

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/1235	Case Officer:	Jessica Szollosi
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Retrospective application for siting an InPost Parcel Locker.		
Site:	Franklands Village Store, Franklands Village, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3RA, , ,		
Validation Date	18 May 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	3 Sep 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Refusal	Recommendation Date:	20 Aug 2026
Target Date:	13 Jul 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Jessica Szollosi</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	6
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Stephen Ashdown</i>	Date:	20 Aug 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/1235

**Franklands Village Store, Franklands Village, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3RA, ,
Retrospective application for siting an InPost Parcel Locker.
InPost UK**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of representation were received from four neighbouring properties in objection of the retrospective planning application. Reasons for objecting are summarised as follows:

- o Scale and Design is visually dominant and results in an intrusive feature
- o Development impacts the character and appearance of the shop front and does not enhance the Conservation Area
- o Obstructs the shop door which detracts from the street scene and appearance of shop contrary to DP35.
- o Incongruent with the distinctive, individual design of the shop and the historic and unique architectural interest
- o 24-hour operation
- o Increased traffic and noise to the area
- o Pedestrian safety concerns
- o Parking and pollution
- o Retrospective nature of application
- o Unsympathetic use of materials

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Conservation Officer

The Conservation Officer referred to her comments submitted to the Planning Enforcement Officer when the development was initially brought to her attention.

'Looking at the photo it appears to have been placed in front of the building, blocking what I would assume was originally a principal entrance door, and detracting from the designed symmetry of the building's frontage. This is likely to be considered an inappropriately prominent position which detracts from the appearance of the shop building, which is a landmark, and a focal point of community life within the Franklands Village development. I would advise that a less prominent position is found, if this is possible, or otherwise that it is removed. As it stands, the box detracts from the character and appearance of the building and of the Conservation Area, contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35.'

'If the grey metal box which sits to the right of the main drop box structure is part of this work and would also require PP similar considerations would apply.'

TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Haywards Heath Town Council responded as follows:

'The Town Council acknowledges the representations made by the neighbouring properties. There are concerns regarding the hours of use of the site and the Town Council politely asks if these hours could be restricted. The Town Council is also concerned that the addition to the shop front it is out of keeping with the area and asks if screening for the site could be considered if it is not deemed a security risk. The Town Council is further concerned about the number of retrospective applications being submitted by the

Village Store, which prohibits residents from commenting on an application before work is carried out on site.'

INTRODUCTION

The retrospective application seeks planning permission for the siting of an Inpost Locker pursuant to S. 73a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended ('the Act').

This application has been submitted for the Inpost Locker and does not include the electrical box sited to the east of the Inpost Locker which pre-dates the installation of the proposal.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/23/1803 - Proposed replacement shopfront and doors - Permitted 27/11/2023

DM/25/2612 - Application for the installation of air conditioning/chiller units upon the western flank wall (Retrospective) and the proposed installation of an acoustic fence with fitted absorption barrier - Decision Pending

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application property is located on the corners of Gravelye Lane and Reed Pond Walk within the Haywards Heath and Lindfield Built up Area Boundary. It is also located within the Franklands Village Conservation Area, designated as such in March 1989.

The existing building on site is a detached single storey south facing retail premises with a curved parapet on the principle elevation and is used as the village shop.

The existing building is located at a slightly lower position than the adjacent roads to the south and east of the site. A small verge and parking area separate the site from Reed Pond Walk to the south and Gravelye Road to the east.

On the principle elevation of the building, a large multiple glass paned bay window is located in a central position between two doors; the original timber shop door, which has been painted dark grey is located to the west of the bay window and a white door is located to the east which provides access to the shop. A round decorative window sits above the bay window within the curved parapet. The windows and doors are surrounded by intricate architrave which adds to the unique character and design of the building. There is no fenestration on the east or west elevation of the building and a service door is located to the rear of the building on the north elevation.

The Inpost Locker, which is the subject of this planning application has been sited forward the principle elevation of the shop front on the southwest corner of the building, obstructing the original timber shop door and intricate architrave.

Located directly west of the site and south of the site beyond Reed Pond Walk are 1930's semi-detached residential dwellings constructed in similar materials, including brick and tile hung walls, plain roof tiles and white fenestration with driveways forward the dwellinghouses. To the east of the site beyond Gravelye Road is Pennington House, a block of flats constructed in red brick with slate roof tiles and white fenestration. A verged area and mature trees provide screening between this property and the application site. A shared driveway providing access to multiple garages is located to the north of the site and beyond that is a building used as a children's nursery.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The retrospective application seeks to obtain planning permission pursuant to S. 73a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, for the siting of an Inpost Locker.

The Parcel Locker is constructed of metal and vinyl wrapped with Oraguard 215 PVC film and sits on a concrete base. It has a vertical touch screen display on the principal elevation and a metal canopy with

integrated security camera and metal clad downlights. Three metal bollards are located forward of the locker.

The parcel locker has a width and depth of some 4.03 metres and 0.9 metres respectively. The total height of the parcel locker, including canopy is approximately 2.42 metres and the canopy measures depth of some 1.66 metres.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance) does not form part of the development plan, but is an important material consideration.

Mid Sussex District Plan

The District Plan was adopted at Full Council on 28th March 2018.

Relevant policies:

DP21 - Transport
DP26 - Design and Character
DP28 - Accessibility
DP35 - Conservation Areas

Site Allocations DPD

The SADPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

There are no relevant policies.

Neighbourhood Plan

Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted December 2016)

Policy E9 - Design

Other Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Consultation Draft

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 is currently at Examination with initial hearings held in February/March 2026. The Council is consulting on Main Modifications which are required to ensure the plan is legally compliant and sound. The District Plan remains at Examination until the Inspector has

published his report, until that time only minimal weight can be given to the Plan and this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

Relevant policies:

DPB3 - Conservation Areas

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DPT1 - Transport

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (August 2026)

HE4 - Securing the conservation of heritage assets

HE5 - Assessing effects on heritage assets

HE6 - Proposals affecting designated heritage assets

HE9 - Conservation areas

ASSESSMENT

It is considered that the main issues that need to be considered in the determination of this application are as follows:

- Planning Principles
- Transport
- Design and Character
- Impact on neighbouring Amenities
- Impact on the Conservation Area
- Biodiversity Net Gain

The retrospective planning application is made pursuant to S.73a of the Act for the siting of an Inpost Locker. This locker is sited forward the principal elevation of the existing shop building and within the Franklands Village Conservation Area.

Planning Principles

The Planning Statement submitted by the applicant in support of this application refers to DP3 of the Mid Sussex District Plan which relates to Village and Neighbourhood Centre Development and states which states that Village Centres are defined as:

'the village centres of Crawley Down, Cuckfield, Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint and Lindfield which meet the needs of their own communities and neighbouring small villages and countryside areas.'

And

Small Village Centres, Neighbourhood Centres (in the towns) are defined as:

'the various small village and neighbourhood shopping centres which meet the needs of their own communities and countryside areas. To support these, changes of use from Class A1 shop uses to other uses will be resisted.'

o In exceptional circumstances, a change of use to Class A2, A3, A4, A5 and B1a offices use, health or medical use will be permitted providing:

o it can be shown that the existing use is no longer viable; and

o is appropriate in scale and function to its location including the character and amenities of the surrounding area and will not give rise to increased problems of traffic generation and car parking; and

o is in accordance with the relevant Neighbourhood Plan.'

Whilst the planning statement submitted by the applicant in support of this application refers to DP3 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and states that the application accords with this provision, the Council would not consider policy DP3 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relevant in this case as the development is located within Haywards Heath which is not a Village centre as specified in the policy. Moreover, whilst Franklands Village could be considered a Neighbourhood Centre, this application does not relate to a change of use and this part of the policy would therefore not be considered relevant.

Transport

Policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in part states the following in relation to transport:

To meet these objectives, decisions on development proposals will take account of whether:

o The scheme is sustainably located to minimise the need for travel noting there might be circumstances where development needs to be located in the countryside, such as rural economic uses (see policy DP14: Sustainable Rural Development and the Rural Economy);

o 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, have been fully explored and taken up.'

and

o The scheme avoids severe additional traffic congestion, individually or cumulatively, taking account of any proposed mitigation;

o The scheme protects the safety of road users and pedestrians.'

Policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in part states the following in relation to parking:

'The scheme provides adequate car parking for the proposed development, taking into account the accessibility of the development, the type, mix and use of the development and the availability and opportunities for public transport; and with the relevant Neighbourhood Plan where applicable;'

The development is sustainably located within the built up area of Haywards Heath and Lindfield. Franklands Village is a neighbourhood with good transport links, including buses providing access to various parts of Sussex. The development is located forward of the local grocery store at the entrance to the village, providing a sustainable way for neighbours to collect parcels and is set in a position safe for pedestrian use. Given its central location within the neighbourhood, local users of the Inpost Parcel Lockers would be able to collect parcels on foot. If not, parking provision is available to the south and west of the development.

In light of the above, the development is considered to accord with Policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Design and Character

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- o is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- o contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- o creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- o protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- o protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- o 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 (see Policy DP29);*
- o creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- o incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- o positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- o take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- o optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'*

Policy E9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan in part states:

'Developers must demonstrate how their proposal will protect and reinforce the local character within the locality of the site. This will include having regard to the following design elements:

- o Height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design and materials of buildings;*
- o The scale, design and materials of the development (highways, footways, open space and landscape), and is sympathetic to the setting of any heritage asset;*
- o Respects the natural contours of a site and protects and sensitively incorporates natural features such as trees, hedges and ponds within the site;*
- o Creates safe, accessible and well-connected environments that meet the needs of users;*
- o Will not result in unacceptable levels of light, noise, air or water pollution;*
- o Makes best use of the site to accommodate development; and*
- o Car parking is designed and located so that it fits in with the character of the proposed development'*

The retrospective planning application relates to an Inpost Parcel Locker which is located on a concrete base and constructed of metal and vinyl wrapped with Oraguard 215 PVC film. The locker is white on the south facing principle elevation with 'Inpost' branding and is yellow on the east and west elevations. The parcel locker has a vertical touch screen display on the principal elevation and a metal canopy with integrated security camera and metal clad downlights. Three yellow painted metal bollards are located forward of the locker.

The parcel locker has a width and depth of some 4.03 metres and 0.9 metres respectively. The total height of the parcel locker, including canopy is approximately 2.42 metres and the canopy measures depth of some 1.66 metres.

The existing building on site serves as a local shop and is constructed of brick with a flat roof and period features, including a curved parapet and a central decorative circular window. On the south facing principle elevation, a multiple glass paned timber bay window painted dark grey sits in a central position and is flanked by two doors. The original timber door is located to the west of the bay window and is painted dark grey and to the east of the window, a white door serves as the main shop entrance. The windows and doors are surrounded by intricate architrave painted dark grey which adds to the character and design of the building. There is no fenestration on the east and west elevation with a service door on

the north elevation. The building holds a prominent position on a corner plot towards the entrance of the village and is a central focal point as the local village shop.

The site is located within the residential estate of Franklands Village which retains a distinct village character and spacious layout with wide grass verges, mature trees, hedges and open space.

The Inpost parcel locker is sited in a prominent position forward the principle elevation of the local shop facing Reed Pond Walk and at 4.03 metres wide and 2.42 metres high, it is an overbearing addition to the shop front. The development obstructs majority of the original timber door and the intricate architrave, disrupting the symmetry of the building and would be considered a poor location for development.

Moreover, the white and yellow vinyl wrapped metal locker with 'Inpost' branding and yellow painted bollards is an urban design which would not be considered to integrate seamlessly with the materials used on the existing building and neighbouring properties and is considered a visually jarring and dominant feature within the village setting.

Given the above, the Inpost Parcel Locker would be considered to cause significant harm to the appearance and character of the existing building and surrounding area within which it is located as a result of the development's design, scale, siting and materials. As such, the development would not be considered to accord with this part of DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and E9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties

In terms of impact on neighbouring amenities, Policy DP26 of the District Plan states proposals 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'*.

The test under policy E9 of the Neighbourhood Plan states in part requires the development to *'not result in unacceptable levels of light, noise, air or water pollution.'*

Under section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 if a policy contained in a development plan for an area conflicts with another policy in the development plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to be adopted, approved or published. As such, policy DP26 of the MSDP is considered to take precedence and therefore the test in this instance is whether the development causes significant harm to neighbouring amenities as outlined above.

The Council would not consider the Inpost Parcel Locker to cause any significant harm from a privacy and daylight and sunlight perspective.

The Inpost Locker would not be considered to be a notable intensification of the local shop's operations on site and would not be considered to significantly increase footfall to the area. Whilst the locker is available to customers 24/7, the number of customers collecting parcels after hours would be considered limited and per the planning statement, the collection/ delivery process takes an average of 15 seconds. Furthermore, it is noted on the planning statement that a maximum of two deliveries/collections of parcels take place daily via transit van and this takes an average of 15 minutes which would not be considered out of keeping with the nature of the existing shop premises or harmful from a noise perspective.

In terms of air pollution, the ethos of Inpost UK is to encourage sustainability by consolidating deliveries and easing the impact on the road network, thereby reducing air pollution. Furthermore, the Inpost Parcel Locker is placed in a central built-up area with pedestrian and good public transport connections encouraging people to collect their parcels on foot minimising air pollution.

The parcel locker has a vertical touch screen display and downlights at the top of the locker. This would be considered modest lighting and sympathetic to the site and surrounding properties, and is unlikely to cause harm in terms of light pollution.

In terms of outlook, it is considered that there would be some outlook impacts, specifically to the residential dwelling to the west of the site as this property overlooks the site and the yellow side panel of the locker is a jarring contrast to the design and character of the surrounding buildings. However, these impacts are considered to be limited given the scale of the development and the position of the dwellinghouse set back from the development.

Given the above, whilst some limited outlook impacts may be experienced, these would not be considered to cause significant harm in terms of outlook. Furthermore, it is not considered that significant harm is experienced by neighbours in respect of privacy, daylight and sunlight, noise, air and light pollution and thereby complies with DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in terms of impact on neighbouring amenity.

Accessibility

In terms of impact on accessibility, Policy DP28 of the District Plan states that:

All development will be required to meet and maintain high standards of accessibility so that all users can use them safely and easily. This will apply to all development, including changes of use, refurbishments and extensions, open spaces, the public realm and transport infrastructure, and will be demonstrated by the applicant.

The parcel locker is located on a levelled concrete slab at ground level with accessible lockers towards the bottom of the structure. It is located against the principle elevation of the shop and out of the way of vehicular traffic. Given the above, the Council would consider the development to meet and maintain high standards of accessibility so that all users can use the parcel locker safely and easily thereby complying with DP28 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in terms of accessibility.

Impact on the Conservation Area

Policy DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to the protection and enhancement of Conservation Areas and states that:

'Development in a conservation area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

o Traditional shop fronts that are a key feature of the conservation area are protected. Any alterations to shopfronts in a conservation area will only be permitted where they do not result in the loss of a traditional shopfront and the new design is sympathetic to the character of the existing building and street scene in which it is located'

Principle DG11 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide states:

'Heritage assets and historic landscapes should be celebrated, enhanced and preserved where appropriate, for the enjoyment of existing and future residents. Where appropriate and providing it does not cause harm to the heritage assets or their setting, they should be carefully integrated into development proposals as they help to reinforce a sense of place and local identity.'

Policy HE4 of the NPPF relates securing the conservation of heritage assets, in part, as follows:

1. *'Heritage assets, as an irreplaceable resource, should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. To achieve this, development proposals which would affect the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting should:*

- a. *Maintain or secure a use consistent with their conservation, taking into account the importance of maintaining the assets, the positive contribution they can make to sustainable communities including local economies, and the positive contribution they can make to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- b. *Avoid (or if that is not possible, minimise) harm to the significance of heritage assets, and instead conserve this significance.'*

Policy HE5 of the NPPF relates to assessing effects on heritage assets and states, in part, as follows:

1. *'Development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The relevant historic environment record should be referred to in making this assessment, and appropriate expertise employed where necessary.*
2. *Assessments of the potential effects of development proposals on the significance of heritage assets (including through effects on their setting) should identify whether proposals would be likely to:*
 - a. *Have a positive effect, which is where the significance of a heritage asset would be enhanced, or better revealed; or*
 - b. *Have no effect on the significance of a heritage asset; or*
 - c. *Result in harm to the significance of a heritage asset, either from work affecting the asset itself or from development within its setting. The degree of harm should be identified: substantial harm would occur where the development proposal would seriously affect a key element of the asset's significance; or*
 - d. *Cause the total loss of the significance of a heritage asset.'*

Policy HE6 of the NPPF relates to proposals affecting designated heritage assets and states as follows:

1. *'When considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of its significance.*
2. *Development proposals which would have a positive effect on a designated heritage asset should be supported.*
3. *Any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight, which should be dealt with in accordance with paragraphs 4 to 6 of this policy.*
4. *Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed.*
5. *Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss, or if all of the following apply:*
 - a. *The nature of the heritage asset would otherwise prevent all reasonable uses of the site;*
 - b. *No suitable use for the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;*

- c. *Conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is not possible; and*
- d. *The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the asset back into use.'*

Policy HE9 of the NPPF relates to Conservation Areas and states as follows:

1. 'Development proposals within or affecting the significance of conservation areas should:
 - a. Retain and conserve buildings and other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area where possible; and
 - b. Consider the area's special architectural or historic interest (as identified as part of the designation of the conservation area) in the design of development.
2. Not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Where a development proposal would result in the loss of a building or other element which contributes to the character or appearance of a conservation area that is desirable to conserve, the assessment of impact should take into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area as a whole, and the effects of this considered in accordance with policies HE5 and HE6.
3. Proposals which conserve those elements of a conservation area that make a positive contribution to the area (or which better reveal its significance) should be supported.'

The Council's Conservation Officer consulted on the development and provided the following comments:

'Looking at the photo it appears to have been placed in front of the building, blocking what I would assume was originally a principal entrance door, and detracting from the designed symmetry of the building's frontage. This is likely to be considered an inappropriately prominent position which detracts from the appearance of the shop building, which is a landmark, and a focal point of community life within the Franklands Village development. I would advise that a less prominent position is found, if this is possible, or otherwise that it is removed. As it stands, the box detracts from the character and appearance of the building and of the Conservation Area, contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35.

If the grey metal box which sits to the right of the main drop box structure is part of this work and would also require PP similar considerations would apply.'

The retrospective application relates to the siting of an Inpost Locker within the Franklands Village Conservation Area. The locker is placed forward the principle elevation of the local shop in an inappropriately dominant position, blocking an original timber door and impacting the design symmetry of the existing building. The urban nature of the design and materials used do not integrate seamlessly into the surrounding suburban landscape and the character of the Conservation Area, detracting from a local landmark and focal point within the Franklands Village development. The development is easily visible from the highway, including Reed Pond Walk and Gravelye Lane.

For these reasons, the proposal to retain the Inpost Locker in its current position is considered to detract from the character and appearance of the Franklands Village Conservation Area. This will be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35 and will in terms of the NPPF result in harm, such that policies HE4, HE5, HE6 and HE9 of the NPPF will apply.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for proposed applications. This is a retrospective application made pursuant to S.73a of the Act

for the siting of an Inpost Locker which has been in situ since February 2026 and therefore the applicant would not be required to provide Biodiversity net gain.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

Planning legislation requires the application to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is therefore necessary for the planning application to be assessed against the policies in the Development Plan and then to take account of other material planning considerations including the NPPF. The Development Plan in this instance consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan.

Where the harm is identified, the criteria set out in paragraph 4 of Policy HE6 of that document would apply. This states that '*Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed.*' This is the balancing exercise that must be undertaken by the decision maker, ensuring that considerable importance and weight is given to the less than substantial harm to the heritage asset that has been identified.

The applicant submitted a planning statement and an Inpost Sustainability and Planning Policy Document claiming that Inpost strives to provide a sustainable delivery infrastructure consolidating deliveries, thus reducing its carbon emissions and impact on the road network. It also provides residents with access to parcel services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, however, no evidence or justification has been provided on the significance of the asset affected and the potential effect of the proposal on its significance as per paragraph 1 of policy HE5 of the NPPF. Therefore, only limited weight can be attributed to this information.

Paragraph 1 (b) of policy HE4 of the NPPF requires that harm to heritage assets should be avoided or minimised. However, no evidence has been provided within the submitted application documents to suggest that alternative, less harmful locations for the Inpost Locker have been considered. Whilst the above public benefits are identified, these benefits could be achieved by placing the development in a more suitable location without causing harm to the Franklands Village Conservation Area and the benefits would not be considered to outweigh the harm caused thereto.

As such, no convincing argument has been made to demonstrate that any public benefit arising from the development could not be achieved by an alternative scheme and/or location which would not result in harm to the special interests of the affected heritage asset and the Council would not consider it to be the clear and convincing justification required by policies HE4, HE5, HE6 and HE9 of the NPPF. The proposal is also contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm which would not be sufficiently outweighed by public benefits arising from the proposal. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with the provisions of policy DP35 of the District Plan, Policies HE4, HE5, HE6 and HE9 of the NPPF and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The application must be assessed against the policies of the development plan taken as a whole; this assessment has identified conflict with the development plan. This being in respect of policies DP26 (design and character) and DP35 of the District Plan, Policies E9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

For the reasons set out within the assessment section, it is considered that the application has a neutral impact in terms of transport, neighbouring amenity and accessibility and therefore accords with Mid Sussex District Plan policies DP21, DP26 (impact of neighbour amenity) and DP28 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Taking the above into account, it is considered that the application is in conflict with the most important policies for determining the application and therefore it is considered that the application conflicts with the development

plan when read as a whole. This is not the end point as planning law requires that 'where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise'.

Weighing against the application, the proposal fails to respond appropriately to the established character and design of the application site and surrounding properties and would be considered an incongruent and prominent feature that is insensitive to the Conservation Area due to its design, scale, siting and materials used.

The proposal would cause harm to its significance, however, sufficient evidence has not been submitted to demonstrate that the public benefits outweigh the harm experienced following implementation of the development.

In favour of the scheme, the proposal would provide a sustainable delivery infrastructure consolidating deliveries, thus reducing its carbon emissions and impact on the road network. It also provides residents with access to parcel services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, however, only limited weight can be attributed to this due to the lack of evidence or justification provided on the significance of the heritage asset affected and the potential effect of the proposal on its significance.

In weighing up these issues, when taken together, it is considered that the adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal.

Overall, the proposal is in conflict with the development plan and the planning balance is considered to fall in favour of refusing planning permission.

Decision: Refusal

Case Officer: Jessica Szollosi