



Planning Statement

Change of use of the existing vacant social club (Use Class F2) to co-working studios (Use Class E), with a first floor extension proposed above the existing ground floor addition to the front of the building, together with the installation of new windows, roof lights, solar panels and heat pumps and a bin and cycle store

**Royal British Legion Social Club,
Woodland Road, Hassocks, West Sussex,
BN6 8HE**

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Just Property
Planning

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning statement seeks to support a planning application to Mid Sussex District Council for Change of use of the existing vacant social club (Use Class F2) to co-working studios (Use Class E), with a first floor extension proposed above the existing ground floor addition to the front of the building, together with the installation of new windows, roof lights, solar panels and heat pumps and a bin and cycle store at Royal British Legion Social Club, Woodsland Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8HE.
- 1.2 This planning statement seeks to demonstrate that the proposed development accords with national, regional and local planning policies.
- 1.3 The following documents have been submitted in support of this planning application:
 - Full drawing set – Job no: DM417 – Date of issue: 4th February 2025
 - Photographs existing – Job no: DM417 – Date of issue: 4th February 2025
 - Energy Statement for Planning – Job no: 6079, Issue no 2 – Date of issue: January 2025
 - Noise Impact Assessment – Ref: 2127.Rep.NIA – Date of issue: 28th January 2025
 - Planning Statement – Date of issue: January 2025
 - Pre-application advice – Ref: DM/24/1030 – Date of issue: 22nd May 2024

2 The Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is situated on the Eastern side of Woodland Road, Hassocks and comprises a part-single, part two-storey building with an adjoining single storey side extension. The front of the site is hard landscaped and accommodates 6 car parking spaces.
- 2.2 The subject building is currently vacant, however it was formerly a branch of the Royal British Legion, which is a social club for current and former military personnel. The existing building comprises a bar, lounge and office space at ground floor level and a games room at first floor level.
- 2.3 The existing site fronts onto Woodland Road, a residential street comprising dwellings which vary with regards to their scale, height, style and design.
- 2.4 The site is in close proximity to Keymer Road which is a street predominately comprising mixed use buildings (commercial at ground floor and residential above).
- 2.5 The application site does not contain a listed building, nor is the site situated within a conservation area or subject to any designations.



3 Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 Planning application reference: KY/043/74 relates to the retention of a temporary beer store. This application was granted planning permission on 21st October 1974 and renewals of this planning permission were granted on 22nd March 1977, 27th March 1979, 24th June 1980 and 5th June 1981 retrospectively (Planning application references: KY/004/77, KY/010/79, KY/029/80 and KY/026/81).
- 3.2 Planning application reference: KY/054/76 relates to first floor additions and alterations. This application was refused planning permission on 22nd March 1977 and an appeal was dismissed on 20th June 1978 following a public inquiry.
- 3.3 Planning application reference: KY/003/77 relates to the display of one double sided projecting box sign. This application was refused on 22nd March 1977 and an appeal was dismissed on 30th September 1977.
- 3.4 Planning application reference: KY/071/79 relates to the erection of first floor and two storey side extensions to front part of existing building to provide extra headquarters and club accommodation. This application was refused planning permission on 27th November 1979.
- 3.5 Planning application references: KY/064/80 and KY/002/82 both relate to the reconstruction of a corrugated iron rear part of building with 2 storey and cellar permanent construction and reconstruction of single-storey timber front part of building with single-storey permanent construction all for existing use as headquarters and club. These applications were granted planning permission on 23rd March 1982 and 30th December 1980 respectively.
- 3.6 Planning application reference: KY/066/86 relates to the demolition of entrance porch and erection of a single storey side extension. This application was granted planning permission on 5th January 1987. An amendment to this application involving render of the porch was approved in 29th May 1987.
- 3.7 Planning application reference: KY/012/95 relates to Duct work to air handling unit on roof of single storey section. This application was granted planning permission on 16th June 1995.
- 3.8 Pre-application reference: DM/24/1030 relates to Change of use of the existing vacant social club (Use Class F2) to co-working studios (Use Class E), with a first-floor extension

proposed above the existing ground floor addition to the front of the building, together with the installation of new windows, roof lights, solar panels and heat pumps and a bin and cycle store. The pre-application advice was issued on 22nd May 2024, and was relatively positive. The pre-application report accompanies this application submission and a summary of the advice can be viewed on the submitted application form.

4 Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 Mid Sussex District Council are in the process of reviewing and updating the District Plan. The District Plan 2021-2039 was submitted for Examination on 8th July 2024. Nonetheless no weight can be given to the new district plan at this stage, as this document is yet to be advanced.
- 4.2 This section of the statement identifies the national, regional and local policies which are of most relevance to the proposal. We have sought to ensure that the proposed development accords with all the relevant planning policy guidance.

- 4.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), (2024)

- Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, (2018)

- 4.4 Policy DP1 – Sustainable Economic Development
- 4.5 Policy DP17 - Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- 4.6 Policy DP21 - Transport
- 4.7 Policy DP25 - Community Facilities and Local Services
- 4.8 Policy DP26 - Character and Design
- 4.9 Policy DP28 – Accessibility
- 4.10 Policy DP29 – Noise, Air and Light Pollution

4.11 Policy DP38 – Biodiversity

4.12 Policy DP39 - Sustainable Design and Construction

Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations Development Plan Document, (2022)

4.13 Policy SA38 – Air Quality

Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031, (2020)

4.14 Policy 5 – Enabling Zero Carbon

4.15 Policy 9 – Character and Design

4.16 Policy 12 – Community Facilities

Other material planning documents

4.17 Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document SPD (November 2020)

4.18 WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Sept 2020)

5 Planning Justification

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The existing site was formerly a branch of the Royal British Legion, which is a social club for current and former military personnel. Therefore, the existing building falls into the category of a 'community facility/local service' (Use Class F2). The proposal seeks to provide co-working studios for local residents and businesses, which would essentially maintain the community nature of the site.
- 5.2 The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 seeks to '*promote a place which is attractive to a full range of businesses, and where local enterprise thrives*' and '*provide opportunities for people to live and work within their communities, reducing the need for commuting*'. Policy DP1 of the District Plan states seeks to 'Support existing businesses and allow them room to expand'.
- 5.3 Policy DP25 (Community Facilities and Local Services) states '*The provision or improvement of community facilities and local services that contribute to creating sustainable communities will be supported*'.
- 5.4 This policy also states '*Where proposals involve the loss of a community facility, (including those facilities where the loss would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs locally) evidence will need to be provided that demonstrates:*
- *that the use is no longer viable; or*
 - *that there is an existing duplicate facility in the locality which can accommodate the impact of the loss of the facility; or*
 - *that a replacement facility will be provided in the locality*'
- 5.5 Policy 12 of the Neighbourhood Plan states that:
'*Development proposals which result in the loss of community facilities will not be supported.*
Development proposals for the alteration and/or replacement of community facilities will be supported where:

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1. *Equivalent (in qualitative and quantitative terms) or enhanced facilities are provided to serve local needs; and*
 2. *Proposals for the replacement of a community facility ensure the replacement facility is made available before the closure of the existing facility.'*

- 5.6 The Royal British Legion moved out of the property in January 2023 as it was no longer viable, and the building has sat vacant since. The proposal involves the creation of working studios and would provide for a community of local businesses within the site. The studios would be interlinked, and the social aspect would remain onsite. Additionally, the redevelopment of the building seeks to enhance the facilities provided onsite. Therefore, the rejuvenation of the site to accommodate local small businesses would be in accordance with the objectives and requirements of planning policy.
- 5.7 As part of the pre-application feedback, the case officer confirmed '*it is not considered that the local planning authority would expect equivalent or enhanced community facilities to be provided elsewhere within the locality as required by policy 12 of the Neighbourhood Plan*'. It was also confirmed '*the proposal could be considered to provide a community use for local people and small businesses by providing a communal working space*'. As such, the case officer concluded that '*the principle of development would be considered acceptable and in line with the strategic objectives of the Development Plan*'.

Design

- 5.8 Policy 26 (Character and Design) of Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 requires development to be of a high-quality design and create a sense of place whilst addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape.
- 5.9 Policy 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan relates to character and design and expects that development is of high-quality design and layout, contributes positively to the private and public realm to create a sense of place, and respects the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape.
- 5.10 The Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD is intended to inform and guide the quality of design for all development across the District. Section 2 of this guide expresses the

need for applicants to understand the context and character of their site and establish the constraints and opportunities that will guide their proposals. Section 6 relates to high quality and sustainable building design, with particular emphasis placed upon principle DG37 which encourages that sustainability is at the forefront of the proposal at the design stage. This stance is also reflected under policies DP39 of the District Plan and 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan. Design principle DG44 relates specifically to the design of commercial buildings and states these buildings should positively to the character and architectural traditions of the District in terms of scale, mass, form, materials and detailing.

- 5.11 Woodsland Road has a varied street scene that is predominantly residential, with a mix of dwelling types and styles. The subject site itself comprises three linked structures, which was referred to as Blocks A, B and C in the pre-application submission. Block A is a two storey brick building dating from 1970s with uPVC glazing and semi dormer windows set within in a concrete tiled roof, Block B is a single storey structure which sits in front of Building A, and is of a similar plan dimension, of painted brick construction with a felted flat roof and Block C is a single storey structure situated to the Northern side of the site. The existing building is of poor quality and does not hold architectural merit.
- 5.12 The proposal involves the refurbishment of the existing buildings and erection of a first floor extension which would be finished in brick and recycled PVC tile cladding. The windows would be powder coated aluminum and the roof would comprise tiles, roof lights and solar panels which would maximise the energy efficiency of the building and utilise natural light. The proposal also offers soft landscaping enhancements.
- 5.13 The proposed first floor extension would be subservient, considering the scale of the main building and buildings along Woodsland Road. The roof design of the proposed addition would introduce an architectural feature to the site which would integrate well with the main building. The use of high-quality traditional materials and glazing would introduce a contemporary addition which would significantly enhance the visual amenity of the site. Other measures include the provision of soft landscaping features which would ensure the site appears welcoming and creates a sense of place.

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- 5.14 For these reasons mentioned above, the design of the development is in accordance with planning policies.

Neighbouring Amenity Impact

- 5.12 Policy DP26 (Character and Design) states development should 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. Policy DP29 also echoes the objectives of this policy.
- 5.13 Taking into account the lawful and former use of the site as a social club, the proposed use of the site as working studios would not result in the intensification of activity/movement and thus would not increase noise generation at the property.
- 5.14 The existing site has 2 wall mounted A/C units to the Southern side of the building, which would be replaced by 2 new heat pumps to the rear of the building. A Noise Impact Assessment accompanies this planning submission, the survey was undertaken in accordance with BS 7445 and the Environmental Noise Measurement Guide. Ultimately the survey concludes that the proposed units should generally achieve compliance with Mid Sussex District Council (-5dBA below background) criterion (40dBA) at the vast majority of properties in the vicinity.
- 5.15 With regards to the proposed first floor addition, the scale of the extension has been reduced from which was previously proposed, with the height being reduced to the Southern boundary, thus reducing any potential impact on No.2 Woodland Road. The proposed extension would be set back significantly from the predominant building lines of neighbouring sites and approximately 3m from the adjoining sites.
- 5.16 Due to the relatively modest scale of the extension and the adequate separation distance from adjoining sites, the proposed addition would not result in any loss of light / outlook, nor would it appear overbearing when viewed from neighbouring properties.

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- 5.17 No side-facing windows are proposed and the roof lights would not directly overlook into neighbouring sites. Therefore, the proposal would not compromise the privacy of neighbouring occupants.
- 5.18 For reasons mentioned above, the proposal would not result in any unacceptable neighbouring amenity impacts.

Transportation (Car and Cycle)

- 5.19 Policy DP21 (Transport) states proposals should provide *'Appropriate opportunities to facilitate and promote the increased use of alternative means of transport to the private car, such as the provision of, and access to, safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and public transport, including suitable facilities for secure and safe cycle parking'*.
- 5.20 The application site is situated 0.2miles / 3 minute walking distance from Hassocks train station and there are bus routes which run along Keymer Road, 200ft / 1 minute walking distance from the site. Due to the accessibility of public transport, it is highly likely the users of the site would utilise these transportation modes.
- 5.21 4 car parking spaces would be provided onsite for the users of the site (including 1 space for disabled persons). Taking into account the size and occupancy of the building, the quantity of car parking spaces proposed would be sufficient for the users of the site.
- 5.22 The proposal would also result in the provision of cycle storage to the Southern side of the site which would accommodate an adequate quantity of cycle spaces.
- 5.23 For reasons mentioned above, the proposal is in accordance with highways/transportation planning policies.

Sustainability

- 5.24 Policy DP39 (Sustainable Design and Construction) states development should seek to *'Minimise energy use through the design and layout of the scheme including through the use of natural lighting and ventilation'* and *'Maximise efficient use of resources, including*

minimising waste and maximising recycling/ re-use of materials through both construction and occupation'.

- 5.25 The proposal seeks to reuse as much of the existing fabric as possible. The existing building would be retained and refurbished and a new first floor extension is proposed. Additional insulation would be fitted to conform with modern building regulations. The proposal also includes the installation of heat pumps, roof lights and solar panels which would maximise the energy efficiency of the building.
- 5.26 An Energy report accompanies this planning submission, this report assesses the predicted energy performance and carbon dioxide emissions of the proposed development in the context of local and nationwide policy requirements and best practice methods.
- 5.27 The energy report confirms the proposal would result in improved U values and ultimately the proposal would result in a reduction of carbon emissions by 100%. This would accord with the objectives of Policy DP39.

Biodiversity

- 5.28 Policy DP38 (Biodiversity) states development should '*contribute and take opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity*'
- 5.29 The existing site is predominately hard landscaped and offers little biodiversity value.
- 5.30 As part of the pre-application feedback, the case officer stated that Development proposals that do not impact a priority habitat and impact less than 25 square metres of on-site habitat are exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and subsequently confirmed BNG would not be applicable for this proposal.
- 5.31 Nonetheless, the proposal includes the provision of trees and soft landscaping which would significantly enhance the biodiversity value of the site, resulting in biodiversity net gain, in accordance with the objectives of Policy DP38.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposal seeks to revitalise this dated site and provide a use which would be of significant benefit to the local community. It has been demonstrated the proposed development would be in compliance with national, regional and local planning policies. We therefore trust the Local Planning Authority will be in support of the proposal and grant planning permission.




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