

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk
Sent: 08 September 2026 04:43
To: Caroline Grist
Subject: Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application DM/26/0481

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 08/09/2026 4:43 AM.

Application Summary

Address:	Natwest 15 London Road East Grinstead West Sussex RH19 1AJ
Proposal:	Change of use of first and second storey floorspace of the existing building from commercial (Class E) use to 7 x HMO bedrooms (Sui Generis) use with associated communal facilities, single storey rear extension, new rooflight and windows, extension of existing wall and a new flat roof to the rear. (Revised Flood Risk Assessment received 18.06.2026. Revised plans received 31.07.2026. Revised description agreed 18.08.2026)
Case Officer:	Caroline Grist

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Customer Details

Address:	Flat 2 Cynthia House, 11a Cantelupe Rd East Grinstead
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	Objection to Planning Application DM/26/0481 NatWest, 15 London Road, East Grinstead Dear Planning Officer, I am writing to strongly object to planning application DM/26/0481, concerning the proposed change of use of the first and second floors of the former NatWest premises at 15 London Road to a seven-bedroom HMO, together with the associated extension, rooflights, windows, wall alterations and new flat roof.

I am the owner of a residential flat within Cynthia House, immediately adjoining the application site, and I am particularly concerned about the direct and cumulative effect this development would have upon the residential amenity, privacy, security and living conditions of the existing residents of Cynthia House.

I appreciate the need for additional housing and do not object to residential development in principle. My objection is to the scale, intensity and particular design of this proposal in such close proximity to established residential accommodation.

1. Over-intensive use of the building

The proposal is not simply the conversion of commercial space into an ordinary dwelling or a small number of self-contained flats. It would introduce a seven-bedroom Sui Generis HMO, with multiple individual occupants sharing communal facilities.

The nature and intensity of such an occupation is materially different from that of a conventional dwelling. A seven-bedroom HMO has the potential to generate substantially more individual movements throughout the day and evening, together with visitors, deliveries, refuse generation, cycles and vehicles.

This intensity of occupation is particularly significant because the application building is immediately adjacent to existing flats at Cynthia House rather than being a detached site with adequate separation from neighbouring homes.

In my view, the applicant has not satisfactorily demonstrated that accommodation of this intensity can be introduced without causing unacceptable harm to adjoining residential amenity.

2. Serious impact on privacy and security

I am particularly concerned by the proposed roof access and external fire-escape arrangements adjoining Cynthia House.

The arrangements appear to provide access to roof areas immediately alongside existing residential accommodation. This raises legitimate concerns about overlooking, loss of privacy and security, particularly where existing residential windows and rooflights are accessible or visible from those areas.

A roof area which presently provides separation between private residential accommodation and the neighbouring commercial premises could effectively become accessible to occupants in an emergency and potentially at other times unless very robust physical controls are provided.

This is not merely a theoretical concern. Creating an accessible route immediately alongside neighbouring residential windows and rooflights changes the relationship between the buildings and introduces opportunities for overlooking and unauthorised access which do not presently exist.

The application should therefore clearly demonstrate how access will be physically restricted, how neighbouring roof areas will be secured and how the privacy and security of existing residents will be protected.

This is particularly relevant to East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan Policy EG3, which requires development to protect adjoining amenity and create a safe and secure environment.

3. External fire escape and relationship with Cynthia House

I also have serious concerns regarding the proposed external fire-escape arrangement and its physical relationship with Cynthia House.

I understand that elements of the proposed escape arrangement may attach to, abut or otherwise rely upon the adjoining Cynthia House structure. The Council should satisfy itself

that the development can actually be implemented entirely within land or structures available to the applicant and without causing physical harm or unacceptable interference with the neighbouring residential building.

While I recognise that detailed compliance with fire regulations is ultimately dealt with through Building Regulations and other legislation, the location, appearance and effect of the proposed escape route upon neighbouring residential amenity, privacy and security are planning considerations.

I therefore request that the Council carefully assesses whether the proposed arrangement represents an acceptable design solution given its extremely close relationship with existing residential properties.

4. Noise and disturbance arising from the proposed use

I am also concerned about the likely ongoing noise impact.

This is not an objection based upon assumptions about any particular type of tenant. It arises from the proposed intensity of occupation itself. Seven independently occupied bedrooms and communal living facilities can reasonably be expected to generate a different pattern and frequency of activity from either the former commercial use or a conventional household.

Communal kitchens, living areas, entrances, external access routes and other shared facilities have the potential to generate noise from a substantially greater number of individual movements, particularly during evenings and early mornings.

Given the physical proximity and connection between the application property and Cynthia House, the potential for noise transmission and disturbance requires careful assessment.

Mid Sussex District Plan Policy DP29 requires development to be designed, located and controlled so as to minimise the impact of noise upon neighbouring properties and quality of life. I do not believe the application presently demonstrates adequately how this will be achieved.

5. Inadequate refuse and recycling provision

A seven-bedroom HMO will inevitably generate a substantial volume of household refuse and recycling.

I am concerned that the application does not clearly demonstrate a satisfactory permanent location for the necessary refuse containers, together with appropriate access for residents and collection services.

This is especially important because the rear of the application site is immediately adjacent to the entrances and circulation areas serving existing homes within Cynthia House.

Large communal refuse containers should not simply be placed alongside neighbouring residential entrances or windows. Such an arrangement would create the potential for odour, visual clutter, vermin and general loss of residential amenity.

Policy EG3 specifically requires development to provide adequate refuse facilities on site. Before permission is granted, the applicant should be required to demonstrate precisely where the necessary bins will be located, their capacity, how they will be screened and how they will be collected without adversely affecting neighbouring residents.

6. Parking, cycle storage and servicing

The application also needs to address realistically the transport consequences of seven separately occupied bedrooms.

Regardless of assumptions about car ownership, accommodation of this scale will generate some combination of resident vehicles, visitors, deliveries, taxis, tradespeople and cycles.

The Council should therefore satisfy itself that appropriate parking and servicing arrangements exist and that sufficient secure and conveniently located cycle storage is provided for the actual potential occupancy of the HMO.

Policy EG3 expressly requires adequate parking and cycle storage. The Mid Sussex Design Guide also emphasises that apartment cycle storage should be secure and conveniently located close to entrances.

The application should not be approved on the assumption that future residents simply will not own vehicles or require adequate cycle storage without convincing evidence supporting that assumption.

7. Loss of commercial floorspace

I am also concerned about the permanent loss of existing Class E commercial floorspace.

East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan Policy EG10a states that the loss of lawful business premises within the settlement will generally be resisted unless it can be demonstrated, amongst other matters, that the premises have been unsuccessfully marketed for employment or business reuse for at least six months, are unsuitable or unviable for continued business use and have no reasonable prospect of continued business occupation.

I therefore ask the Council to confirm that satisfactory evidence has been provided to meet these requirements.

The former use of the premises as a bank does not in itself demonstrate that the upper floors have no realistic future Class E or other employment use. The policy requires evidence rather than assumption.

8. Cumulative effect on existing residential amenity

My principal concern is ultimately the cumulative effect of the proposal.

Taken individually, matters such as refuse storage, additional windows, roof access, cycle storage, increased comings and goings and communal occupation may each appear capable of mitigation. However, the Council must also consider the development as a whole and its relationship with the residents who already live immediately alongside it.

The combination of:

- seven HMO bedrooms and intensive occupation;
- communal residential facilities;
- increased pedestrian and servicing movements;
- roof and fire-escape access immediately adjoining existing homes;
- new windows and rooflights;
- refuse and recycling requirements;
- cycle storage and parking demand; and
- potential noise and disturbance

creates, in my view, an over-intensive form of development for this particular site.

The fact that the proposal has already been materially revised from the originally submitted scheme does not remove the fundamental issue: a large HMO is being inserted into a tightly constrained building immediately adjoining established residential flats.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, I believe the application fails to demonstrate that the proposed seven-bedroom HMO can be accommodated without unacceptable harm to the amenity, privacy and security of neighbouring residents.

In particular, I consider that the proposal conflicts with the objectives of East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan Policy EG3, Policy EG10a, and the relevant amenity and noise provisions of the Mid Sussex District Plan, including Policies DP26 and DP29.

I therefore respectfully request that planning permission be refused.

If the Council is nevertheless minded to approve the application, I request that determination is deferred until the applicant has provided satisfactory and detailed information addressing:

the roof and external fire-escape arrangements and their impact upon Cynthia House;
measures preventing unauthorised access to adjoining residential roof areas;
privacy and overlooking;
acoustic protection between the HMO and adjoining residential properties;
the precise location and capacity of refuse and recycling storage;
adequate secure cycle storage and parking/servicing arrangements; and
evidence satisfying the policy requirements relating to the loss of commercial floorspace.

I would also request that, in the event permission is granted, appropriate planning conditions are imposed regarding refuse storage, external access, lighting, noise mitigation and a construction management plan in order to minimise the impact upon existing residents.

Yours faithfully,


Owner, Flat 2 Cynthia House
11a Cantelupe Rd,
East Grinstead, RH19 3BE

Kind regards