

# Design, Access and Sustainability Statement

## 15 London Road, East Grinstead, RH19 1AJ



# Contents

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Site Context and Planning Background**
- 3 Planning Policy Framework**
- 4 Existing and Proposed Plans**
- 5 Principle of HMO Use**
- 6 Quality of Accommodation and Residential Amenity**
- 7 Design, Character and Heritage Impact**
- 8 Highways and Sustainable Transport**
- 9 Sustainability and Ashdown Forest Mitigation**
- 10 Planning Balance and Conclusion**



Fig 1 Aerial photo with boundary shown

## 1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the change of use of the upper floors of 15 London Road, East Grinstead, from former commercial use (Class E – bank) to an 8-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation.

The proposal also includes internal reconfiguration, the construction of a two-storey front extension designed to match the existing gabled tile-hung elevation, and the construction of a single-storey flat-roofed side infill extension.

The ground floor will remain in active commercial use. This ensures full compliance with Policy DP2 (Town Centre Development), which resists the loss of ground floor commercial uses within Primary Shopping Frontages.

The Planning Appraisal confirms that the site lies within East Grinstead Town Centre, immediately adjacent to (but outside) the East Grinstead Conservation Area, within Flood Zone 1, and within the Ashdown Forest 7km Zone of Influence

## 2. Site Context and Planning Background

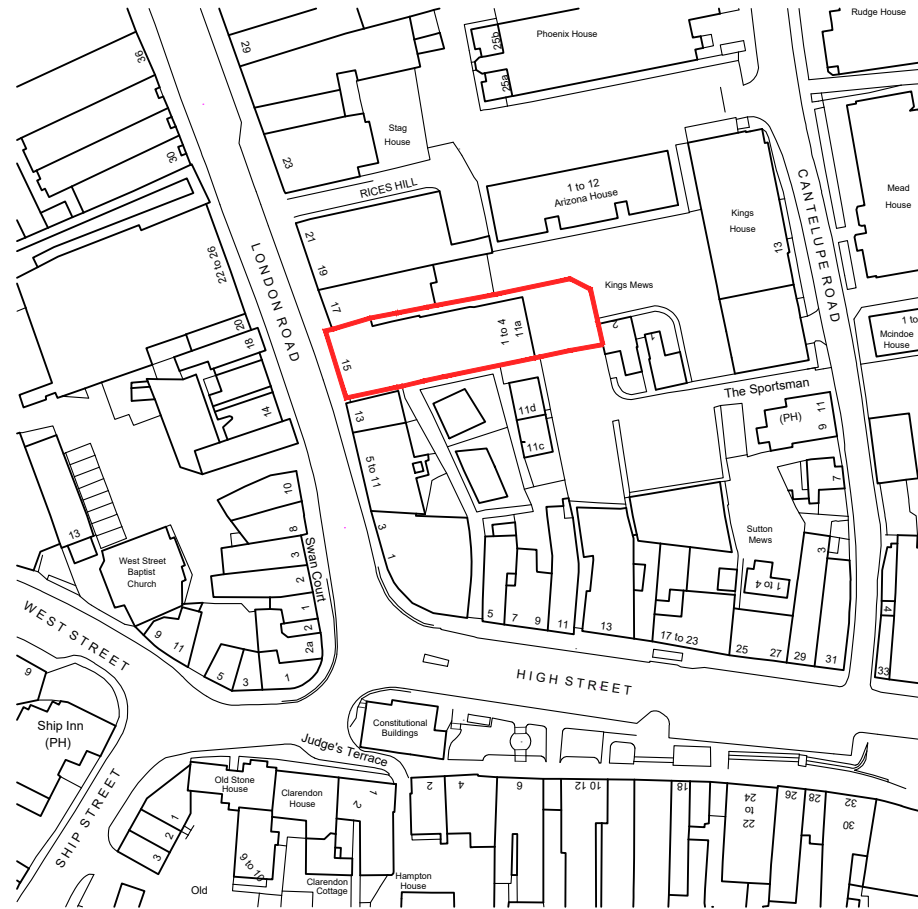
The site occupies a prominent position on London Road within the defined built-up area boundary of East Grinstead.

The surrounding area is characterised by a traditional mixed-use pattern comprising active commercial units at ground floor level with residential accommodation above and to the rear.

The building is part one, part two and part three storeys in height and was formerly occupied by NatWest bank. The upper floors were used as ancillary commercial space and are currently underutilised.

In 2010, planning permission was granted for the conversion of disused retail space to the rear of the building into residential use (ref. 10/02304/FUL), demonstrating that the principle of residential use within this building envelope is established and accepted

The site is highly sustainable, being within walking distance of shops, services, employment and East Grinstead railway station, which provides regular services to London Victoria.



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Fig 2. Location Plan

### 3. Planning Policy Framework

The development plan comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031, the Site Allocations DPD (2022) and the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan (2016). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD are material considerations.

The proposal directly engages the following policies:

- Policy DP2 confirms that changes of use to residential at ground floor level within Primary Shopping Frontages will be resisted. As the proposal retains the ground floor in commercial use, the vitality and viability of the town centre will not be harmed. Residential use at upper floors is consistent with town centre objectives and emerging Policy DPE6, as referenced in the Planning Statement.
- Policy DP4 seeks to deliver housing within the district. The proposal contributes to housing supply in a sustainable urban location.
- Policy DP21 requires development to be sustainably located so as to minimise the need to travel. The site's town centre location fully satisfies this requirement.
- Policy DP26 requires high quality design that responds to local character. The design approach is addressed in detail below.
- Policy DP27 requires new residential development to meet minimum nationally described space standards. Although HMOs fall outside the traditional C3 category, all bedrooms meet or exceed Mid Sussex HMO minimum size

standards and provide high-quality accommodation.

- Policy DP30 seeks to provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes reflecting local need. HMOs provide an important component of the housing mix, offering accommodation for single professionals and smaller households.
- Policy DP35 requires development to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas and their settings.
- Policy DP17 requires residential development within the 7km Ashdown Forest Zone of Influence to contribute to mitigation measures.

At neighbourhood plan level, Policy EG3 requires good design that is proportionate and in keeping with surrounding scale and materials. Policy EG4 addresses heritage considerations, and Policy EG5 supports housing on previously developed land.

The Planning Statement confirms that the Council currently cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development under the NPPF is engaged.

#### 4. Existing and Proposed Floorspace

The existing building provides 232 square metres of gross internal area at first and second floor levels combined

The proposed development increases the gross internal area to 288 square metres.

This increase is achieved through a sensitively designed two-storey front extension and a modest single-storey side infill extension. The site area measures 0.071 hectares.

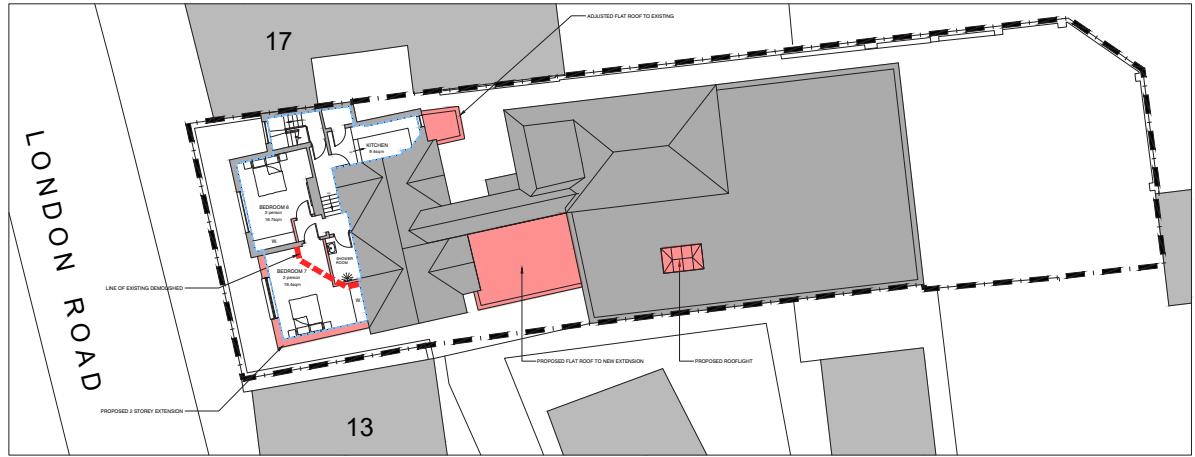
The scale of increase is proportionate and does not represent overdevelopment of the site.

#### 5. Principle of HMO Use

Mid Sussex District Council does not have an adopted policy restricting HMOs, and the Planning Statment confirms that the Council has previously granted permission for an 8-person HMO within East Grinstead local area (ref. DM/20/1612)

The proposal does not result in the loss of an existing dwelling. Rather, it introduces new residential accommodation within an established mixed-use town centre building. The use is therefore consistent with Policies DP4, DP5 and DP6 as referenced in the Planning Statement.

In the absence of any evidence of harmful concentration, and given the town centre context where mixed uses are characteristic, the introduction of an HMO at upper floors is entirely appropriate. The scale of occupation, limited to eight residents, is proportionate to the building's size and configuration.



KEY	
	EXISTING WINDOWS/DOORS
	PROPOSED WINDOWS/DOORS
	EXISTING WALLS
	WALLS TO BE REMOVED
	NEW WALLS
	OPENINGS IN WALLS BRICKED UP AND MADE GOOD
	BOUNDARY LINE

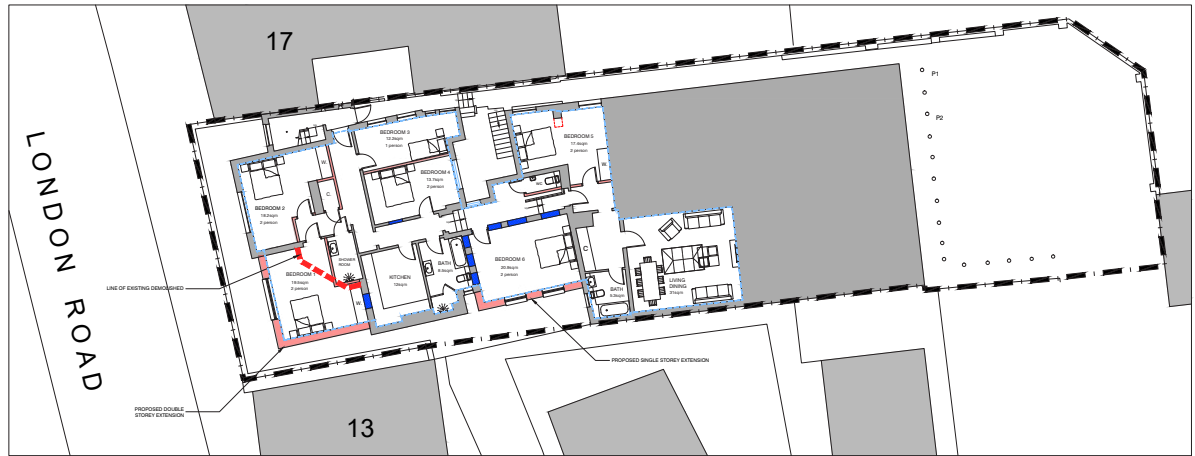
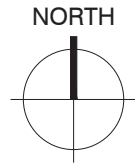
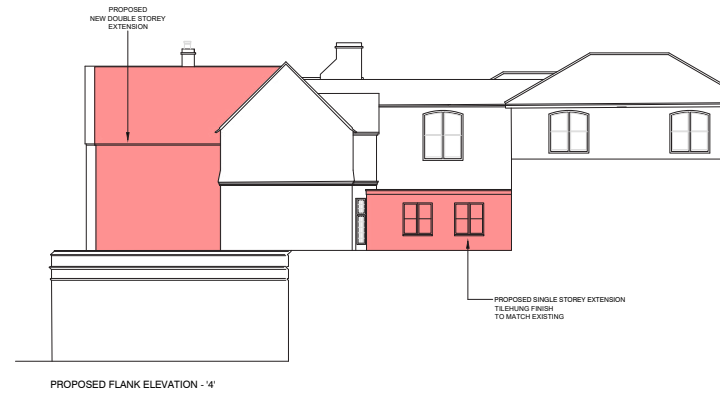
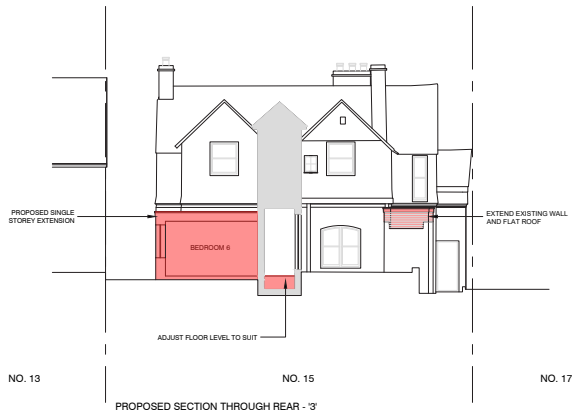


Fig 3. Floor Plans NTS



## 6. Quality of Accommodation and Residential Amenity

The proposed floor plans demonstrate eight bedrooms, all of which meet or exceed the Council's HMO size standards.

Bedroom sizes range from approximately 12.2 square metres to 20.9 square metres.

Two kitchens and a shared living/dining area of 31 square metres are provided, together with an appropriate number of bathrooms and WC facilities. The level of shared amenity space exceeds typical HMO requirements and ensures a high standard of accommodation.

All habitable rooms benefit from natural light and ventilation. The layout ensures adequate circulation space and logical separation of private and communal areas. The proposal therefore provides a high quality living environment consistent with Policy DP26 and the objectives of the NPPF to secure well-designed places.

Noise impacts arising from the commercial ground floor use can be appropriately addressed through building regulation compliant sound insulation measures.

## 7. Design, Character and Heritage Impact

The design strategy has been to reinforce the established architectural form of the building and maintain the rhythm of the London Road frontage.

The existing elevations show a gabled composition with traditional detailing. The proposed front elevation continues the gabled form, replicates the tile-hung finish and matches existing window proportions.

The extension does not exceed the established ridge height and is visually integrated into the overall façade.

The single-storey side infill extension is deliberately subservient in scale and largely screened from public vantage points. The sectional drawing confirms that it sits comfortably beneath the principal roofline .

Although the site lies adjacent to the East Grinstead Conservation Area, it is not within it. The proposal preserves the setting of the Conservation Area by maintaining scale, materials and architectural coherence. There is no harm to heritage significance, and the development therefore complies with Policy DP35 and Policy EG4.

## 8. Highways and Sustainable Transport

The site is centrally located within the town centre and within walking distance of public transport and services

This ensures compliance with Policy DP21 and supports sustainable travel behaviour.

Given the highly sustainable location, future occupiers are unlikely to be reliant on private vehicles. The proposal therefore does not give rise to unacceptable transport impacts.

## 9. Sustainability and Ashdown Forest Mitigation

The proposal represents the sustainable reuse and extension of an existing town centre building. The retention and adaptation of the existing structure significantly reduces embodied carbon when compared to demolition and rebuild, consistent with the objectives of Policy DP39 (Sustainable Design and Construction).

In accordance with Policy DP39, the development will incorporate proportionate sustainability measures appropriate to its scale, including:

- Upgrading the thermal performance of the building envelope to meet or exceed current Building Regulations Part L standards.
- Introducing enhanced insulation to new walls and roof elements, and improving existing fabric where practicable.
- Installing energy-efficient double glazing to reduce heat loss while maintaining good levels of natural daylight.
- Incorporating high-efficiency heating and hot water systems, with low-energy LED lighting to communal areas.
- Fitting water-efficient sanitaryware to reduce water consumption.

- Applying responsible construction practices, including waste minimisation and recycling of materials where feasible.

The site's highly sustainable town centre location further supports the objectives of Policies DP21 and DP39. Future occupiers will have easy access to shops, services and East Grinstead railway station, reducing reliance on private vehicles and promoting sustainable travel patterns.

As the site lies within the Ashdown Forest 7km Zone of Influence, appropriate financial contributions toward Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) will be secured. This ensures compliance with Policy DP17 and emerging Policy DPC6 and mitigates any potential recreational impact arising from the net increase in residential accommodation

Overall, the proposal adopts a proportionate and policy-compliant approach to sustainable design and construction.

## 10. Planning Balance and Conclusion

The proposal brings underutilised upper floors within a town centre building into productive residential use while retaining an active commercial frontage at ground floor level. It delivers eight units of high-quality shared accommodation in a sustainable location and contributes to housing supply at a time when the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

The extensions are proportionate, sensitively designed and preserve the character of London Road and the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area. The accommodation provided exceeds minimum HMO space standards and offers a good standard of amenity.

The development accords with the relevant policies of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan and represents sustainable development within the meaning of the NPPF. Planning permission should therefore be granted.



Fig 5. Photoshop Image



ASCOT DESIGN  
Timeless architecture