

Planning Statement by Client

What we propose:

1. Extending the commercial area (shop) into the existing Living Room area.
2. Installing a partition wall to divide the extended shop area from the living area and to permit access from the ground floor directly to the living accommodation at 1st floor.
3. Repositioning of the staircase in order to make better use of the remaining available space.
4. Demolition of the existing single storey structure currently used as a kitchen and replace with a single storey pitched roof to provide storage and WC facilities for the shop.
5. Removal of the existing conservatory and replace with a 2-storey rear extension to provide living accommodation lost to the expansion of the shop outlined above.
6. The 2-storey rear extension would have a side access onto the alley way.

From the pre-application visits we have taken into consideration your comments and have amended our plans to further enhance the Conservation area and other plans/policies. Further details are explained below.

Impact to the retail use:

In line with the District and Neighbourhood Plans and policies, our proposed ground floor extension at Handcross News aims to significantly enhance the retail offered within the village.

By expanding the shop floor unit, we will have the much-needed space to introduce a wider range of products that our customers regularly request, including essential fresh fruits and vegetables and more. This addition would be particularly beneficial to the elderly residents of the area, as it would allow them to do their daily shopping locally, without needing to take public transport into town.

This improvement directly supports the community's need for more accessible and diverse retail options while aligning with policies focused on sustaining and enhancing local services.

Additionally, the proposal will retain the current residential accommodation on the property, with the extension providing extra living space at the rear, ensuring that both the commercial and residential aspects of the building are improved to meet policy needs. The shop front and characteristics will not be changed meeting the conservation areas policies.

For the past 17 years, being a small independent retailer, we believe Handcross News has been a cornerstone of the local community, providing a reliable and convenient shopping option for residents from early morning to late evenings. Despite the limitations of our current space, we have always made every effort to meet the diverse demands of our customers by carefully selecting and stocking products that cater to their needs. Our commitment to serving the community is unwavering over the years, and we continually adapt to ensure we provide a wide range of goods.

Handcross Newsagents, High Street, Handcross, West Sussex RH17 6BJ

However, the lack of space has restricted our ability to expand, and this proposed extension will allow us to better serve our community by fulfilling these unmet needs and further enhancing the services we offer.

Design and impact on the Conservation Area:

In accordance with DP35, our proposed extension has been carefully designed to respect the character and appearance of the Handcross Conservation Area. We understand the importance of preserving the heritage of the local environment, and as such, the shop front layout will remain unchanged. The design of the extension is intended to complement the existing architecture, using materials and finishes that harmonize with the surrounding buildings.

We propose that the walls and roof of the extension are finished with the same materials to match the existing building.

The plan has been amended to have 2 windows (symmetrical) instead of 3 on the first floor and will ensure they are evenly spaced and sized, with the cills lined through. We also propose to use double glazed, timber windows for the extension. Should planning permission be granted, we would be happy to submit detailed plans of the windows that will be used if such a condition were attached to an approval.

Lastly, we note the planning officers pre-application comments in that the extension for the kitchen must remain a pitched roof. We propose to either convert the existing kitchen or to demolish and rebuild it but in any event, it will remain a pitched roof to match the existing one.

Heritage matters

Our proposed extensions are focused solely on enhancing both the shop and the living accommodations at Handcross News. The design of the extension is concentrated at the rear of the property, meaning it will not significantly impact the wider streetscape or public view. As mentioned, the shop front remains unchanged.

This careful placement ensures that the character of the street remains intact while allowing us to improve the functionality of the property. Additionally, we are committed to using the same high-quality materials as the existing structure to ensure that the new development blends seamlessly with the surrounding buildings, maintaining the aesthetic harmony of the area. This thoughtful approach ensures that while we enhance the shop's capabilities and residential space, we remain respectful of the local architectural integrity.

Impact to neighbouring properties:

The proposed extension will not adversely affect the neighbouring bed shop, as the areas adjacent to our development are used as service rooms, not habitable spaces, ensuring there will be no significant disruption to their operations.

Additionally, it's important to note that the bed shop's previous extension includes a service window that overlooks our garden, which has compromised our privacy. In contrast, our proposed extension is designed with careful consideration of privacy

concerns. The windows included in our plans will not overlook any private gardens, but instead face our alleyway. As this our extension includes a bathroom, a window is necessary for ventilation, but it will be positioned to minimize any potential impact on neighbouring properties.

We have taken great care in designing our proposed extension, ensuring that the first-floor extension is set back from our adjoined neighbour to respect the privacy of our neighbours. By thoughtfully positioning and scaling the extension, we have ensured that it will not intrude on the neighbouring properties or compromise their privacy. Furthermore, the design has been planned with sensitivity to natural light; our extension will not block sunlight or cast significant shadows on adjacent properties. This approach ensures that the development enhances our property without negatively impacting the living conditions or enjoyment of neighbouring homes.

Other matters:

In support of our planning application, we can confirm that there are no shrubs, bushes, or trees either overhanging or located within 15 meters of the proposed development site.

The extension has been carefully planned to ensure it will not interfere with any natural greenery, preserving the local environment. As such, there is no risk of damage to or removal of trees or foliage that could impact the surrounding landscape. This consideration ensures that the proposed development will have minimal environmental impact, aligning with local planning and conservation guidelines.

In conclusion, our proposed extension has been thoughtfully designed to enhance both the retail and residential aspects of Handcross News, while remaining fully compliant with local planning policies and conservation guidelines. We have taken every measure to ensure the development will have minimal impact on neighbouring properties and the surrounding environment, preserving the character of the area and maintaining privacy for all.

This extension is essential to improving the services we offer to our community, particularly for our elderly customers, and enhancing our living accommodations. We respectfully submit our application to Mid Sussex Council, confident that this extension will benefit both our business and the community we have proudly served for the past 17 years.

We look forward to your favourable consideration and are happy to provide any further information as needed.

Statement typed by:

Isha Amin

01/10/2024