

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/24/2497	Case Officer:	Anna Tidey
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Proposed replacement of conservatory with extension of living accommodation over two floors, internal alterations and extension of commercial premises at ground floor. Method Statement and Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan received 26.03.2025.		
Site:	Handcross Newsagents, High Street, Handcross, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6BJ, ,		
Validation Date	26 Mar 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	2 May 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	27 May 2025
Target Date:	21 May 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Anna Tidey

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	83
--	--	-------------------------------	----

Signed and Agreed By:	Stephen Ashdown	Date:	28 May 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/24/2497

**Handcross Newsagents, High Street, Handcross, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6BJ, Proposed replacement of conservatory with extension of living accommodation over two floors, internal alterations and extension of commercial premises at ground floor. Method Statement and Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan received 26.03.2025.
Mrs T Amin**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

83 letters of representation received, of 74 are in support and 9 object to the proposal. In summary they contain the following points:

Supporting comments include:

- Support fellow business owners.
- The extension will allow the business to grow and support the community.
- The trees on the site will not be impacted.
- The High Street already has a heavy traffic flow and limited parking.
- The development will not create further hazards.
- This is not a supermarket.
- Customers will be local.
- No adverse impact will result for the London to Brighton cycle and classic car events.
- The proposal is for a modest rear extension, maintaining the front facing aesthetic.
- The proposal will not impact upon local drainage, unlike the development of family housing developments.
- The business supports elderly residents and the less mobile.
- Applicants seek to build on their local service.
- Parking impact was not considered when Budgens opened in June 2024, which is now a competitor.
- Hope that a Post Office might be provided in the enlarged floor area.
- Support the business expansion.
- Support the residential extension.
- Will provide more space to make commercially viable.
- This is an investment into the community - allows an increase in products, creates new job opportunities and contributes to the local economy.
- The newsagents are an important part of the village. Many other local shops no longer operate.
- More shop space will aid accessibility.
- Asset during Covid.
- The increased floor space will not change through traffic.
- Small businesses need support.
- This is a home and a livelihood.
- The proposal appears to accord with NPPF and MSDC Plan.
- There are financial and social benefits.
- Should encourage use of the High Street.
- Neighbour living opposite supports.
- Nymans visitors can impact upon available parking spaces.
- The construction will cause short term noise and disruption.
- Support from two local businesses for this positive investment for the business and the High Street.
- Will create a more attractive and functional shopping environment for local people.

The Objections that have been received are as follows:

- development will impact direct semi-detached neighbour and family as follows: loss of outlook from neighbour's windows and garden, overbearing, impact on sunlight, noise, disturbance, increased opening hours and footfall from business use, increase in occupants, parking issues, impact upon Conservation Area.
- impact upon local traffic and pedestrian activity,
- increasing traffic congestion in the High Street, and parking demand, creating hazards for pedestrians and cyclists, increased risk of accidents.
- adds to the commercial space.
- air and noise pollution, affecting health and wellbeing.
- the impact of the development upon trees on the site should be considered.
- concern that there will be added pressure on the shared drainage system.
- impact upon historic cottages and Conservation Area/heritage /historic charm.
- added road wear and tear.
- a comprehensive parking impact study is required.
- a local business objects on grounds of access, and impact upon trade from the extension of the newsagent shop.
- concern regarding heavy machinery and parking that will be required for the proposed development.
- will harm the High Street.
- concern over the impact of the proposed development of a larger shop and disruption.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Conservation Officer:

The application site is an unlisted attached building located to the western side of Handcross High Street, within the Conservation Area. From its appearance, and from a brief historic map regression exercise it would appear that the building dates from the 19th century, and may originally have been a pair of cottages, which were converted during the 20th century into a single shop at ground floor with residential accommodation above. The building has been subject to a number of unsympathetic alterations, including in particular to the front elevation a pair of extremely unattractive uPVC projecting oriel windows, and a uPVC conservatory and windows to the rear. It does however retain some character and overall makes a neutral or slight positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Handcross Conservation Area.

The existing rear conservatory detracts from the appearance of the building, and its removal is not considered problematic. However, although I do not consider that the principle of a replacement two storey extension is contentious in this context (there are a wide variety of rear extensions and additions to other buildings to this side of the High Street), I do have some concerns regarding the scale and form of the proposal as shown:

- the scale, and in particular the width, of the extension is excessive, resulting in an inappropriate relationship of scale with the host building.
- the extension would appear inappropriately dominant in views of the building from the rear. --the offset position of the extension is awkward and detracts from the existing, original, symmetry of the building at first floor.
- suggest the width of the extension should be reduced by setting it in from the southern side elevation by an amount equal to that shown to the opposite northern side, so that the extension is centred on the elevation. If the existing pitch of the roof is maintained, this will also reduce the height of the roof ridge. These factors should result in a more appropriate scale and form.
- The detailed design of the extension would also benefit from amendments to include windows which are more appropriate to the age and original character of the building and its setting, i.e. timber sashes as opposed to casements.
- The associated loss of the rear chimney is considered regrettable as this detracts from the roofline interest of the building. If possible the chimney should be retained.
- I suggest that the number of sun pipes shown should be reduced in order to minimise clutter to the roof slope.
- there would be no objection from a heritage perspective to the new windows to the side of the building, subject to detail, with respect to the front oriel windows.

-strongly recommend replacing the existing unattractive uPVC windows with timber windows of a more sympathetic design, e.g. timber sashes.

-Given the scale of the proposed rear extension (even if this is reduced as suggested), every opportunity should be taken to include enhancements such as this elsewhere within the scheme, to ensure that the overall impact on the character and appearance of the scheme is considered on balance to be neutral or positive.

The principle of the proposal may be acceptable in terms of the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, amendments are required in order to ensure that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is preserved.

Further comments on Amended Plans:

The proposal has been revised to amend the scale and form of the proposed rear two storey extension, as suggested in the previous comments. The addition is now considered to be appropriately subordinate to the existing building, within the wider context of the other existing additions along the rear of the buildings to this side of the High Street. The fenestration has also been amended to reflect better the original character of the building. In my opinion, this aspect of the proposal is now acceptable, subject to detail.

The number of sunpipes to the rear roof slopes has been reduced, which consequently reduces the visual clutter to this part of the building.

To the front of the building, the uPVC windows at first floor level are now shown replaced with timber sashes. Subject to detail, this is welcomed and has the potential to have a positive impact on the appearance of the building and its contribution to the street scene of the High Street.

On balance, therefore, the proposal as amended is considered to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the building, and of the wider Handcross Conservation Area. This meets the requirements of District Plan Policies DP35 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Recommends conditions for material and building design details.

Naturespace Newt Officer:

The proposed development is not considered to be relevant to the District Licensing Scheme in this case and we consider there would be no likely impact on Great Crested Newts or their habitats. No comments.

Tree Officer: I have reviewed the Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan for this proposal and have no objection. Please condition adherence to these documents.

MSDC Housing Officer:

Advice is provided with specific reference to compliance with Housing Standards legislation, HHSRS Operating Guidance, minimum standards for bedrooms, floor to ceiling head heights, means or escape, heating, ventilation and lighting, which have also been forwarded to the applicant's agent.

SLAUGHAM PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No objection.

INTRODUCTION

This application seeks planning approval for alterations and an extension to the mixed commercial and residential building which accommodates Handcross Newsagents in the High Street in Handcross. The works include the removal of the existing rear conservatory addition and the construction of a single and two storey rear extension, the insertion of new windows, and replacement of the existing uPVC windows to the front elevation at first floor with new windows to match.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

02/02365/FUL. Rear dormers to form bedroom and ensuite and double garage. Approved December 2002.

02/01917/FUL. Flat roof rear dormer (to form bedroom and ensuite) and double garage. Refused October 2002.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The Newsagent in Handcross is located on the western side of the High Street in the centre of the built up area in the village. The premises consist of a ground floor shop with living space to the rear, with further residential accommodation on the first floor.

The floor plans show that the shop space and storage space is limited to approx half of the building footprint, with the rear of the building in use as living space with a reception room and a small kitchen in a rear single storey projection, which extends up to the mutual boundary with the adjacent residential dwelling at New Cottage. To the rear of the kitchen there is a separate small store room with external access from the back garden. A single storey conservatory in white UPVC with a lean to roof has been added across the rear elevation of the building.

At first floor level there are three bedrooms and a shared bathroom and store. The first floor is accessed off a centrally located staircase. The front two bedrooms benefit from a pair of projecting oriel windows with white uPVC frames, facing onto the High Street.

The shop frontage at ground floor contains a recessed door which opens directly from the shop onto the High Street. There is a pedestrian path to the side of the building and adjacent to the next door bed shop (trading as 'And So to Bed'), and first floor flats located at Dorset House, which provides access to a set back gateway into the rear garden. The garden extends back to a garage which is accessed off Windmill Platt at the rear. The garden is laid to lawn and contains a number of trees.

The premises are located within the Handcross Conservation Area, which was established in March 1990, and within the designated High Weald AONB.

The site is located in a Red Zone for Great Crested Newts.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The original submitted plans sought permission for a 6.7m wide by 4m deep two storey extension, with a gabled roof, on the rear of the building. This addition would accommodate a new ground floor kitchen/dining room and first floor family room and family bathroom.

Associated with the extension are plans to enlarge the shop floor area by approx. 17 square metres into the current ground floor living space in the original building and to create a new ground floor shower room and hallway to access the first floor.

Amended Plans have been submitted during the course of determining the application to address concerns regarding the scale of the original scheme and to reduce the size of the proposed first floor. The Amended Plans show the addition of a 3.15m deep single storey side addition and a narrowed first floor. The south western side wall of the first floor on the addition is stepped in. A lean to roofline has been introduced on the single storey side element to reflect the form of the existing rear single storey projection. A hipped roofline on the two storey addition also reduces the overall bulk of the addition. The amended rear elevation of the extension has a symmetric design. The reduced width of the first floor element of the addition (to 5.4m) serves to increase the distance between the proposed addition and north east facing side windows located in the adjacent flats at Dorset House.

The revised extension layout accommodates the additional residential accommodation, but on a smaller scale. The proposed shop floor area increase at ground floor is not affected. A new ground floor shop store and toilet is to be accommodated within the existing single storey projection at the rear, accessed off the additional shop floor area. The proposed floor plans also show a new timber refuse/recycling bin enclosure off the external access path.

The amended plans show the reconfiguration and extension of the living accommodation on the first floor to provide 4 bedrooms, a family room and a new family bathroom.

As a result of the proposed extension new windows are proposed in the existing building. A new ground floor window is proposed in the south western elevation of the building to serve the new hallway and two new first floor windows are proposed to serve each of the two rear facing bedrooms, to replace windows in the existing rear wall that the extension will block. The amended plans are annotated to confirm that all replacement windows are to be timber sashes. The amended plans also show that the two front projection oriel windows are to be replaced with timber sash windows. A chimney on the rear roof slope will be removed to allow for the construction of the extension.

High level Conservation style rooflights are proposed in the south west and north eastern facing roof slopes of the addition to light the new family room and family bathroom. A similar high level rooflight is also proposed in the rear (north west) facing roof slope, close to the mutual boundary, to light a rear bedroom. Two flush fitting sunpipes are proposed below the main ridge line on the rear roof slope to light the internal staircase and first floor landing.

During the course of determining the application an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and a Tree Protection Plan have been submitted as the proposed development is within 15 metres of trees growing in the rear garden.

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, the Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan and Site Allocations DPD.

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.

The following policies are considered relevant when considering this application:

Mid Sussex District Plan

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

Relevant policies:

- DP3 Village and Neighbourhood Centre Development
- DP6 Settlement Hierarchy
- DP16 High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- DP21 Transport
- DP25 Community Facilities and Local Services
- DP26 Character and design
- DP28 Accessibility
- DP35 Conservation Areas
- DP38 Biodiversity

Site Allocations Development Plan Document

Mid Sussex District Council adopted its Site Allocations Development Plan Document on 29th June 2022. The Site Allocations DPD identifies sufficient housing sites to provide a five year housing land supply to 2031 and also makes sure that enough land is allocated to meet identified employment needs.

There are no policies deemed relevant to this application.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 - Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

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 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and the stage 1 hearings were concluded on the 31st October 2024. There are unresolved objections to some of the Policies in the draft District Plan and as such, 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:

DPS2 Sustainable Design and Construction

DPS6 Health and Wellbeing

DPN4 Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery

DPB1 Character and Design

DPB1 Conservation Areas

Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan

The Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan was made in September 2019 and forms part of the development plan.

Policy 1 Protecting the AONB

Policy 2 Sustainable Development Measures

Policy 4 Conservation Areas

Policy 6 Community facilities

Policy 12 Economic Development

Policy 13 Protection of Handcross High Street

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - 2020

West Sussex County Council Guidance on Parking at New Developments (September 2020)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

National Design Guide

Technical Housing Standards: Nationally Described Space Standard (March 2015)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2024-2029

ASSESSMENT

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

- Principle of the development
- Design
- Impact upon the Conservation Area
- Impact on AONB
- Impact on residential amenities
- Parking and access
- Impact upon trees
- Biodiversity
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Principle of the development

The proposal affects an established business premises and the associated residential accommodation in Handcross High Street. The proposal will allow for the expansion of the shop floorspace whilst also improving the living accommodation for the business operators, adding an additional bedroom and living space at ground and first floor levels.

District Plan Policy DP6 categories Handcross as a medium sized village, *'providing essential services for the needs of their own residents and immediate surrounding communities. Whilst more limited, these can include key services such as primary schools, shops, recreation and community facilities, often shared with neighbouring settlements'*.

District Plan Policy DP3 refers to the development of village and small village centres. It does not directly identify Handcross as a village centre. It states:

Policy DP3 Village and Neighbourhood Centre development

Village Centres

These 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.

To support the village centres, development, including for mixed uses, will be permitted providing it:

- o helps maintain and develop the range of shops and services to enable the village centre to meet local needs; and*
- o is appropriate in scale and function to its location including the character and amenities of the surrounding area; and*
- o is in accordance with the relevant Neighbourhood Plan.*

Small Village Centres, Neighbourhood Centres (in the towns)

These 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.

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.'*

Handcross Newsagents provide a community facility. Policies in the District and Neighbourhood Plans seek to improve such provisions.

District Plan 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.

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:

- o that the use is no longer viable; or*
- o that there is an existing duplicate facility in the locality which can accommodate the impact of the loss of the facility; or*
- o that a replacement facility will be provided in the locality.*

The on-site provision of new community facilities will be required on larger developments, where practicable and viable, including making land available for this purpose. Planning conditions and/ or planning obligations will be used to secure on-site facilities. Further information about the provision, including standards, of community facilities will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document.

Community facilities and local services to meet local needs will be identified through Neighbourhood Plans or a Site Allocations Development Plan Document produced by the District Council.'

Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan recognises that the Parish benefits from many community facilities and mentions newsagents as one (para 2.15) such asset. Policy 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan refers to Community Facilities and states:

Policy 6: Community Facilities

Development proposals, which result in the net loss of community facilities will not be supported. Development proposals for the alteration and/or replacement of community facilities will be supported where:

- 1. Equivalent (in qualitative and quantitative terms) or enhanced facilities are provided to serve local needs;*
- 2. Proposals for the replacement of a community facility ensure the replacement facility is made available before the closure of the existing facility;*
- 3. Facilities are easily accessible for the benefit of the community;*
- 4. There is no adverse impact on local amenity; and*
- 5. Heritage Assets and their setting are protected.'*

The principle of the extension to the Newsagents and the associated residential accommodation is supported in policy terms and will accord with District Plan Policies DP3, DP6 and DP25 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy 6.

Design

Policy DP26 of the District Plan seeks to promote well located and designed development, to protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities and support sustainable communities and create accessible environments. The wording of Policy DP26 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:

- * is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- * 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;*
- * creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- * protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- * protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- * 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);*
- * creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- * incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- * positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- * 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;*
- * optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'*

Also relevant in the determination of the application is the design guidance contained in the Mid Sussex Design Guide, which seeks good design in all forms of new development.

Principle DG49 states:

'Extensions should respond to the design of the original dwelling and applicant will be expected to demonstrate how local character has informed the design proposal. Extensions should also normally be designed to be well integrated with the existing scale, form and massing allow the original building to remain the dominant element of the property whether it has one or several additions.'

Extensions should typically use simple, uncomplicated building forms to complement and coordinate with the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling. The design approach may benefit from coordinating with the existing pattern of window and door openings as well as employing facing materials to match those of the existing dwelling. Otherwise it should demonstrate the appropriateness of the alternative approach.

Extensions should not result in a significant loss to the private amenity area of the dwelling.

There are two general approaches to extending a property:

-designing in the style of the existing building by closely matching its facing materials, architectural features, window sizes and proportions; and

-designing in a contemporary style that takes its cues from key aspects of the existing building that might include its underlying form and proportions, facing materials, window design and other specific architectural features. The success of this approach is particularly reliant on high quality facing materials and finishes, and this will normally need to be demonstrated through detailed elevations and section drawings.

Both approaches can create successful, well designed extensions that can be mutually beneficial to both the house and the wider area. All extensions and alterations should consider their impact on neighbouring properties (refer to Chapter 8 on residential amenity).'

Design Guide Principle DG51 refers to Rear extensions and states:

'Rear extensions which are not visible from the street and do not negatively impact on neighbouring properties can be expressed in many forms, including by adopting a contemporary architectural approach. With reference to DG49, they should nevertheless have consideration for the character of the existing building and the relationship of the extension with the side boundaries and adjacent buildings and gardens'.

The proposed external alterations to the building and the amended rear extension represent suitably designed alterations to the building. The amended plans show a well designed, subordinate solution which complements the original building, with appropriate materials, sash windows and Conservation rooflights to reflect the original design and appearance of the building.

Consequently the proposal will accord with District Plan Policy DP26, and the Design Guide principles and can be supported.

Impact upon the Conservation Area

The application site is located within the Handcross Conservation Area.

This application needs to be considered with reference to guidance contained in Paragraphs 207-210 of the NPPF and with regard to the statutory duty of the Council, as the Local Planning Authority, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the character or appearance of the Handcross Conservation Area, as set out in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Also relevant in the consideration of the application is District Plan Policy DP35, which requires development to conserve or enhance the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas. The Policy states:

'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:

- *New buildings and extensions are sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area in terms of their scale, density, design and through the use of complementary materials;*
- *Open spaces, gardens, landscaping and boundary features that contribute to the special character of the area are protected. Any new landscaping or boundary features are designed to reflect that character;*
- *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;*
- *Existing buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation area are protected. Where demolition is permitted, the replacement buildings are of a design that reflects the special characteristics of the area;*
- *Activities such as markets, crafts or other activities which contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area are supported;*
- *New pavements, roads and other surfaces reflect the materials and scale of the existing streets and surfaces in the conservation area.'*

The proposed extension to the Newsagents building is located to the rear, and will not adversely impact upon the street scene. Limited views of the building can be seen through the side access path which lies between the Newsagents and the adjacent bed shop.

The frontage of the building is highly visible in the High Street and the proposed replacement of the UPVC oriel windows to timber sashes will be seen in public vantage points. This alteration will enhance the building and will benefit the historic character and appearance of the Handcross Conservation Area.

Overall the proposed alterations and extensions will not have an adverse impact upon public vantage points of the building and will not harm the character or appearance of the Handcross Conservation Area. The proposal will preserve the character and appearance of this part of the Handcross Conservation Area. The application therefore accords with the aims of District Plan Policy DP35 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Impact on AONB

The legal framework for AONBs, (also known as National Landscapes) in England and Wales is provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000 which at Section 82 reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs: to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Section 84 of the CRoW requires Local Planning Authorities to *'take all such action as appears to them expedient for accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB'*. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) amended section 85 of the CRoW Act, to create a new duty on relevant authorities to *'seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area' when discharging their functions in AONBs'*. A similar ethos is found within The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the AONB.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks.'

Policy DP16 of the District Plan is relevant to development in the High Weald AONB and states:

'Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular;

*o the identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting;
o the traditional interaction of people with nature, and appropriate land management;
o character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB; and
o the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.*

Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.

Development on land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where it does not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB, and in particular should not adversely affect the views into and out of the AONB by virtue of its location or design.'

The proposed external works to the building will be seen in the context of the built form of the High Street and will not harm the wider appearance of the AONB. The proposal would therefore accord with District Plan Policy DP16 of the District Plan and the relevant NPPF and AONB guidance.

Impact on residential amenities

The Newsagents shop is located in the centre of Handcross High Street. The area is characterised by a mix of commercial and residential properties, of various ages and styles. The Newsagents occupies a semidetached building. The residential occupiers of the attached residential property, known as New Cottage, have raised objections to the proposed development.

In assessing the potential impact of the proposed alterations upon the neighbouring amenities consideration needs to be given to District Plan Policy DP26 and the Design Guide principles.

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.'

In addition Principle DG45 in the Design Guide refers to the need to consider privacy of existing and future residents and it is noted that privacy may be affected by the relationship of buildings to each other.

The submitted plans show the impact of the construction of the rear extension in views from the attached neighbour on the north eastern elevation. The existing rear single storey projection extends to a 3.8m (approx.) high wall which extends to a depth of 6.6m (approx.) from the rear line of the back wall line of the two properties. The proposed first floor addition is inset 1.5m from the mutual boundary line. The extension will extend with a vertical wall of a height of 1.7m (max) above the ridgeline of the rear projection, with the hipped roofline a maximum of 8.2m at a distance of 4.1m from the party wall.

It is considered that the presence of the rear single storey projection along the mutual boundary will assist in screening the form of the addition from the rear yard at New Cottage. There are no north east facing windows proposed in the side wall of the first floor addition and the proposed rooflight in the bathroom will be set at a high level within the room.

The proposed plans show the provision of two new 0.7m wide by 1.6m high sash windows to serve Bedrooms 1 and 2, the rear bedrooms created from the reconfiguration of the first floor rooms in the existing building. One window is proposed a minimum of 0.5m from the mutual boundary. The other is inset approx. 0.5m from the south west facing side wall. Whilst it is not considered ideal for a bedroom window to be fully obscure glazed, the applicant's agent has agreed that the lower panes of these two sash windows can be obscure glazed to a height of 1.55m above the finished floor level. This has been confirmed in writing. It is considered that the position of both of these windows, relative to the mutual boundary with the neighbouring dwelling at New Cottage, and to first floor windows serving the adjacent flats at Dorset House, requires careful consideration. It is considered that as the windows serve bedrooms (which are non principle rooms), such screening for the lower half of the sash window will serve to protect the amenities of the neighbouring residents and prevent potential overlooking issues.

Similarly to avoid overlooking to the side of the bed shop, and to protect privacy for the occupants, a planning condition to require that the new window in the side wall of the building is obscure glazed is recommended.

Subject to the above matters being addressed by restrictive planning conditions the proposal is considered to comply with Policy DP26 of the District Plan and the Design Guide principles in respect of the neighbouring amenities.

Parking and access

Concerns have been raised in a number of the representations regarding the existing traffic congestion and parking issues that arise in the High Street (B2114) in Handcross. There is unrestricted on street parking on the High Street, with several areas for roadside parking sited close to the shop. The High Street also serves as a busy connecting road for traffic passing through the village. In the High Street there is no public car park, although visitors to the nearby National Trust site at Nymans can park in the car parks there and walk the short distance to the High Street via an established off road path. The proposal will increase the commercial floor area by 17 square metres and the number of bedrooms in the associated residential living space by 1, to a total of 4 bedrooms.

The West Sussex County Council Guidance on Parking at New Developments sets out guidance on vehicular and cycle parking demand for non residential development. In the case of shops 1 car space per 14 square metres of floor space is recommended. The existing shop unit has a floor area of approx. 25 square metres. The addition of a further 17 square metres gives a total retail space of 42 square metres. The required parking spaces to meet the WSCC Parking standards is therefore 3.

In terms of the residential unit, for a 3 bed dwelling in Handcross the WSCC Parking standards require 2.2 spaces, and for a 4+ bed dwelling, 2.7 spaces.

There is provision at the rear of the site for three cars to park, including space within the garage. There is no other available space at the site to provide additional car parking spaces. There is space to the side and front of the building for customers to leave bicycles whilst in the shop.

It is acknowledged that there may be times when there are traffic and parking issues in the High Street. However, the shop is an established operating business and it is located in the main commercial area of the village, in a sustainable location.

There are nearby bus stops and there is provision for on street parking for users of the newsagents. It is considered that the proposed modest increase in floor space for the shop and the one additional bedroom will not harmfully increase the traffic flow and parking pressures from this unit. Therefore, the application can be supported on transport grounds.

In terms of accessibility the premises are located in a sustainable location in the village centre. District Plan Policy DP28: Accessibility refers to the need for easy access for buildings and the public realm. It states:

'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.

With regard to listed buildings, meeting standards of accessibility should ensure that the impact on the integrity of the building is minimised.

Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings

Developments of 5 or more dwellings will be expected to make provision for 20% of dwellings to meet Category 2 - accessible and adaptable dwellings under Building Regulations - Approved Document M Requirement M4(2), with the following exceptions:

1) Where new dwellings are created by a change of use;
 2) Where the scheme is for flatted residential buildings of fewer than 10 dwellings;
 3) Where specific factors such as site topography make such standards unachievable by practicable and/ or viable means;
 4) Where a scheme is being proposed which is specifically intended for the needs of particular individuals or groups, where a greater proportion may be appropriate. Wheelchair-user dwellings Category 3 - Wheelchair-user dwellings under Building Regulations - Approved Document M Requirement M4(3) will be required for a reasonable proportion of affordable homes, generally 4%, dependent on the suitability of the site and the need at the time.
 The Requirement will also apply to private extra care, assisted living or other such schemes designed for frailer older people or others with disabilities and those in need of care or support services.'

The proposed development will not change the existing access arrangements or the doorway into the newsagents, but will increase the shop unit size. This will enlarge the available display space, and the storage provision will also be enlarged. This will assist in improving the range of services and goods that the Newsagents can provide for the local community.

There have been numerous representations confirming support for the services that the proprietors offer and support for the enlargement of the commercial premises. This extension will provide for people in the local community, including those with mobility issues, and reduce the need to travel from Handcross to larger settlements for basic shopping needs. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the aims of District Plan Policies DP21 and DP28 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy 6.

Impact upon trees

District Plan Policy DP37 is relevant in the determination of the proposed impact of the development upon the trees growing on the site. This states:

'The District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected.

Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.

Proposals for new trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of suitable species, usually native, and where required for visual, noise or light screening purposes, trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of a size and species that will achieve this purpose.

Trees, woodland and hedgerows will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

- incorporates existing important trees, woodland and hedgerows into the design of new development and its landscape scheme; and
- prevents damage to root systems and takes account of expected future growth; and
- where possible, incorporates retained trees, woodland and hedgerows within public open space rather than private space to safeguard their long-term management; and
- has appropriate protection measures throughout the development process; and
- takes opportunities to plant new trees, woodland and hedgerows within the new development to enhance on-site green infrastructure and increase resilience to the effects of climate change; and
- does not sever ecological corridors created by these assets.

Proposals for works to trees will be considered taking into account:

- the condition and health of the trees; and
- the contribution of the trees to the character and visual amenity of the local area; and
- the amenity and nature conservation value of the trees; and
- the extent and impact of the works; and
- any replanting proposals.

The felling of protected trees will only be permitted if there is no appropriate alternative. Where a protected tree or group of trees is felled, a replacement tree or group of trees, on a minimum of a 1:1 basis and of an appropriate size and type, will normally be required. The replanting should take place as close to the felled tree or trees as possible having regard to the proximity of adjacent properties.

Development should be positioned as far as possible from ancient woodland with a minimum buffer of 15 metres maintained between ancient woodland and the development boundary.'

The Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan submitted to support the application have been reviewed by the Tree Officer to assess the impact of the development upon trees growing on the site.

It is considered that provided the works are carried out to accord with the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan the trees growing on the site will be appropriately protected. The application is therefore recommended for approval, subject to the imposition of a planning condition to require the development to accord with these measures. With this condition in place the proposed development works will accord with the aims of District Plan Policy DP37.

Biodiversity

The site is located in a Red Zone for Great Crested Newts. The application has been reviewed by the Naturespace Newt Officer and she has confirmed that the proposed works are unlikely to impact upon Great Crested Newts or their habitats.

The application is therefore considered to accord with the aims of District Plan Policy DP38.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. 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.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the proposed amended plans are appropriate in terms of design, and will not negatively impact on the appearance of this building in the Conservation Area or the wider High Weald AONB. The proposal would accord with Policies DP16, DP26 and DP35 of the District Plan, Policies 1 and 4 of the Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan, the Design Guide principles and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Subject to planning conditions, which have been agreed by the applicant's agent, the proposal would not cause significant harm the amenities of neighbouring properties. Therefore the proposal complies with Mid Sussex District Plan Policy DP26 and the Design Guide principles.

The proposal accords with District Plan Policies DP25 and DP28 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy 6 to enhance neighbourhood facilities, and is therefore considered acceptable.

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the aims of District Plan Policies DP21 and DP28 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy 6 in terms of highway impact and accessibility.

The application is recommended for approval, subject to a planning condition to ensure that trees growing on the site frontage are appropriately protected during the course of the development. With this condition in place the proposed development works will accord with the aims of District Plan Policy DP37.

The application is unlikely to impact upon Great Crested Newts or their habitats and is considered to accord with the aims of District Plan Policy DP38.

The application is therefore recommended for approval.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Anna Tidey