the east side of Glendale Road, also formerly a detached dwelling now converted for boarding accommodation.
- 4.4 The application proposal is to convert the dwelling into a boarding house for up to 10 pupils. No extensions or external alterations to the existing building are proposed as per the submitted photographs and proposed plans. The existing garden outbuilding is to be retained along with the garage. The frontage parking and access arrangements are also to be retained together with the existing vegetation on the site.
- 4.5 The very limited changes to the building will result in limited or no impacts upon the Conservation Area within which the site is located.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (see section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
- 5.2 Where a proposal accords with an up-to-date development plan it should be approved without delay, as required by the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out at para 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024.
- 5.3 The development plan consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 which was adopted in 2018 and the Burgess Hill Neighbourhood Plan which was 'made' in January 2016.
- 5.4 In addition to the policies of the development plan, the national guidance provided in the NPPF and the associated online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are relevant to the consideration of the application.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031

- 5.5 Policy DP1 concerns sustainable economic development and confirms the Council's support for existing businesses, allowing them room to expand.
- 5.6 Policy DP6 sets out the settlement hierarchy for the District and states that development will be permitted within towns and village with defined built-up area boundaries. Burgess Hill is listed as a Category 1 settlement, the highest level of sustainability with a comprehensive range of services and facilities.
- 5.7 Policy DP21 seeks to ensure that development is sustainably located to minimise the need for travel and to promote alternative means of transport to the private car.
- 5.8 Policy DP25 states that the improvement of community facilities and local services will be supported.
- 5.9 Policy DP26 seeks to ensure new development is of high-quality design which respects the character and scale of the surrounding buildings, protects trees which contribute to the character of the area and does not cause significant harm to neighbouring amenity.
- 5.10 Policy DP35 states that development within a Conservation Area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character and appearance. It also requires that landscaping and boundary features which contribute to the special character of the area are protected.
- 5.11 Policy DP37 indicates that the Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees and that development which would damage or lead to the loss of trees will not normally be permitted.

Burgess Hill Neighbourhood Plan (2015-2031)

- 5.12 Policy H1 requires proposals within Conservation Areas to preserve and enhance their special character or appearance. The policy lists a number of buildings in Burgess Hill which are not listed but are of architectural or historic merit. The application site is not included in the list.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- 5.13 The updated December 2024 version of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 5.14 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the 3 objectives to sustainable development: social, economic and environmental.
- 5.15 Paragraph 100 requires local planning authorities to take a positive approach to development that will widen choice in education and states that they should (inter alia) give great weight to the need to expand schools.
- 5.16 Chapter 16 refers to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

6.1 The key issues in the determination of this application are considered to be:

- Principle of development
- Impact on the Conservation Area
- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- Trees

Principle of development

6.2 As set out in Section 4 above, the proposal would allow the expansion of the school by increasing the number of boarders. It would also provide a staff flat that can accommodate a teacher with a small family, thereby increasing the employment opportunity at the school. The school has 450 pupils and provides employment for 120 persons including 62 teachers. It is a significant employer of the town. Policy DP1 of the Mid Sussex District Plan confirms support for the expansion of existing businesses and Policy DP25 supports the improvement of community facilities (including educational facilities).

6.3 The school and the application site are located within the built-up area boundary of Burgess Hill which is a highly sustainable location with an extensive range of services and facilities within easy walking or cycling distance as well as benefitting from excellent public transport links. Furthermore, the proximity of the boarding house to the school campus would allow students boarding there to travel to school on foot or by bicycle and would reduce the need for private car journeys. The proposal is, therefore, compliant with policies DP6 and DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

6.4 It is acknowledged that there is a need for housing in the district and the loss of an existing dwelling does not assist in this, however, there is no policy within the development plan which expressly seeks to retain C3 uses. Furthermore, there are important benefits arising from the expansion of the school which would provide not only a social benefit resulting from improved community (educational) facilities but also an economic benefit resulting from the expansion of a business which is a significant employer in the town. It should also be noted that while the proposals would result in the loss of the use of the entire property as a single dwelling, a flat would be included within the extended building to provide residential accommodation for a teacher. This would retain an element of C3 use albeit ancillary to the boarding house use.

6.5 In view of the above, the application proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle and would be consistent with the approval of the previous application in 2022 and the Council's support for the proposals for no. 14 Silverdale Road.

Impact on the Conservation Area

- 6.6 Whilst the site is within a Conservation Area, the subject property is not a listed building and is not of any particular architectural merit.
- 6.7 The proposed change of use of the building does not involve any changes to the external appearance or elevations and therefore the impact upon the Conservation Area very limited. The building will house up to 10 boarders with a member of staff in the proposed flat. Whilst this may involve a greater use of the outside areas, any change would be difficult to perceive – see below.
- 6.8 The existing access and frontage parking area would be retained as would all of the existing vegetation (hedges and trees) which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.
- 6.9 Accordingly, the proposals would have no unacceptable impact on the Conservation Area and would preserve its character and appearance. Therefore, it is considered that there would be no harm to the significance of the heritage asset and the proposal would comply with the NPPF as well as policy DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan (2018) and policy H1 of the Burgess Hill Neighbourhood Plan (2015-2031).

Impact on neighbouring amenity

- 6.10 The building would remain in a form of residential use as a result of the proposals (C2 rather than C3). The type of activity associated with boarding students would be similar to that of a residential dwelling albeit that the number of residents would be larger than normally associated with a single dwelling and this could give rise to increased levels of activity. The school has other properties along Silverdale Road and Glendale Road which it operates successfully as boarding houses for students without unacceptable impacts on neighbouring residents. As indicated by the provision of staff accommodation, the boarders would be supervised at all times.
- 6.11 The parking area to the front of the property would be retained and used by staff members living in the building. However, due to the proximity of the school there would be no need for teachers to commute to work and, therefore, the number of traffic movements would likely be fewer than the number typically associated with the use of a large residential property.
- 6.12 The closest residential neighbour is to the south-east of the application site at no.2 Glendale Road. The relationship to this dwelling is similar to the property at no. 14 Silverdale where the impacts upon residential amenity were considered to be acceptable by the District Council. As per the proposals for no.14, the mature boundary hedges and trees would be retained. It is also noted that the application site is already adjacent to existing boarding accommodation for the school on its western side.

- 6.13 In the light of the above, it is considered that the proposal accords with policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan which seeks to ensure new development does not cause significant harm to neighbouring amenity.

Trees

- 6.14 The site is located within a Conservation Area, therefore, all of the existing trees are protected by this designation.
- 6.15 As referred to above, the proposals do not affect the existing vegetation on the application site as it is proposed that all of the hedges and trees are to be retained. Consequently, the proposal accords with the requirements in policies DP26, DP35 and DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan (2018) to retain and protect trees, landscaping and boundary features which contribute to the character of the area.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The full planning application is submitted on behalf of Burgess Hill Girls in respect of proposals to extend the existing property at no.12 Silverdale Road, Burgess Hill and a change of use from a single dwelling (C3) to a boarding house (C2) to provide additional boarding accommodation at the school.
- 7.2 This is a resubmission of application DM/22/0034 which was approved in February 2022.
- 7.3 The proposal accords with local and national planning policy guidance. It would allow for appropriate development of the school which is a significant employer in Burgess Hill and this would result in both social and economic benefits.
- 7.4 The site is in a highly sustainable location within the town and is close to the school campus making it an appropriate location for a boarding house. The school already successfully operates several properties in the immediate vicinity as boarding houses and the Council approved the same change of use (from C3 to C2) at no. 14 Silverdale Road. The property would include accommodation for staff to ensure that the pupils are supervised at all times which will protect the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- 7.5 The application site would, in part, remain in a residential use with the provision of a self-contained flat, albeit ancillary to the proposed C2 use.
- 7.6 As a result of there being no discernible change to the elevations, the proposals would conserve the existing character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 7.7 All of the existing trees on the site would be retained including the mature vegetation to the site boundaries. Appropriate protection of the trees would be provided at the construction stage, secured by planning condition.
- 7.8 In conclusion, the change of use of the property as proposed would not have any unacceptable impact on the area and satisfies the relevant development plan policies. The proposals would add to an existing successful business in the town which makes a significant contribution to the local economy. It is respectfully requested, therefore, that the application be supported.

