

COMBINED DESIGN AND ACCESS/PLANNING/HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING UNIT FOR STORAGE PURPOSES AT LITTLE KING STREET, EAST GRINSTEAD

1. Introduction

1.1 This document has been prepared by Beacon Hill Planning and accompanies plans for the change of use of the existing unit to the rear of the Travelodge on Little King Street, East Grinstead.

1.2 The application site is bounded by Little King Street, King Street and Institute Walk in the centre of East Grinstead, which comprises a mix of uses including commercial and residential.

2. Planning history

2.1 Nothing of relevance to this unit.

3. Planning policy

3.1 The original National Planning Policy Framework was published by Central Government in March 2012 and was an important material consideration in the determination and assessment of all planning applications. In December 2024 the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

3.2 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three aspects that comprise this goal:

- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

3.3 Achieving sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including (but not limited to): moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature; improving the conditions in which people work; widening the choice of high quality homes; securing high quality design; supporting the transition to a low carbon future; contributing to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution; and improving the health, social and cultural well-being for all.

3.4 The Government's planning policies on design are set out in section 12 of the Framework. The initial paragraph of the section states that *"the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."*

3.5 Paragraph 135 advocates that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

"a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.”

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

3.6 For the purposes of the Development Plan, the current and adopted planning policies are contained in the Mid Sussex District Plan. Also of relevance is the Mid Sussex Design Guide.

4. Analysis of the proposal

4.1 The proposed use would utilise the premises for self storage rooms which would be a mix of sizes to cater for a range of customer needs. The self-storage units are intended to be operated on a self-service basis with a key code system for the external entrance door. The intended opening hours for the self-storage units are 7am to 8pm each day.

4.2 The storage units will not be accessible outside of these hours as the external boundary security gates will be locked. The management and operation of the self-storage units will be handled by the applicant on a primarily remote basis, with 2

part-time members of staff. The proposed use will require internal refurbishment only and as such no adverse affect on the character and appearance of the site and surrounds is envisaged. The application proposal would use the existing parking spaces in front of the building that also serve other premises locally.

4.3 District Plan Policy DP1 supports the development and expansion of existing and new businesses in Mid Sussex. Moreover, one of the stated aims within the Core Objectives of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan is to: 'Promote development that will provide sustainable economic growth, including business and tourism related development and maintain a prosperous town centre.'



Front of site

4.4 The proposal is to use an existing Class E outlet to provide storage units (B8), on an underused previously developed brownfield site. The proposal will result in a new centrally located business development. This accords with the aims of District Plan Policies DP1 and DP6 for commercial and employment facilities to be provided

within the accessible town centre of East Grinstead. The proposal also accords with the stated Neighbourhood Plan objectives and the aims of Neighbourhood Plan Policy EG10. The conversion of this part of the building will enable the applicant to have another income stream to their business which will strengthen their economic base. It will also provide some indirect employment through the company that is going to manage the operation of the self-storage units. It is submitted that the principle of the proposed development is therefore acceptable.

4.5 District Plan Policy DP26 requires that development 'does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution.' Neighbourhood Plan Policy EG3 refers to the requirement for development not to harm adjoining amenity.

4.6 The proposed self storage is considered to be of low impact and would not amount to significant harm to the local environment, particularly given the busy town centre setting and context. A condition to restrict hours of operation in the interests of protecting residential amenity could be imposed as per the times set out previously.

4.7 District Plan Policy DP21 sets out a number of criteria relating to the transport impacts of proposals including the provision of adequate car parking, avoiding severe additional traffic congestion and protecting the safety of road users and pedestrians.

4.8 The existing access has been operating safely with no accidents being reported within the vicinity of the site in the last five years. The site is in a location which could attract people by modes other than the private car, albeit sustainable transport may not be that attractive given the proposed use. Any servicing and maintenance of the site will operate as per the opening times. Trips associated with the proposed use are expected to be low (circa 4-5 per day), with no material impacts on the local transport network. Parking spaces and turning would be available on site to the front in the existing car park.

4.9 This planning application does not result in a net increase in dwellings within the 7km zone of influence and so mitigation is not required with respect to the

Ashdown Forest. Furthermore, the potential effects of the proposed development are incorporated into the overall results of the transport model prepared for the Mid Sussex Transport Study, which indicates there would not be an overall impact on Ashdown Forest. This means that there is not considered to be a significant in combination effect on the SAC by this development proposal.

4.10 Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain this application comprises development below the de-minimis threshold meaning that this development is exempt from providing biodiversity net gain.

4.11 It is trusted that the proposals are acceptable, however the Authority is asked to make contact with the agent for any further clarification, and to work with the applicant should any additional alterations be required before determination in accordance with the NPPF.